National Conversation on Immigration

Final report

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British Future and HOPE not hate

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NATIONAL CONVERSATION

British Future...

HATE HOPE

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TROWBRIDGE
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SOUTHAMPTON
UCKFIELD
EXETER

PENZANCE

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Executive summary

The National Conversation on Immigration is the biggest-ever public consultation on immigration and integration.

Immigration has remained one of the most salient and divisive issues for the public in recent years, and a factor in many voters' decisions in the EU referendum. Leaving the EU presents an opportunity to reform Britain's immigration policy: to address public concerns about immigration and put in place a system that works for employers, is fair to migrants and receiving communities and commands public trust and support. But we believe that this confidence cannot be fully restored without engaging the public in a debate about their views and concerns, and what policies we should now put in place.

The current immigration system does not command public trust and support. At the same time, employers have expressed frustrations about the difficulty in recruiting staff from overseas. Organisations working with refugees remain concerned about backlogs and the quality of initial asylum decisions.
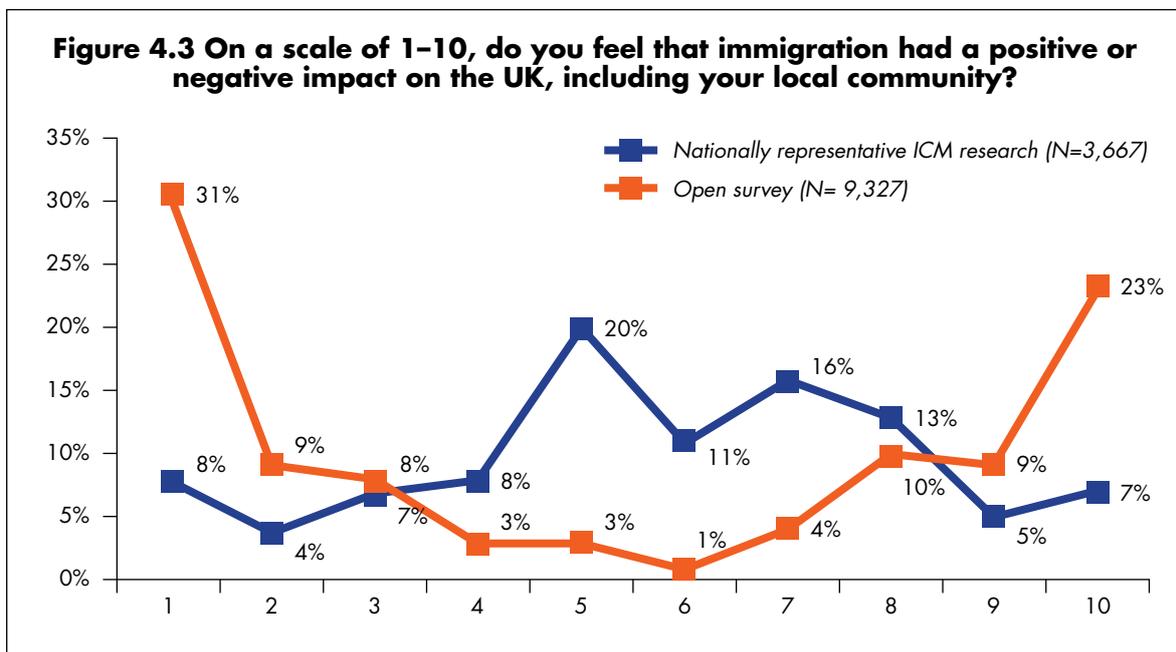
British Future and HOPE not hate have come together to involve the public in the debates and decisions about what to do now. We aimed to:

- Create an evidence base of public views on immigration.
- Examine if it is possible to build a consensus on immigration policy and, if so, what steps are needed to do so.
- Engage those with less voice in policy decisions: for example young people and those who live outside big cities.
- Advocate for deeper, on-going public engagement from the Government by demonstrating the value of such work when done well.

METHODOLOGY

The National Conversation on Immigration had three main components:

- 60 visits to towns and cities across the UK, chosen to offer a mix of places with different experiences of migration, as well as political and geographic variety.
- An online survey, hosted on our website, completed by 9,327 people over an 18-month period.
- A nationally representative survey of 3,667 UK adults undertaken in June 2018 by ICM.

Figure 4.3 On a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK, including your local community?

Legend:
- Nationally representative ICM research (N=3,667)
- Open survey (N= 9,327)

Scale	ICM	Open survey
1	8%	31%
2	4%	9%
3	8%	7%
4	8%	3%
5	20%	3%
6	11%	1%
7	16%	4%
8	13%	10%
9	5%	9%
10	7%	23%

In each location we ran a citizens' panel made up of members of the public, recruited to be representative of the local area. Basing our conversation on a discussion guide, the citizens' panels discussed the approach that they would like to see the Government take to different types of migration. They were also asked their views about integration. Crucially, participants considered what would need to change in order for the Government to get their support for its handling of immigration. In a separate meeting in each location we met with local stakeholders, including councils, business groups and civil society organisations.

We were given the opportunity to work alongside the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, which undertook its own inquiry on the future direction of immigration policy. Our findings were given as evidence to the Home Affairs Committee Inquiry on building consensus on immigration policy, and informed the Committee's recommendations.

OUR FINDINGS

Leaving the EU offers a window of opportunity to reform immigration policy, and to put in place a system that works for everyone. The evidence we have gathered from the National Conversation on Immigration suggests that this task is possible, given sufficient leadership and political will. We have found:

Most people are 'balancers'

Most people who have taken part in the citizens' panels are what we have termed 'balancers', who see both the pressures and gains of immigration. Typically, the citizens' panels described the benefits of migration, the skills that migrants bring to the UK and the jobs that they fill. Migrants who worked in the NHS were seen as characterising the best qualities of migration. At the same time, participants also voiced concerns and questions about migration, with the nature of these concerns often varying from place to place.

Face-to-face discussion on immigration is more moderate than the online debate

While the National Conversation on Immigration showed that there is a moderate and balancing majority on immigration, this is not reflected everywhere. We found considerable difference between the face-to-face discussions in the citizens' panels, and an online debate dominated by relatively few voices, where those with stronger views at either end of the spectrum are most likely to voice their opinions. The difference between online and offline debate was profound in the National Conversation on Immigration, where we were able to contrast the views expressed in the citizens' panels, the nationally representative ICM research and the online survey, open to anyone.

9,327 people took the open survey online, with responses showing the polarisation of the online debate. As in the citizens' panel and the nationally representative ICM research, we asked those who took part in the open online survey an impact question: *"On a scale of 1-10, with 1 very negative and 10 very positive, do you feel that immigration has had a positive or negative impact on the UK, including your local area."*

A majority of the online survey respondents chose either the minimum or the maximum score. This helps to explain the highly polarised nature of online debate. Almost one-third (31%) gave a score of 1 out of 10 and just short of a quarter (23%) gave a score of 10 out of 10. In contrast, these strongly held views were much rarer in the nationally representative ICM research. Just 15% of the ICM sample chose either end of the spectrum; 8% chose the lowest score of one, and 7% the highest score of ten.

Trust in the Government and politicians is low

Among those who took part in the citizens' panels there was very little trust in the Government to manage immigration, both adding to and reflecting a broader mistrust of politicians and politics. Just 15% of respondents in the nationally representative ICM research felt that the Government had managed immigration into the UK competently and fairly. The citizens' panels did not trust the Government to enforce immigration policy competently or follow through policy commitments. High profile policy failures such as the Windrush scandal, failure to deport foreign national prisoners and failure to meet the net migration target added to political mistrust.

Many participants felt that politicians had tried to shut down open debate about immigration or had used biased or inaccurate statistics when they had been forced to comment on immigration. The request for greater transparency was a very common demand in almost all the citizens' panels, along with a request not to use immigration for party political advantage.

Contribution, control and fairness were common themes in our discussions

The citizens' panels wanted the migrants who come to the UK to make a contribution, through the skills they bring, the jobs they do and through taxation. But detailed and often abstract economic arguments about fiscal and economic impacts did not resonate with the citizens' panels. Rather, economic contribution was seen through a 'common sense' fiscal lens, with participants having positive views about migrants who are seen as tax-payers and negative views about those who work off the books, send money home or are perceived as coming to the UK to claim benefits.

Control was also a key topic in many citizens' panel discussions, though what was meant by 'control' varied. Many of the concerns about immigration centred on UK sovereignty and the government's lack of control over EU migration flows, or that immigration regulations were not enforced. Security and criminality were also themes that were raised in many citizens' panels discussions, with participants concerned that would-be migrants were not vetted to exclude violent extremists and those with serious criminal records.

While the citizens' panels wanted immigration to be controlled, they also wanted the system to be fair, both to migrants and to receiving communities. There was also a consensus that migrants and refugees must be treated fairly and humanely. Every participant in the citizens' panels wanted law-abiding EU nationals who were presently living in the UK to be given the legal right to remain as residents and citizens after the UK left the EU. The Windrush scandal received media coverage towards the end of the National Conversation on Immigration visits, with the last citizens' panel unanimously agreeing that this group had been treated unfairly.

Local differences

As well as common themes there were some striking local differences in the issues that citizens' panels raised, the salience of immigration as an issue, and the balance between the perceived benefits and disadvantages of immigration. We found that immigration is a national issue, but that perceptions are often framed through a 'local lens'. Where migration is seen as putting pressures on public services or is associated with badly-maintained private rental housing and neighbourhood decline, there is usually less public consent for immigration.

Geography matters, too, and we have been struck by the differences in attitudes to immigration between the UK's major cities and the rest of the UK. There are various explanations of this trend: cities often have a longer history of immigration, so their residents are less likely to be disconcerted by recent immigration from the EU. City residents tend to have more social contact with migrants, factor that seems to be a key driver of more liberal attitudes. Higher proportions of graduates live in big cities, which also tend to have a younger age profile; both are social characteristics associated with more positive attitudes to immigration.

Personal circumstance also has an influence: age, qualifications, social grade, migration, ethnicity as well as opportunities and deprivation. We found that areas where socio-economic conditions are more favourable, and there are more opportunities, attitudes tend to be more open towards immigration. Hostile views towards immigration often emerged as an expression of broader resentments, a sense of external control and dissatisfaction with people's own lives. Our conversations were often about much more than immigration, and building a consensus will require addressing these drivers of hostility.

Integration matters

Integration often frames how immigration is seen, and local experiences of integration matter. It was clear that social contact with migrants has a major impact on how the citizens' panels viewed immigration and immigrants. The extent to which the participants had such social contact differed from place to place. Where participants had social contact with migrants, they were able to base their opinions on these interactions, rather than on what we have called 'community narratives' drawn from the media and peer group debate. In places where migrants are less well-integrated into their local communities, negative public views tended to predominate.

We also sometimes found a gulf between local and national perceptions of integration, where people felt in their communities people got along and mixed well, but held a more pessimistic view of integration nationally.

Most people want EU migration to be better managed

Many of the concerns expressed in the citizens' panels focused on migration from the EU. Participants felt that the UK government had little control over who came here and that they were unable to exclude those who presented a security risk or had unspent criminal convictions. There was very little understanding of the current free movement rules, with most of the citizens' panels believing that EU nationals could move to the UK and have immediate- and for some, preferential- access to the welfare system.

Many of the concerns that the citizens' panels held about EU migration focused on the local impact that it had, particularly on public services and on neighbourhoods with large amounts of private rental accommodation.

Most participants wanted to make changes to the rules covering this type of migration and we spent time discussing future policy options to regulate EU migration after Brexit. Options we discussed included keeping or reforming free movement, bringing in caps or quotas for low-skilled migrant workers from the EU, temporary visa regimes, or using the same system for EU and non-EU migrants.

There was very little support for temporary visas, with participants feeling that regulations would not be enforced by the Home Office and that such an approach would stop migrants putting down roots, learning English and integrating. A minority of those who took part in the citizens' panels wanted to keep the current free movement rules. Overall, participants were fairly equally divided between a cap on low-skilled migration from the EU or a system that treats EU and non-EU nationals in the same way.

The political challenges of Brexit

Whatever post-Brexit immigration system the Government wishes to put in place, it must be capable of securing public support. To secure a Brexit deal with the EU, policy proposals must also be negotiable with the EU27, in a process that will inevitably result in compromises.

On this issue, there was most division between Leave and Remain voters, both in the citizens' panel discussions and the nationally representative ICM research. Four in ten (39%) of those who took part in the nationally representative ICM research were willing to keep the current free movement rules if it meant a better deal for British business. But 33% of respondents felt that they UK should not offer a preferential immigration deal to the EU, even if this limited the trade deal that the UK could strike.

These options also divided respondents along social lines and by political affiliation, much more so than the other policy choices we posed in the survey. Remain voters (59%), Labour voters (50%), 18-24s (47%), students (56%) and those living in large cities (45%) were more likely to favour compromising on freedom of movement in return for a better deal for business. In contrast 53% of Leave voters believed that the UK should not offer a preferential immigration deal to the EU, even if business would lose out, compared with 16% of Remain voters. Conservative voters, older people, those without higher level qualifications and those who live outside big cities were also more likely to favour this option.

Clearly, developing a future immigration system that commands public support and is negotiable with the EU will be a difficult task for the Government. But changes to immigration policy alone will not address the concerns that the public hold on immigration. To secure public consent for the immigration that the economy needs, the Government will have to take action against rogue landlords, enforce labour standards, promote integration and make sure that public services can respond to increased demand.

Anti-Muslim prejudice is widespread

The National Conversation on Immigration discussions were open, decent and constructive. We have shown that it is possible to have such a discussion about a controversial subject such as immigration. However, we are concerned about the prevalence of anti-Muslim prejudice, which we found to be widespread in parts of the UK, particularly in places where the local population has little social contact with Muslim communities.

Anti-Muslim prejudice took different forms, with a tendency to stereotype Muslims as a homogeneous community whose values and lifestyle are incompatible with the British way of life. In some citizens' panels, participants talked about Muslims "*taking over*" UK cities. They believed that British culture was under threat because people were forced, usually by schools and councils, to pander to "*political correctness*" and the sensitivies of Muslims.

Anti-Muslim prejudice sometimes underpinned broader views about immigration. In many places, the citizens' panels' attitudes to Muslims impacted on how they saw refugees and sometimes references to Muslims and refugees were mixed or conflated in the discussion.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

The evidence of the National Conversation on Immigration highlights the importance of dialogue in reaching a consensus on immigration policy. Face-to-face discussion gives people a chance to express their views on immigration, debate issues with others, balance positives and challenges and, in many cases, come to a consensus. We believe that the Government needs to consider how to institutionalise public engagement on highly salient issues such as immigration.

Winning public trust will require change both nationally and locally. We have to address the public's desire to see immigration competently managed and better controlled at national level. There is also a need to address local impacts. There is no single or immediate solution that will restore the immigration system to good health: rather a series of steps and policy changes that will need time to take effect and build consensus.

We believe that a future immigration system that works for everyone in the UK must meet seven tests. It will need to be:

- Workable for the economy and employers;
- Simple and deliverable as policy;
- Fair to migrants;
- Fair to local communities and should not lead to negative impacts;
- Capable of securing public consent across social and political divides;
- Capable of securing political support in the UK; and
- In the case of EU migration, changes to policy need to be capable of securing support from the EU27.

Politicians must also address widespread mistrust in the Government's ability to manage migration competently, if they are to secure public support for the immigration that the UK economy needs. It is also clear that the immigration system needs to be more transparent, with ministers and officials held accountable for failures. But changing immigration policy alone will not unlock this consent. Dealing with local pressure points and promoting integration is also key to building an immigration system that has public support.

Drawing from the evidence we have gathered, the National Conversation on Immigration makes 47 recommendations which, if implemented, would help create an immigration system that works for employers, is fair and humane and has broad public support. We have set these out in full in our final report and in summary below. Unless otherwise indicated, these recommendations are directed at the Government.

Build confidence in the immigration system

1. **Institutionalise public consultation through an official National Conversation on Immigration and Integration which feeds into a three-year plan and an Annual Migration Day in Parliament.**

   We need a sustained and ongoing commitment to public engagement across the nations and regions of the UK, in the form of an official National Conversation on Immigration. This project has shown that such a conversation can be conducted in such a way that all voices are heard, not just the loudest. It should be coordinated by the Migration Advisory Committee, in partnership with local authorities, combined authorities and the devolved administrations. A three-year immigration plan and a House of Commons Migration Day report should become the focal point for this.

2. **Publish a three-year plan for migration to replace the net migration target, with this plan reviewed every year in Parliament on an Annual Migration Day.**

   A three-year migration strategy, led by the Cabinet Office with input from the Home Office, devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and other relevant bodies, should replace the Government's net migration target. If the Government decides to include numeric targets in its three-year plan, these should be based on robust evidence and treat different types of immigration differently. The plan should be reviewed each year in an Annual Migration Day in Parliament.

3. **Review the threshold for immigration policy change that requires legislation.**

   Setting a lower threshold on the type of change that requires primary legislation and a parliamentary vote would help put in place greater transparency on immigration policy, and prevent problems from arising.

4. **Task the Migration Advisory Committee to set up an independent and simple-to-understand, public-facing website that explains immigration policy and sets out key statistics.**

5. **Require that lay members sit on Asylum and Immigration Tribunals.**

Improving the performance of the Home Office

6. **Make sure that the Home Office has the resources to deliver on its aims.**

   In 2015 and before the EU referendum the Government committed to making the borders and immigration function in the Home Office fully self-funded by 2019-2020. We recommend that plans to make borders and immigration self-funding are reconsidered, and that the Migration Advisory Committee is tasked with calculating how much revenue and capital funding is needed for the Home Office to fulfil its immigration control function efficiently and fairly. Politicians also need to promote a more open and honest debate and acknowledge that the level of border controls that the public wants will entail a larger Home Office budget, ultimately funded through taxation.

7. **The Government should support high quality and speedy asylum decision-making through investment in staff and the merging of the Home Office budget for asylum determination with the Ministry of Justice budget for asylum appeals.**

   The UK's asylum system should be fair, efficient and humane. At present it is beset with errors and backlogs. In 2017, 36% of asylum-seekers who appealed against a negative decision were later granted refugee status - a situation that causes anxiety for refugees while also incurring an unnecessary expense for the taxpayer. We recommend that the Government merge the Home Office budget for initial asylum determination with the Ministry of Justice budget for appeals. This would be a cost-neutral measure that would incentivise high quality initial decision-making.

8. **Reduce the administrative burden placed on individual users of the immigration system, as well as business and university sponsors.**

   Immigration control must be robust and must not compromise on security and integrity. At the same time, the delivery of immigration control should avoid unnecessary and expensive bureaucracy. We welcome the Home Secretary's commitment to simplifying immigration law but we believe that there are still opportunities to reduce unnecessary and costly bureaucracy, particularly in relation to Tier 2 work visas, Tier 4 student visas, sponsorship rules and the process by which EU nationals can obtain British citizenship.

9. **Make sure that immigration policy is flexible enough to take into account the best interests of children in decision-making.**

   Children born in the UK should have the right to citizenship, and families should not be unfairly separated.

10. **Pilot immigration enforcement activities and evaluate their effectiveness in reducing illegal immigration, before their wider application.**

    The Government should not proceed with policy that is ineffective in achieving its aim or which discriminates against UK citizens.

11. **Build a culture of openness within the Home Office with a commitment to better stakeholder engagement in all divisions.**

12. **Parliamentarians, civil society, business groups and universities should make better use of migration transparency data to hold the Home Office to account.**

Migration for work – a new post-Brexit immigration system

13. **Involve the public in decisions about future EU migration policy through an official National Conversation on Immigration, and a public information campaign after the Brexit negotiations are concluded.**

14. **Give a unilateral commitment to EU nationals currently living in the UK that their status is secure in the event of the UK leaving the EU without a final deal.**

15. **Introduce a mandatory Home Office registration system and Canadian-style criminal vetting for future migration from the EU.**

16. **Introduce controls on some or all low-skilled migration from the EU, through a bar on recruiting EU nationals into jobs that pay less than the National Living Wage and/or a work visa system.**

    Under the first of these proposals employers, including employment agencies, would be barred from recruiting EU nationals into jobs that paid less than the hourly National Living Wage. We believe that this policy would encourage employers to increase recruitment from the domestic labour market, and could address some of the real and documented labour market impacts of migration on jobs and wages. Such a system would need to be enforced - currently there are too many workers who are underpaid in the UK, despite the protection of National Minimum Wage and Living Wage. We consider that this proposal would be negotiable in the event of a close UK-EU partnership, such as one in which Britain remains in the single market with reforms.

    A preferential work-permit system for EU nationals, covering some or all low-skilled work, would involve EU nationals registering with the Home Office on arrival in the UK. Should they then find a low-skilled job, they would also be required to secure a work permit from the Home Office before they took up this employment. EU nationals who were taking up high- and medium-skilled work would be exempt from this process. Employers would be responsible for designating the skill level of the jobs they wish to be filled, using the existing National Qualification Framework codes and the Standard Occupational Classification codes, which are already used in UK immigration policy. Such an approach could act as an overarching emergency brake, with the number of new work permits made available each year to be set at a pre-agreed level. We consider that this would be negotiable in the event of a UK-EU deal that takes the UK out of the single market.

    These proposals present policy options that are negotiable with the EU in the event of either a close deal with the EU, remaining in the single market with reforms, or a UK-EU partnership outside the single market – such as the Chequers proposals or an alternative, bespoke arrangement. If these two policies do not prove to be negotiable, the UK government faces a stark choice between sovereignty over immigration control and single market access.

17. **Simplify the Tier 2 visa system covering the recruitment of migrant workers from outside the EU and reduce the £30,000 pay threshold for Tier 2 visas.**

18. **Make sure that all migrant workers – from outside and within the EU - have clear and affordable routes to settlement and British citizenship, which should act as a lever to encourage integration in the UK.**

19. **Make sure that HMRC and the Gangmaster and Labour Abuse Authority have sufficient resources to enforce that National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage and other labour standards.**

20. **Sector skills councils should be required to work with the Government, the further education sector, employers and professional bodies to reduce the UK's dependence on migrant workers.**

21. **Prioritise tackling unemployment, under-employment and precarious work among young people.**

International student migration

22. **Aim to bring the number of international students up to 500,000, a 13% increase, over the next five years.**

23. **Provide immediate clarity on the status of EU students after the Brexit transition period.**

24. **Introduce a new post-study work visa for graduates of STEM subjects, with quotas allocated to Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and each English region.**

25. **Establish a new wave of university building to spread the benefits that higher education brings more widely across the UK.**

Universities bring economic and social benefits to the communities in which they are located. They encourage skilled jobs, boost local economies through student spending and have been integral to the regeneration of some towns and cities. The benefits that universities bring, however, are not evenly spread across the UK.

The benefits that universities bring, however, are not evenly spread across the UK. We recommend, therefore, that the Government establish a new wave of university building. There should be clear criteria for deciding the location of these new universities, including proximity to other universities and socio-economic need, and we set out our recommendations as to prospective locations in this report. These new institutions should specialise in regional economic and cultural strengths and have strong business and community links, with obligations to deliver additional courses below degree level, to support lifelong learning and to boost the skills of the local population.

26. **All universities should produce a community plan, involving university staff and local residents in its development and implementation.**

Protecting refugees

27. **Civic leaders and politicians of all parties should stand up for the principle of refugee protection.**

28. **The Government should maintain its commitment to resettling refugees in the UK through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, the Vulnerable Children Programme and the Gateway programme for other groups of vulnerable refugees.**

29. **Allow asylum-seekers to work if their case has not been decided within six months.**

Most asylum-seekers want to work and there is strong public support to allow them to do so. There is little evidence to suggest that allowing asylum-seekers to work after six months would act as a 'pull factor' increasing asylum arrivals. We believe that there would be many benefits from such a policy change: it would help the process of social and economic integration and prevent some of the loneliness and poor mental health experienced by asylum-seekers and refugees. Such a policy change would also discourage asylum-seekers from working 'off the books' and would address some of the public concerns about welfare dependency and groups of bored young men loitering in town centres.

30. **Councils, civil society and faith groups should continue work to broaden public support for refugee protection.**

Managing the local impacts of migration

31. **Require organisations that employ more than 250 workers in a particular local authority to account to that local authority for any increase in employees, either in a new organisation or over a threshold of 20% of the existing workforce, with regard to minimising housing market impacts of internal and international migration and encouraging integration.**

    Businesses, including employment agencies, must take more responsibility for ameliorating some of the negative impacts on local housing markets that rapid internal and international migration can bring to an area. This proposal must also apply to staff who have contracts with employment agencies. This obligation should be used to start a conversation as to what businesses might do to promote integration, for example, by making space available for workplace-based English language classes and encouraging staff to attend.

32. **The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the devolved administrations should better enforce standards in the private rental sector and look at better ways to reverse neighbourhood decline.**

33. **Introduce a minimum three-year tenancy term for private renters**

    We support the proposal put forward by Secretary of State for Communities for the introduction of a minimum three-year tenancy term, with a six-month break clause. This would help renters put down roots, and give landlords longer term financial security. This would also help to reduce undesirable population churn that is seen in some of the neighbourhoods experiencing decline.

34. **Use the next Comprehensive Spending Review to secure extra funding for and development of the Controlling Migration Fund and look at ways to deal with the local impacts of migration outside England.**

35. **Aim to reduce the UK's socio-economic and geographic divides by using the opportunities of the 2018 Industrial Strategy and the next Comprehensive Spending Review to make sure that smaller conurbations and rural areas receive a fair share of infrastructural investment.**

36. **Have an honest political debate about public spending and demographic change.**

Integration

37. **Make integration a policy priority in all four nations of the UK.**

    Integration is key to building public consent for immigration. There is a need in all parts of the UK for overarching integration strategies that frame integration as an 'everybody' issue and tackle age and income divides as well as those associated with faith and ethnicity. These strategies must be capable of securing cross-party support and there needs to be recognition that integration requires long-term policy commitment.

38. **Increase political accountability on integration through a House of Commons permanent committee on integration and opportunity.**

    In addition annual integration summits, similar to those held in Germany, would provide a focal point for policy and public debate about the progress made and future challenges.

39. **Oblige local authorities to develop an integration strategy, in consultation with the public, and make sure that they have the resources and skills to deliver it.**

40. **Take action to make sure adult migrants, including asylum-seekers and refugees, have access to English language classes in all parts of the UK.**

41. **Review language support for children who speak English as an additional language, with the aim of reducing postcode lotteries of provision.**

42. **Work with local partners to encourage social integration through a Local Citizenship Service offer, mandatory school linking and sustainable funding for parks and leisure centres.**

Addressing resentment, prejudice and hate

43. **Make sure that all local authorities have long-term strategies for reducing hate crime, prejudice and intolerance.**

44. **Put pressure on social media companies to ensure that they promptly remove social media content that breaches existing hate speech polices.**

45. **Provide coordinated training opportunities to groups such as youth and community workers on holding 'difficult conversations'.**

46. **Adopt a clear definition of anti-Muslim prejudice.**

47. **Use Remembrance Day to unite communities and mark our shared history.**

An ongoing National Conversation

The findings of the National Conversation on Immigration provide an invaluable evidence base on public attitudes to immigration and integration for policy-makers, local and national government, business and civil society and other stakeholders with an interest in this important issue. We hope it is of much use to them and would welcome approaches from those interested in learning more about our findings and/or with an interest in taking forward its recommendations.

Above all, the National Conversation on Immigration is a pilot which shows the value and feasibility of large-scale public engagement on issues of public salience; and which demonstrates that through such public engagement, it is possible to build consensus, even on issues which appear to be difficult and divisive. We hope, therefore, that the Government will take forward our key recommendation of sustained and ongoing public engagement on this issue in the form of an official National Conversation on Immigration. We strongly believe that such a commitment would play a significant role in rebuilding public trust and confidence in our immigration system.

PART ONE:

Setting the scene

1. Introduction

Immigration has long been one of the most salient political issues in the UK and played an important role in determining how people voted in the EU referendum. It is within this highly politicised and often polarised environment that the Government is forming its post-Brexit immigration policy.

Brexit is likely to lead to substantial reforms to the immigration system, and presents an opportunity to get it right; to rebuild public confidence on immigration issues and to find a system which works for employers, universities and local communities. While public opinion should not be a veto for policy choices, and rebuilding trust will require resourcing and political leadership, immigration is a socially important issue which requires political and public consensus. The National Conversation on Immigration has set out to show how this consensus can be achieved, and to engage the public in the choices that Britain faces on immigration today.

The National Conversation on Immigration is the biggest-ever public consultation on this issue. Over the course of 15 months we have held over 130 meetings, in 60 locations across every nation and region of the UK, with citizens' panels made up of ordinary members of the public and with local stakeholders – such as local government, business and civil society groups. Together with an open online survey and nationally-representative research conducted by ICM, it provides an unprecedented snapshot of what the public thinks about immigration now and what it would like to see in future.

It finds that in contrast to the polarised media and online immigration debate, most people are 'balancers' – seeing both the gains that immigration has brought to Britain's economy and cultural life, and also the pressures that it can place on public services like schools and the NHS, and on housing and integration.

It also finds a commonly-held set of expectations: that the UK Government has control over who can come to the UK; that migrants who come here make a contribution to Britain, paying taxes and being part of their local community; and also that our immigration system is fair – both to migrants and refugees but also to receiving communities too. These expectations are currently not being met, and feed a foundation of mistrust in politicians. There is a lack of confidence in the Government to manage immigration competently and fairly, to honour the commitments that it makes and to be held to account for its failures.

We believe that sustained public engagement can have a positive effect in helping to rebuild public trust on immigration. Indeed one of the aims of the National Conversation on Immigration is to prove that such engagement is both possible and valuable. In that respect, we believe the project has succeeded. With only a few exceptions, our conversations with the public all over the UK were conducted in a thoughtful and decent manner. People were keen to engage with the subject, to listen to others' views – even when, as in many cases when talking about this divisive topic, they did not agree – and, in most cases, to come to a consensus.

This decent, nuanced and balanced face-to-face conversation sits in stark contrast to the nature of the immigration debate online, which is dominated by those with the strongest-held and most polarised views on the issue, both in favour and against. Our online survey replicated this trend, and many participants talked about divisive content they saw online, including extreme or prejudiced content that they had encountered.

If politicians do not engage with the public on 'difficult' issues such as immigration, their anxieties can be pushed underground and their fears can be amplified or exploited by those seeking to divide. The National Conversation has shown how to open up conversations with the public about immigration and about their concerns, so they can be discussed and addressed in a way that doesn't damage communities, and doesn't allow the debate to be dominated by extremes.

One issue that has remained polarising and difficult is Britain's future approach to immigration from EU countries. The answer to that question still tends to divide people along referendum lines. The eventual answer will, of course, be affected by the nature of Brexit and the trade deal that Britain is able to agree with the EU. It is beyond the scope of the National Conversation on Immigration to determine or make recommendations regarding the nature of that deal and so our recommendations include future approaches to EU migration that could, we believe, be negotiated with the EU in the event of the UK being inside or outside the single market.

There is no one answer to the central question on what should now happen to immigration policy. Moreover, our conversations revealed that immigration policy cannot operate in isolation from other policy areas, such as housing and education. The importance of local experiences in

framing immigration as a national issue was stark, with substantial differences in the salience of immigration and in the balance between the perceived benefits and disadvantages of immigration. Our conversations were often about more than immigration: they were also about opportunity, about identity and about hope. In areas where socioeconomic conditions are more favourable and there are more opportunities, less work will be needed to reach consensus on immigration than in areas where there are high levels of deprivation and isolation.

This report makes over 40 recommendations covering migration for work and study, refugee protection, integration, managing local impacts, improving Home Office performance and rebuilding public trust. Central Government is not the only target of these recommendations: local government, business and civil society will also need to act.
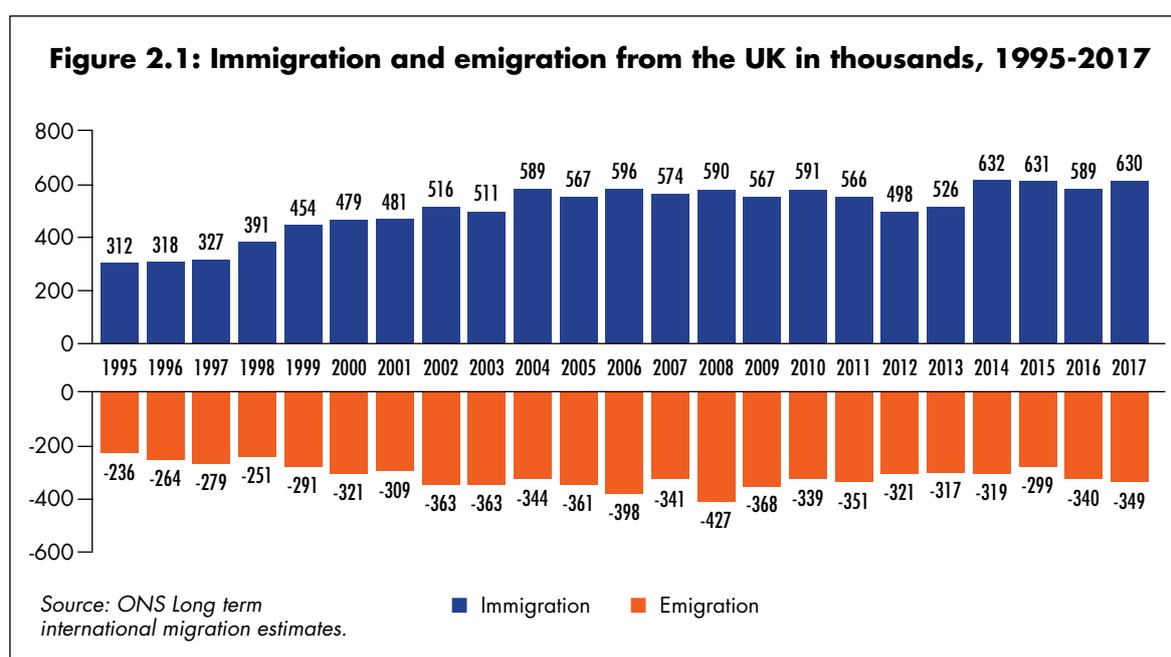
What was striking about our conversations, however, was how willing people were to explore, debate and come up with answers – not just critiques or complaints. The National Conversation on Immigration has demonstrated that public engagement on such a seemingly-divisive topic is not only possible, but productive. We hope that this pilot will be taken forward by central government on an ongoing basis, that its results will be listened to, and that over time we can start to rebuild trust in Britain's immigration system.

2. Background and context

Immigration has been a high profile issue in the UK, prompted by increased asylum migration in the late 1990s, then later by large-scale migration from the EU. Opinion polls suggest that immigration has rarely dropped out of the top five issues facing the country over recent years. This chapter provides some of the context to the National Conversation on Immigration.

WHO MIGRATES TO THE UK?

Although international migration has always been a feature of life in the UK, both immigration and emigration have increased since the early 1990s as shown in Figure 2.1. Increased immigration has been caused by higher numbers of asylum arrivals in the 1990s, sustained student and work visa flows and large-scale migration from the EU's new member states after 2004.

Figure 2.1: Immigration and emigration from the UK in thousands, 1995-2017

Source: ONS Long term international migration estimates.

■ Immigration ■ Emigration

Immigration values: 1995: 312, 1996: 318, 1997: 327, 1998: 391, 1999: 454, 2000: 479, 2001: 481, 2002: 516, 2003: 511, 2004: 589, 2005: 567, 2006: 596, 2007: 574, 2008: 590, 2009: 567, 2010: 591, 2011: 566, 2012: 498, 2013: 526, 2014: 632, 2015: 631, 2016: 589, 2017: 630

Emigration values: 1995: -236, 1996: -264, 1997: -279, 1998: -251, 1999: -291, 2000: -321, 2001: -309, 2002: -363, 2003: -363, 2004: -344, 2005: -361, 2006: -398, 2007: -341, 2008: -427, 2009: -368, 2010: -339, 2011: -351, 2012: -321, 2013: -317, 2014: -319, 2015: -299, 2016: -340, 2017: -349

EU NATIONALS

About half of all recent migration has come from within the EU[1]. This includes migration from pre-2004 EU countries such as Ireland and France, as well as from those states which joined the EU in 2004 and 2007, of which the largest group are from Poland (Table 2.2). Migration from eastern Europe accounts for most EU migration after 2004, although the Annual Population Survey also shows increased recent immigration from Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece.

EU nationals have work rights equivalent to UK citizens. They do not require visas to travel to the UK, but face some restrictions on claiming benefits and right of residency in the UK. Under Article Six of EC Directive 2004/38/EC, EEA nationals and their families have the right to reside in another EEA country for an initial three-month period. Article Seven of the same directive gives these nationals, and their family members, further rights of residence dependent on them fulfilling the conditions that grant them EEA worker status. Essentially, a person must be in employment to secure EEA worker status. A protracted period of unemployment for an EU national who does not have full settlement rights in the UK will disqualify that person from benefits and residency.

Work and student migration from outside the EU

Non-EU nationals also come to work or study in the UK, through its points-based system introduced in 2008, and now comprising:

■ Tier One – for highly-skilled migrants. Changes to this tier were introduced in 2012, effectively shutting this route down apart from a small number of wealthy investors and those with 'exceptional talent in sciences and the arts'.

- Tier Two – a scheme for skilled workers with a job offer, usually paid at least £30,000 a year, or those filling identified skills gaps.
- Tier Three – for low skilled temporary workers, although this scheme has never been opened.
- Tier Four – student migration.
- Tier Five – temporary work, youth mobility and other schemes.
- Non-points-based visas, mainly domestic workers in private households.

Each visa route has further eligibility requirements, such as English language requirements or a set amount of personal savings.

In 2017 some 165,131 work visas were granted, mostly as Tier Two visas (94,247)[2]. Non-EU students also enter the UK through the point-based system. Excluding short-term student visas, some 223,536 Tier Four student visas were granted in 2017, with Chinese, Indian and US nationals accounting for 53% of them[3].

Family migration

Migration for family formation or reunion is another category of immigration into the UK, with 134,857 family visas granted in 2017[4]. Since 2010, adult family migrants have had to pass pre-entry English tests to gain a visa, a policy change that aims to promote their integration in the UK. Rules governing family migration were changed again in 2012, requiring a minimum income for the UK partner, setting the pre-entry English test at a higher level and five years of residency before settlement is granted.

Refugee migration

Asylum-seekers comprise a distinct category of migrants, with their treatment governed by international law – the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol – as well as domestic legislation. Asylum applications rose from around 20-25,000 per year in the mid-1990s to a peak of over 85,000 per year in 2002 – as part of a wider trend across the developed world – before falling back to mid-1990s levels from 2005 onwards[5]. In 2017, 26,350 asylum applications were made in the UK, excluding dependents.

Applications for political asylum are made at the port of entry, or in-country after passage through immigration control. Asylum-seekers are not allowed to work in the UK and those asylum-seekers – the majority – who have no means of supporting themselves apply to the UK Borders Agency of the Home Office for cash support, or for a support and housing package. The Home Office commissions housing for asylum-seekers who require accommodation – most of which is provided under contract by private property management companies in what are termed 'dispersal areas'.

In 2017, 28% of initial asylum decisions resulted in a grant of refugee status[6]. In the same year 1% of decisions resulted in subsidiary forms of protection – grants of Humanitarian Protection or discretionary leave to remain. Some 69% of initial asylum decisions were refused in 2017. A proportion of those refused asylum after an initial application go on to appeal and in 2017 some 36% of asylum appeals were upheld, in that the appellant was allowed to remain in the UK. Civil society organisations working with refugees have seen this as evidence of poor-quality asylum decision-making by the Home Office. But only a small proportion of those refused asylum are removed from the UK or leave voluntarily. In part this is down to administrative inefficiency in the Home Office, but there are other reasons which include the costs and difficulty of returning individuals to many countries. This problem has persisted for at least two decades. Periodically, the UK government has implemented one-off exercises to grant leave to remain for people who have been in this situation for long periods and are unlikely ever to be removed. The largest of these exercises – known as the 'asylum legacy' programme – ran from 2007 to 2011 and took in 450,000 people. These backlog clearance exercises are not blanket amnesties for irregular migrants, as all cases have been subject to individual review with some of them rejected.

Programme or quota refugees are a specific category of refugees. In the recent past certain nationalities – Vietnamese, Bosnians, Kosovars and most recently Syrians – have been admitted to the UK through settlement programmes where refugee status or other leave to remain is granted overseas, usually through the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. In 2017, the UK resettled 6,212[7] people through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme and the Mandate and Gateway programmes.

British immigration

A further group of international migrants are British nationals and those with ancestry visas who move to the UK. An average of about 4,000 out-of-country ancestry visas have been granted every year this century, most often from Australia, New Zealand and Canada. Most who come through this route are short-term migrants.

The return migration of UK nationals is on a much larger scale, with estimates from the International Passenger Survey suggesting that 79,000 UK nationals migrated or re-migrated to the UK in 2017[8]. This diverse population includes armed forces families, returning 'lifestyle migrants', and those who have previously moved overseas to work. British citizens returning to the UK to live are currently included in estimates of net migration.

Irregular migrants or undocumented migrants

A final group is irregular or undocumented migrants. This group mostly comprises visa and asylum overstayers (see above) as well as smaller numbers of clandestine entrants and the UK-born children of irregular migrants. Estimates of the size of this population vary considerably.

THE CHANGING NATURE OF MIGRATION

As well as increases in scale, the nature of migration to the UK has changed over the last 25 years. Between 1945 and 2000 most migrants to the UK ended up living in urban areas, particularly in London and the South East. Work opportunities influenced this settlement pattern as did chain migration, where pioneer migrants were joined by their co-nationals in particular areas, with the latter benefiting from the social networks of the first settlers. Today, 48% of all the UK's overseas born population live in London and the South East[9].

Over the last 20 years the distribution of migrants across the UK has seen further changes. Since the late 1990s asylum-seekers who need housing have been dispersed throughout the UK. There has also been a shift to market towns and rural areas, with some EU migrants settling in rural shire counties, where they have often found jobs in intensive agriculture, the food processing sector or hospitality. Rapid population change in areas that have had little previous experience of international migration has been met with some public concern and sometimes opposition; it was undoubtedly a factor that contributed to the high Leave vote in the EU referendum in places such as the Fens.

Migration flows have also become increasingly super-diverse and super-mobile. In the past, much international migration to the UK was permanent or semi-permanent in nature, with arrivals coming from a small number of countries, mostly the UK's former colonies. Today, there is much more short-term migration – of those who arrived in the UK in 1998, only a quarter were estimated to have been present in 2008[10]. Overseas students and those from EU countries are particularly likely to be short-term migrants. Moreover, international migrants move frequently within the UK – outstripping the general trend towards greater mobility among the overall UK population. In terms of public perception, this super-mobility or population churn can sometimes make immigration feel more rapid.

Table 2.2: Top 10 overseas-born populations in UK by country of birth, 2017 estimates

Poland	922,000	Germany	318,000
India	829,000	Bangladesh	263,000
Pakistan	522,000	Italy	232,000
Romania	390,000	South Africa	228,000
Ireland	390,000	China	216,000

Source: ONS Annual Population Survey.

HOW HAS THE GOVERNMENT RESPONDED TO IMMIGRATION?

Growing numbers combined with greater media coverage meant that immigration grew as an issue of public concern from the 1990s. Initially, asylum was a highly salient issue, but since 2004 the focus has mostly been on migration from the EU.

Public concern about immigration is not new and neither is the notice taken of it by mainstream politicians. But over the last 25 years, immigration policy has become trapped in a vicious circle of growing public concern, following by political 'tough talk' and legislation, then a failure to deliver on policy commitments, followed in turn by further growing public concern. Over-promising on policy, then failing to deliver, can reinforce among the public a view that immigration is 'out of control' and that politicians cannot be trusted.

In the last 25 years there have been nine Acts of Parliament with a main focus on immigration: in 1993, 1996, 1999, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2009, 2014 and 2016[11]. Further changes to immigration policy have been introduced through sections inserted into other primary legislation, and through statutory instruments such as the Immigration Rules. As a result, immigration law has become highly complex and this is a barrier to political accountability.

One piece of legislation stands out as having had marked impacts, far beyond its intended targets. The Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 removed welfare benefits from asylum-seekers who made their applications 'in country' rather than at the port of entry. It was passed at a time when an explicit aim of policy was to deter those who had no case for refugee protection. The Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 rendered thousands of people destitute. After a legal challenge, councils became obliged to house and support this group. As emergency accommodation soon ran out in London and the south east, asylum-seekers were moved to locations around the UK. This legislation marked the start of a dispersal policy and separate welfare provision for asylum-seekers, also a focus of 1999 legislation. It also magnified public concern about refugees – dispersal outside London was accompanied by negative media coverage in both local and national press. Local authorities were not fully compensated for the money they were obliged to spend on asylum-seekers and had to make cuts from other parts of their budget. Headlines such as 'Influx of refugees costing thousands' (Kettering Evening Telegraph, 7 August 1998) became commonplace and the debate about refugee protection became increasingly polarised.

In addition to primary legislation, two further policies have had a marked impact on public opinion. In 2004, the Labour Government took the decision to allow migrants from the EU's new member states full access to the UK labour market, without bringing in any transitional controls. Of the EU15, only Ireland and Sweden adopted the same position. At the time, Labour immigration policy was characterised by a 'balanced' approach: tough on dealing with irregular migration and unfounded asylum applications, but also offering work visa routes into the UK and encouragement for integration. Although some in the Labour Party now feel the 2004 decision was wrong, the decision also intended to prevent illegal working. Moreover, there were many job vacancies in 2004 and the Government was the target of much lobbying by employers[12][13].

But by 2005, there was growing public concern about the pace of migration from the EU, which was at a much higher level than had been predicted in research commissioned by the Home Office[14]. This was partly because of job vacancies in the UK and also because Germany had adopted transitional labour market controls. Many local authorities were also worried about the impact of increasing migration on public services. They believed that the usual methods of calculating mid-year population estimates undercounted EU migrants, thus impacting on the allocation of revenue funding from central government. The geographical dispersal of this group, to areas that had not seen much immigration in the past, was also felt to put pressure on public services. The Government attempted to deal with this issue through the Migration Impacts Fund, a grant of £50million, funded out of visa fees and presented as additional funding for local services that incurred no extra cost to the UK taxpayer.

Public concerns about numbers and pressures on public services led the Conservative Party to make a 2010 manifesto commitment to reduce net migration to the tens of thousands by 2015. This 'net migration' figure – the difference between immigration and emigration – had last been achieved in 1997 (Figure 2.1). This policy has faced much criticism, not least because the Government had little control over many of the migration flows that impact on this figure: EU migration, emigration from the UK and much asylum migration. Many policy changes since then have focussed on meeting this pledge, for example, tightening the criteria for work, student and family migration from outside the EU and making it more difficult for those with time-limited visas to secure permanent settlement. Despite these measures, the Government is far from meeting the net migration target and has faced criticism for sticking to a measure that has damaged public trust and inflicted damage on individuals and families, universities and those who need to employ highly-skilled migrants.

A RESET MOMENT?

On 23rd June 2016, he UK voted to leave the European Union. The vote was a complex one, and many factors affected people's decisions at the ballot box: for some it was primarily a vote against the elite, about UK sovereignty, but for others it was a vote of no confidence in the Government's ability to manage migration.

The current immigration system is not working for anybody. Employers face difficulties recruiting skilled migrants that the economy needs. The asylum system is beset with backlogs and poor decision-making. The Government has missed its headline performance indicator, the net migration target, so often and by such margins that it has damaged public trust in its competence to manage immigration. Policy has been ineffective at dealing with some of the local impacts of migration, for example, on rental housing. From 2007 until the publication of the Integrated Communities Green Paper in 2017 integration was low on the list of successive governments' priorities[15] and significant challenges remain.

While Brexit will present challenges for the Government, it also offers an opportunity to get policy right in this area and to help secure public consent for the immigration that we need. The future of freedom of movement will dominate the Brexit negotiations. Likely restrictions to freedom of movement will, in turn, impact on the direction of non-EU immigration policy.

When the content of the Brexit settlement becomes clearer, it will offer the space for a comprehensive review of Britain's approach to immigration.

3. What we did and why we did it

The National Conversation on Immigration aims to engage the public about the future direction of immigration policy and to find out whether there is common ground on which more of us can agree. Here we set out in greater detail why such a conversation is needed and how we have undertaken it.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Trust in the political class is low, and polls suggest there is little public confidence in the way immigration is handled. Ipsos MORI research shows that the proportion of the public who are satisfied or very satisfied with the Government's handling of immigration has remained under 30% for most of the last two decades[16]. At the same time, employers have expressed frustrations about the difficulty in recruiting overseas staff and the bureaucracy involved in securing Tier 2 work visas. Organisations working with refugees remain concerned about backlogs and the quality of initial asylum decisions.

Brexit offers a window of opportunity to reform immigration policy, and to put in place a system that works for employers, is fair to migrants and commands broad public support. But this support will not be won without hearing and responding to public concerns. The National Conversation on Immigration sought to provide a conduit for these views. It aims to:

- Create a robust evidence base of public views on immigration reform.
- Examine if it is possible to build a consensus on immigration policy and, if so, what steps are needed to do this.
- Engage those with less voice in policy decisions, for example young people and those who live outside big cities.
- Contribute to increased public confidence and engagement in immigration politics in ways that engage anxieties effectively, and so build resilience against prejudice.
- Advocate for deeper, ongoing public engagement by the Government by demonstrating the value of such work when done well.

Engaging people in seeking consensus can help to restore trust in the immigration system. It can also reduce tensions in a noisy and polarised immigration debate by highlighting what we have in common, and offers an avenue for concerns to be heard, so they are not driven underground and fears are not exploited.

OUR APPROACH

Public engagement rarely invests participants with decision-making powers. Rather it is a process of dialogue between those who do have power – policymakers and stakeholders – and members of the public. There are many different ways of going about this process. Some approaches aim to gather the public's views about a particular issue or potential policy change.

Alternatively, public engagement can give policymakers a mandate to carry out changes, for example the well-documented, London-wide consultation on the configuration of NHS stroke services, undertaken because policymakers wanted to provide acute care in eight specialist units but wanted to show they there was consent for these major changes.

In the UK, local authorities frequently consult about policy changes, for example about school place allocation or planning decisions. While local consultation is common, it is much rarer for national governments to undertake extensive public engagement on major policy reform, either in the UK or elsewhere. In 2016, however, the Canadian Government held its own National Conversation on Immigration which took the form of an open online survey, public opinion research, stakeholder discussions and public roundtables in all of Canada's states. We modelled our own National Conversation on Immigration on the approach taken by the Canadian Government. Later in this report we reflect on the approach we took and how the UK Government might institutionalise public engagement on immigration and integration.

WHAT WE DID

As noted in the introduction, the National Conversation on Immigration had three main components:

■ 60 visits to towns and cities across the UK, where we usually held a stakeholder meeting and ran a citizens' panel in each location.

■ An online survey hosted on our website www.nationalconversation.uk. This was open between February 2017 and July 2018 and received 9,327 responses.

■ A nationally representative survey of 3,667 people, undertaken by ICM in June 2018.

The National Conversation on Immigration was given the chance to work with the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee which undertook its own inquiry into building consensus in immigration policy[17]. We provided the Committee with our findings, thus increasing the geographic reach of the inquiry. Our partnership with the Committee also enabled the views expressed by the citizens' panels and local stakeholders to reach a larger number of MPs.

As well as the two surveys and 60 visits, we created toolkits to encourage civil society and other relevant organisations to hold their own conversations. We received feedback from a number of these events, and have included an analysis of these submissions in the appendices and where relevant in the main body of this report. We also held an open citizens' panel in Bristol as part of the Festival of the Future City 2017, with a brief report on this event also included in the appendices.

The National Conversation on Immigration also worked with Votes for Schools, an organisation that enables school children to engage with democracy. *Votes for Schools* sends teaching material and a new voting question for debate to participating schools each week: recent topics have included international aid, plastic pollution and North Korea. Pupils then vote in real time and on their phones and computers. A final result is fed back to each school at the end of the week. In the week that Article 50 was triggered in March 2017, 6,000 children in 200 schools voted on the question: *"Should British and European people be able to live and work in each other's countries?"* We have included, in the report and appendixes, feedback from some of the young people who took part.

In total, 19,951 people took part in the National Conversation on Immigration through participation in the surveys, citizens' panels, stakeholder meetings and fringe activities.

THE 60 VISITS

Over a 15-month period, from February 2017 to April 2018, the National Conversation on Immigration went to 60 towns and cities across the UK. In most cases we visited five locations in each English region, as well as five each in Scotland and Wales. In Northern Ireland, which has a smaller population that Scotland and Wales, we held three citizens' panels and a stakeholder meeting in Belfast.

The location of each visit is given in the appendices. Within each region or nation of the UK we chose a range of places to reflect the different demographic, economic and political landscapes of the UK. In choosing where to visit we wanted to secure a mixture of:

■ Places with different migration histories, for example super-diverse cities, northern mill towns, areas that have experienced recent EU migration and places which remain largely white and British.

■ A range of prosperous and less prosperous areas.

■ Inner cities, suburbs, large and small towns.

■ Destinations that reflect the different party political and EU referendum choices of the UK's population.

Stakeholder meetings

In each place we held an invitation-only consultation with local stakeholders such as the council, the office of the local MP, other public sector bodies, organisations working with migrants, other community organisations and business leaders. We wanted to hear about the policy changes that these groups wanted as well as learning more about the local area. Some 405 people took part in the stakeholder meetings and the names of the organisations they represent are given in the appendices.

The citizens' panels

In each location we also held a citizens' panel made up of ten members of the public recruited to be broadly representative of the local area. These were not open public meetings – our experience has shown that open meetings about immigration tend to be dominated by those who have the strongest opinions about this very topical issue. Instead we used a professional recruitment company that screened potential panel members before selection.

In most cases, the citizens' panels comprised five men and five women and participants were selected to be representative of their local areas in relation to their ethnic groups. We made sure we had a mix of ages and educational and employment histories in the discussion. Overall, 572 people attended the citizens' panels, of whom 80% were of white British ethnicity, 7.2% other white, 5.6% British Asian/Asian, 2.6% black British/black and 4.4% self-identified as mixed or other. We estimated that 12% of those who took part in the citizens' panels were born outside the UK. The oldest participant was 91 and the youngest was 17 years old. Further information about the composition of the citizens' panels is given in the appendices.

The National Conversation on Immigration aimed to engage with as many people as possible, including those who have very strong views on immigration. But we decided to screen out those who were strongly for or against immigration in the majority of the citizens' panel discussions. In the recruitment process, potential participants were asked *'on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is "very negative", 10 is "very positive")'*. Those who gave a score of 1 or 2, or 9 or 10 were not selected for the citizens' panels. Sometimes they did participate because people might change their scores after recruitment (we asked the same question again during the citizens' panel discussion itself).

Using the above question, we included people who gave a mix of scores from 3 to 8. The decision to exclude those who had strong views, for or against immigration, was taken in order to ensure constructive conversations where all participants felt comfortable sharing their opinions. We discussed this with our advisory group as well as at a preparatory citizens' panel in Bedford, who supported it. It should be noted that we did not prevent those with the strongest views from taking part – they were able to fill in the open survey, which many did. We also held two panels with those who scored 1-3 and 8-10, both in Sheffield.

The citizens' panel conversation was based on a discussion guide that we developed with the preparatory panel held in Bedford. Participants were asked about their views on the impact of migration in their local areas, and the approach that they would like to see the Government take to different types of migration. They were also asked their views on integration and about how the debate about migration could be kept decent and non-prejudiced. At two points in the discussion, participants were asked to make some choices and vote: on future policy to EU migrants and on the numbers of people they would like to be admitted to the UK. They were also given a real case study of an undocumented migrant and asked to decide how they felt the Government should approach that case.

A final group of questions explored what participants felt would need to change in order for the Government to get their support for its handling of immigration. The questions we used in the discussion are given in the appendices to this report.

The discussions lasted about 100 minutes and were all taped and then transcribed. So as to minimise individual bias, there were at least two facilitators attending each citizens' panel and at the end they compared and discussed their observations and conclusions in detail.

After each visit we produced a blog and a local report, which were published online at www.nationalconversation.org.uk/reports. In January 2018, we also published an interim report, based on our first 30 visits[18].

THE OPEN SURVEY

During the period when we were making the visits, the National Conversation on Immigration website hosted an online survey, open to anybody in the UK. The survey explores the changes that people want to see made to immigration policy, as well as how greater consensus could be built. Although it was a survey, it examined many of the same issues that were discussed in the citizens' panels, with the questions developed with input from the preparatory panel held in Bedford.

We were clear that this was an open survey and we encouraged people with a wide range of views to contribute. During the time that the survey was open, we saw that politicians and activists from mainstream and fringe political parties were encouraging their supporters to complete the survey. As well as publicising the survey through social media and the newsletters of British Future

and HOPE not hate, we distributed postcards providing a link to the survey across the towns and cities we visited, and at stakeholder events. This postcard explained that the survey's findings would be fed back to the Home Affairs Committee.

Over an 18 month period, there were 9,327 responses to the open survey.

THE NATIONALLY REPRESENTATIVE SURVEY

A nationally representative survey of 3,667 UK adults was undertaken by ICM between 13 and 18 June 2018. In addition to the core sample, run as part of an online omnibus survey, four boosts were undertaken to enable more detailed analysis. These boosts comprised:

- 700 adults resident in Scotland;
- 250 adults resident in Northern Ireland;
- 400 adults born outside the UK;
- 500 minority ethnic adults.

Many of the questions we asked were the same as those included in the online survey. However, we included a number of additional questions to enable us to examine issues that were raised by the citizens' panels. A full list of questions is included in the appendices.

PART TWO:

Our findings

4. The nature of the debate

Over the last 15 years immigration has grown as an issue of public concern in the UK, with opinion polls consistently placing it as one of the top five issues of importance to people in the UK. At a national level, the media debate about immigration has been polarised, with pro-migration voices from business and civil society pitted against an anti-migration tabloid press and politicians and public figures sharing hard-line views. Most members of the public have been largely absent from this noisy and adversarial discussion and it is this group who we involved in the National Conversation on Immigration citizens' panels. Here we present an overview of what we heard, explored in greater detail in later chapters.

THE BALANCING MAJORITY

Most people who have taken part in the citizens' panels are what we have termed 'balancers', who see both the pressures and gains of immigration.

Typically, the citizens' panels described the benefits of migration, the skills that migrants bring to the UK and the jobs that they fill. Migrants who work in the NHS were seen as personifying the best qualities of migration. At the same time, participants also voiced concerns and questions about migration, with the nature of these concerns often varying from place to place.

"I think migration has positive and negatives. The positives are the skills that have been brought in, but negatives are that in some areas, the amount of immigrants that are used for labour work has pushed the wages down, because they're more keen to do the work than the local people."

Citizens' panel participant, Uckfield.

While media narratives about migration are often simplistic and polarised, most of those who have attended the citizens' panels had complex and nuanced views on immigration.

"I think immigration is a huge subject and I'm a very black and white person but I'm not black and white on this because there are positives and there are negatives. I think if immigration was controlled, like it is in Australia, and we're allowing people who are coming into this country who are not going to sponge off the country and god knows what, but actually going to bring skills with them, good skills which are going to benefit the country, then that's a positive."

Citizens' panel participant, Lincoln.

The citizens' panels' views often related to what they saw locally, or to their direct experiences. Longer waiting times for GP appointments or hospital treatment featured in almost all the discussions, something participants saw as a direct consequence of rapid immigration. But positive experiences of care from migrant NHS staff were also voiced in the same citizens' panels and by the same people who were concerned about pressures on the NHS.

"I work as a public servant and we've been affected very heavily by immigration. But I've another point of view – when we had our first child it was foreign people that saved my wife's life. She had a post-partum haemorrhage. So from a personal point of view, I agree there are a few problems that come, but there are positives, so two sides. The cancer centre would not work without them."
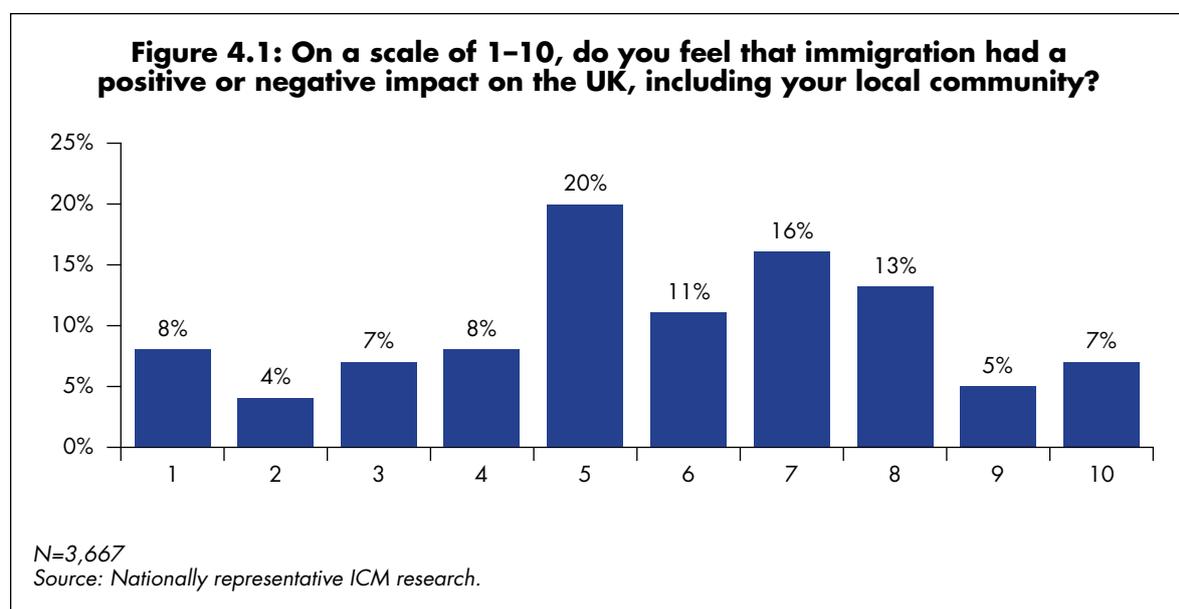
Citizens' panel participant, Derry-Londonderry.

This 'balancing' was also seen when we asked whether migration had a positive or negative impact. How this balance was weighted varied from person to person and across localities.

The citizens' panels were asked to give a score of 1-10 to indicate whether migration had a positive impact on the UK, including in their local community. The same question was asked on the open survey and in the ICM research. In both the citizens' panels and the nationally representative ICM research, the average impact score was 5.7. Just 12% of respondents in the ICM research gave a score of 1 or 2, indicting that they thought that immigration had a largely negative impact. At the other end of the spectrum, 12% of survey respondents gave a score of 9 or 10. (Figure 4.1)

> *"I put a 6. It [immigration] has been a positive thing, and a lot of jobs have been taken up that many British people wouldn't want to do. I've got firsthand experience; immigrants who come into this country tend to be hard working. On the other hand, what you read in the news that they take advantage of the benefit system and the housing system and different bits and pieces and don't put into the system, and quite often take out. But I don't know if that is actually the truth.*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Macclesfield.

Figure 4.1: On a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK, including your local community?

N=3,667
Source: Nationally representative ICM research.

Most people saw gains from immigration. ICM's nationally representative research for the National Conversation showed that 63% of respondents felt migrant workers supported the economy by doing jobs that British workers did not want to do. Some 65% of respondents agreed that migrants bring valuable skills for the economy and public services such as the NHS. A majority of people (59%) believe that diversity from immigration has enriched British culture. At the same time, the ICM research shows this balancing between perceived benefits and disadvantages, with 52% of respondents saying that public services are under strain as a result of immigration. Over half (53%) believed that migrants are willing to work for less, putting jobs at risk and lowering wages.

The concerns expressed in our citizens' panels about immigration can be categorised as:
1. Those that relate to numbers, rate of arrival, population growth and over-crowding.
2. Concerns that relate to ethnic and cultural differences and challenges of integration, particularly focusing on Muslim communities.
3. Competition in access to jobs and public services.
4. National concerns about control, enforcement and security.
5. Views that immigration policy was sometimes unfair: both to migrants themselves and also to receiving communities.

Social class, educational background, employment experiences, age and ethnicity were factors which were associated with different points of view. We explore these issues in greater detail in the next chapter. It was older people who tended to be more unsettled by hearing different languages and by the changing nature of their high street. Younger people were more concerned about the

labour market impacts of migration on jobs, wages and employment conditions, which tended to be concerns of non-graduates. At the same time they were more likely to think that migration had enriched British culture.

COMMON THEMES: CONTRIBUTION, CONTROL AND FAIRNESS

Contribution, control and fairness emerged as common themes in all the National Conversation on Immigration discussions. Most people wanted to see a system that is controlled and ensures migrants are contributing members of society. Most people also want an immigration system that is fair, upholding the rights of migrants, and is fair to receiving communities.

The citizens' panels wanted the migrants who come to the UK to make a contribution, through the skills they bring, the jobs they do and through taxation. But detailed and often abstract economic arguments about fiscal and economic impacts did not resonate with the citizens' panels. Rather, economic contribution was seen through a 'common sense' fiscal lens, with participants having positive views about migrants who are seen as tax-payers and negative views about those who work off the books, send money home or are perceived as coming to the UK to claim benefits. We discuss contribution in more detail in Chapter Six.

"It worries me, as I am getting older, that not only the NHS, you've got so many immigrants working in the hospital, but then also hotels, the hospitality sector, and also nursing homes. There are so many immigrant workers in the nursing homes and they are so good. If you took them all out, it would collapse, and we all know that. There are hundreds of Filipinos working in nursing homes."

Citizens' panel participant, Exeter.

Control was also a key topic in many citizens' panel discussions. Many of the concerns about immigration centred on sovereignty and the UK government's lack of control over EU migration flows, or that immigration regulations were not enforced. Security and criminality were also issues that were raised in many citizens' panel discussions, with participants concerned that would-be migrants were not vetted to exclude violent extremists and those with serious criminal records.

"I'd like to know who's in the country. Because they ain't got a clue. Even when they are let in, they've still got no idea who's here."

Citizens' panel participant, Milton Keynes.

While the citizens' panels wanted immigration to be controlled, they also wanted the system to be fair, both to migrants and to receiving communities. Some participants thought that migrants had preferential access to public services, which they felt was unfair. But there was also a consensus that migrants must be treated fairly and humanely. They wanted refugees fleeing war and persecution to be treated to be treated decently. No-one in the citizens' panels wanted law-abiding EU nationals who were presently living in the UK to be asked to return home after the UK left the EU. The Windrush scandal received media coverage towards the end of the National Conversation on Immigration, with the last citizens' panel unanimously agreeing that this group had been treated unfairly. Calls for flexibility, compassion and humane immigration regulations were common.

Anxieties emerged where people see immigration as having offset this balance of contribution, control and fairness.

"These are human beings coming into this country, I have no problem with them coming in to the country to work. I don't like the idea of anybody coming in to not do any work. They shouldn't get any benefits. But to me, if you work, no problem."

Citizens' panel participant, Dungannon

These common themes of contribution, control and fairness were manifest in the dominant images that the citizens' panels held of migrants. When talking about specific migrant groups, they were most likely to mention:

■ Indian doctors and Filipino nurses or care workers, seen as contributors.

■ Low-skilled migrant workers from Poland – also seen as contributors and *"hard working,"* but invoking concerns about control.

■ Refugees fleeing across Europe – people who needed protection and fair treatment, but who also bring to mind anxieties about control and contribution.

LOCAL DIFFERENCES

As well as the common themes there were some striking local differences in the issues that citizens' panels raised, the salience of immigration as an issue, as well as the balance between the perceived benefits and disadvantages of immigration. How people understand immigration on the national scale understandably reflects their own experiences.

We have found that immigration is a national issue but that perceptions are partly constructed through a 'local lens': each of the 60 places we visited told a different story, in relation to their experiences and history of immigration and emigration, as well as their economic and political context and their geographic location. We examine these local differences in greater detail in Chapter Twelve and the profiles of each location in the appendices.

Local experiences matter. It was clear that social contact with migrants has a major impact on how the citizens' panels viewed immigration and immigrants. The extent to which participants had such social contact differed from place to place. Where participants had social contact with migrants, they were able to base their opinions on these interactions, rather than on what we have called 'community narratives' drawn from the media and peer group debate. In places where migrants are less well-integrated into their local communities, negative public views tended to predominate. We explore the importance of social contact in Chapter Five.

Local tensions and negative encounters also informed the citizens' panels' views. For example, in Berwick-upon-Tweed, the citizens' panel voiced concerns about the impact of immigration on the fishing industry. Some were worried that migrant workers recruited to go out to sea were being exploited, but also felt that immigration had undercut wages and working conditions, making jobs less readily available for local workers. We were also told, by people who had worked alongside EU migrant workers in fish processing plants, about tensions caused by language barriers between workers.
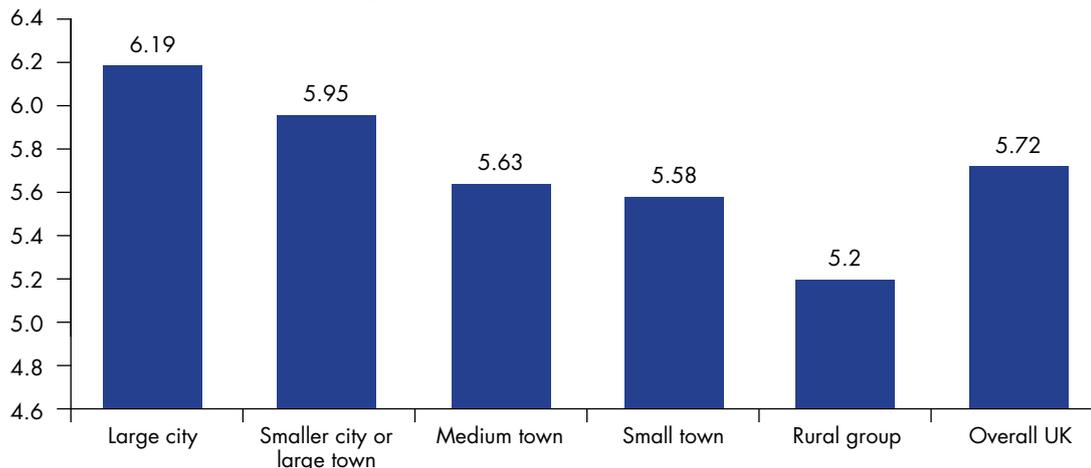
"They aren't getting paid the minimum wage half of them, they're getting paid a pittance and then they'll work for a pittance, and then people that do want the jobs, even for the minimum wage, can't get it because employers are paying illegal wages."

Citizens' panels participant, Berwick-upon-Tweed.

Geography matters, and we have been struck by the differences in attitudes to immigration between the UK's major cities and the rest of the UK. These differences were exposed in the EU referendum vote, where major cities voted to Remain and the rest of England and Wales largely voted Leave. This place-based polarisation has been highlighted by academics such as Will Jennings who describes 'two Englands': one that is metropolitan, global in outlook, liberal and more plural in its sense of identity, and one that that is less liberal, more negative about the EU and immigration, more nostalgic and English in its identity[19].

The National Conversation on Immigration also shows some place-based differences in attitudes between big metropolitan areas and the UK's smaller cities and towns. As described above, nationally representative ICM research asked respondents *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK, including your local community?"*. The mean score among respondents who lived in large cities (with a population over 500,000) was highest and among those who lived in rural areas it was lowest.

Figure 4.2: Mean score to question "On a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK, including your local community?" by place of residence of the respondent

Place of residence	Mean score
Large city	6.19
Smaller city or large town	5.95
Medium town	5.63
Small town	5.58
Rural group	5.2
Overall UK	5.72

N=3,667.
Source: Nationally representative ICM research.

In the citizens' panels, those who lived in the biggest cities – London, Birmingham, Edinburgh, Southampton – generally thought that migration was associated with more benefits that disadvantages. This group was also more appreciative of the cultural diversity that migration brought and had fewer concerns about changes to the British way of life. Generally, those who lived in smaller cities and towns had more concerns about immigration, although these often differed in their nature. We have summarised these place-based differences in Table 12.1 and in the profiles in the appendices.

Various factors may explain why attitudes to migration among those who live in the UK's largest cities are pulling away from those who live everywhere else. Cities often have a longer history of immigration, so their residents are less likely to be disconcerted by recent immigration from the EU. City residents tend to have more social contact with migrants, a factor that seems to be a key driver of more liberal attitudes. And higher proportions of graduates live in big cities, which also tend to have a younger age profile – both social characteristics which are associated with more positive attitudes to immigration[20].

It is important that policy-makers understand these local differences. Addressing local pressure points is key to gaining public consent for the immigration that the UK economy needs. And if these local pressures – such as those on housing or school places – are not seen to be managed, economic arguments about migrants' fiscal or broader economic contribution will not resonate. Talking to people about the place where they live, listening to their concerns and, better still, offering solutions to the issues they face will be much more effective in easing anxieties.

EU MIGRATION: THE ISSUE THAT DIVIDES PEOPLE

Migration from the EU was the most salient issue raised by those who took part in the National Conversation on Immigration citizens' panels. Many of the participants' concerns about control and enforcement focused on migration flows from the EU.

Most of the citizens' panels believed that EU nationals were free to travel to the UK and have immediate access to benefits and social housing. Almost no-one knew the detail of current free movement rules: that after three months an EU national can only legally reside in the UK if they are employed, self-sufficient, a student or a family member of one of these three groups[21]. When we explained these regulations in the discussion, there was scepticism that such regulations were ever enforced.

Many of the concerns that the citizens' panels held about EU migration focused on the local impact that it had, particularly on public services and on neighbourhoods with large amounts of private rental accommodation. Concerns about the labour market impact of EU migration on the availability of jobs and on wages and employment conditions were less prevalent and tended to be held by younger non-graduates, and those in precarious, low-skilled work; or they were linked to specific employers such as Amazon and Sports Direct.

Most participants wanted to make changes to the rules covering this type of migration and we spent time discussing future policy options to regulate EU migration after Brexit.

"You know, if they have a few more boundaries [on EU migration] and say look, we've got a cap or whatever, we'll still be better off than we are now. That's what needs to happen, we need to start getting better off, therefore English people and British people can start making better for themselves. You know, homeless people, people that are unemployed and that, at least we can start getting better jobs."

Citizens' panel participant, Grimsby.

Options we discussed included keeping or reforming free movement, bringing in caps or quotas for low-skilled migrant workers from the EU, and temporary visa regimes or using the same system for EU and non-EU migrants. There was very little support for temporary visas, with participants feeling that regulations would not be enforced by the Home Office and that such an approach would stop migrants putting down roots, learning English and integrating. A minority of those who took part in the citizens' panels wanted to keep the current free movement rules. Overall, participants were fairly equally divided between favouring a cap on low-skilled migration from the EU or a system that treats EU and non-EU nationals in the same way.

Whatever post-Brexit immigration system the Government wishes to put in place, it must be capable of securing public support. Policy proposals must also be negotiable with the EU, in a process that will inevitably result in compromises. On this issue, there was most division between Leave and Remain voters in the citizens' panel discussions and in the nationally representative ICM research. Four in ten (39%) of those who took part in the ICM research were willing to keep the current free movement rules if it meant a better deal for British business. But 33% of respondents felt that the UK should not offer a preferential immigration deal to the EU, even if this limited the trade deal that the UK could strike. However, these options divided respondents along social lines and by political affiliation, much more so than the other policy choices we posed in the survey. Remain voters (59%), Labour voters (50%), 18-24s (47%), students (56%) and those living in large cities (45%) were more likely to favour compromising on freedom of movement in return for a better deal for business. In contrast 53% of Leave voters believed that the UK should not offer a preferential immigration deal to the EU, even if business would lose out, compared with 16% of Remain voters. Conservative voters, older people, those without higher level qualifications and those who live outside big cities were also more likely to favour this option.

Clearly, developing a future immigration system that commands majority public support and is negotiable with the EU will be a difficult task for the Government. But changes to immigration policy alone will not address the concerns that the public have about immigration. To secure public consent for the immigration that the economy needs, the Government will have to take action against rogue landlords, enforce labour standards, make sure that public services can respond to increased demand and promote integration.

TRUST IN THE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICIANS IS LOW

Among those who took part in the citizens' panels there was very little trust in the Government to manage immigration, alongside a broader mistrust of politicians and politics. Just 15% of respondents in the nationally representative ICM research felt that the Government had managed immigration into the UK competently and fairly.

The citizens' panels did not trust the Government to enforce immigration policy competently, or follow through policy commitments. There was much criticism of politicians who over-promised on immigration control and then failed to deliver what they had pledged. High-profile policy failures such as the Windrush scandal, failure to deport foreign national prisoners and failure to meet the net migration target added to political mistrust.

"I'd like the Government just to be honest, and if they say they are going to do something, actually do it. Rather than saying they are going to do it and it just phases out and you never hear about it again. People don't trust the Government."

Citizens' panel participant, Edinburgh.

Many participants felt that politicians had tried to close down the debate about immigration, or had used biased or inaccurate statistics when they had been forced to comment on the issue. The request for greater transparency was a very common demand in almost all the citizens' panels, along with a request not to use immigration for party political advantage.

> *"We want non-politicians sitting in on lots of committees, making decisions. Feeding back to their communities. I think politicians we don't need. In interviews with most politicians, they are asked a direct question and they just don't answer it, which makes you think if they can't answer one direct question, how can you trust them?"*

Citizens' panel participant, Enfield.

THE IMMIGRATION DEBATE: WHY THE ONLINE AND OFFLINE DEBATES DIFFER

While the National Conversation on Immigration shows that there is a moderate and balancing majority on immigration, this is not reflected everywhere. We have found considerable difference between the face-to-face discussions in the citizens' panels and how immigration is discussed online.

In most instances, the citizens' panel discussions were pragmatic, constructive and decent. These conversations gave participants space to challenge one another and to find consensus in a constructive way. Participants often had strong opinions about immigration but, after these were aired, they listened to others and sometimes came to a different point of view.

– *"I work for the NHS and I just think I've seen the way it's gone downhill in the last few years and I think there's just too many people using it and other public services as well, I think the only reason I can come up with is that there's too many people in the country."*
– *"I think immigration has been positive in Penzance. They've tried to employ local people but they can't actually get people to work and obviously that hole has been filled by migrant workers."*
– *"But that didn't used to be the case, twenty years ago, local people did that kind of work, so there has been a dip in wages, but they seem to be in dire circumstances, in caravans, with…I'd be curious to know what they're being paid and what working conditions they have."*
– *"I remember back in the day, where most [of this kind of work] was cash in hand, and I can tell you then, the wages used to be much worse than those people are paid now, because it was all done so you'd just get your cash on the day, you'd turn up the next day, in case there's work, so actually probably it's being run better now, and better wages."*
– *"Can I ask, how do you know that?"*
– *"My husband and my brother, and we're probably talking about in the early eighties, used to do that."*

Dialogue between three citizens' panel participants, Penzance.

In many citizens' panels, participants contrasted this face-to-face discussion with material on immigration that they had seen online. Participants often told us they had seen extreme content on Facebook and Twitter about immigration, from groups such as For Britain or Britain First. Participants often told us that they would avoid any discussion of immigration on social media, not because they did not hold opinions on the subject, but because the discussion often became toxic or divisive.

> *"I see things on Facebook that people have shared, Britain First posts, and I think that it feels like we've moved on but then you see people sharing these things, and you don't even know if they are really true."*

Citizens' panel participant, Bexley

The online debate on immigration is dominated by relatively few voices. Those with stronger views at either end of the spectrum are most likely to share their opinions, which are reinforced though the 'echo chamber' effect[22]. The 'balancer' majority of the public have a much lower share of voice in the online immigration debate.

The difference between online and offline debate was profound in the National Conversation on Immigration, where we were able to contrast the views expressed in the citizens' panels, the nationally represented ICM research and the open online survey.
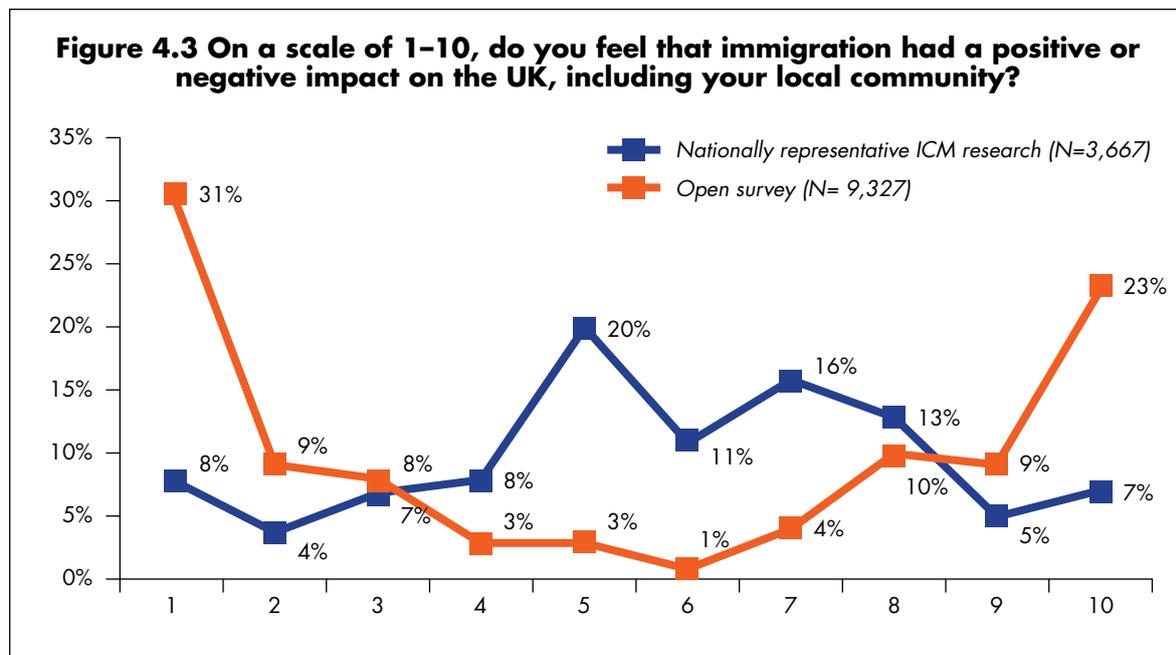
The open survey was taken online by 9,327 people, with its responses showing the polarisation of the online debate. We intended for the survey to open up the National Conversation to a broader audience and in Chapter Three we describe how we promoted it. The survey was picked up and heavily circulated by activists and supporters of For Britain, a far-right political party standing on an explicitly anti-Islam platform, as well as a number of online groups opposing Brexit.

As in the citizens' panels and the nationally represented ICM research, we asked all participants an impact question: "*On a scale of 1-10, with 1 very negative and 10 very positive, do you feel that immigration has had a positive or negative impact on the UK, including your local area?"*. Figure 4.2 shows the responses to the open survey and to the ICM research side-by-side, highlighting the difference between online debate and overall public opinion.

In both surveys, around half of respondents had voted Leave and Remain in the referendum, but in most other ways, the balance of participants was starkly different.

Over half (57%) of respondents in the ICM nationally representative research gave a score somewhere in the middle, between 4-7 on the 1-10 scale. But this group made up only 11% of those who responded to the open online survey.

Meanwhile, a majority of the online survey respondents chose either the minimum or the maximum impact score: almost one-third (31%) gave a score of 1 out of 10 and a quarter (23%) gave a score of 10 out of 10. This helps to explain the highly polarised nature of online debate. These most strongly held views were much rarer in the nationally representative ICM research, where just 15% of the ICM sample chose either end of the spectrum: in ICM's representative survey, just 8% chose the lowest score of one, and just 7% the highest score of ten.

Figure 4.3 On a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK, including your local community?

- Nationally representative ICM research (N=3,667)
- Open survey (N= 9,327)

We believe that the online debate on immigration does not reflect public opinion but rather creates a space which amplifies the strongest views. Some of the online survey responses to open questions were actively hostile, and occasionally violent, towards migrants and minority ethnic and faith groups, usually Muslims. These often contained references to places, such as Rotherham or Bradford. There were 1,033 mentions of 'Muslim' or 'Muslims' in responses to the open questions, and 1,022 mentions of 'Islam' or 'Islamic', almost always in a negative context.

> *"You do not seem to comprehend that Muslims have one aim and that is total world sharia law. Ever since Islam was created they have been on one long jihad, be it by arms or out-breeding the native population. By Islam's very nature integration is impossible!"*

Open survey response, impact score 1.

It is likely that the nature of these responses was a result of online disinhibition effects, whereby people feel freer to say what they really think under the veil of online anonymity.

At the other end of the spectrum, among those who gave 9 or 10 when answering the impact question, the responses to open questions stressed the economic and cultural benefits of migration or focussed on campaigning priorities of refugee organisations. There was also a strong opposition to Brexit, with those participants who gave a 10 out of 10 score being most likely to call for a second referendum or for the UK to remain in the EU.

> *"I love diversity and culture and the service sector in the UK has improved immeasurably since the new wave of migration in the 90s. I also love being able to go to Polish and Asian supermarkets and restaurants and benefit from friends connected around the world."*
>
> *Open* survey response, impact score 10.

It is often said that one problem with online debate is that people with differing views can end up in a 'bubble', only talking to people who already agree with them. The distribution of attitudes among online participants highlights another challenging dynamic: we are much more likely to encounter those with the strongest opposing views, rather than those with more moderate opinions, either positive or negative, about immigration. This may well reinforce a liberal perception that those who oppose migration are mostly motivated by intolerant or prejudiced views; and a socially conservative perception that liberal supporters of migration do not regard other views as legitimate. The crowding-out of how the majority of people think about migration may reinforce perceptions that this is a 'culture war' in which no quarter should be given, despite there being a much broader public appetite for seeking common ground.

ANTI-MUSLIM PREJUDICE

The National Conversation on Immigration discussions were open, decent and constructive. We have shown that it is possible to have such a discussion about a controversial subject such as immigration. However, at times, the conversations led to some participants expressing prejudiced views.

We are particularly concerned about the prevalence of anti-Muslim prejudice, which we found to be widespread in parts of the UK, particularly in places where the local population has little social contact with Muslim communities.

Anti-Muslim prejudice took different forms, with a tendency to stereotype Muslims as a homogeneous community whose values and lifestyle are incompatible with the British way of life. Recent terror attacks have had a profound impact on public attitudes towards Muslims, feeding a perception of cultural incompatibility.

Often these anti-Muslim sentiments were implicit and expressed in a way that attempts to maintain anti-racist norms. In the extract below, one citizens' panel participant talks about a recent visit to Birmingham and tries to maintain anti-prejudice norms by not naming any specific nationality, religious or ethnic group.

> *"I see why people get upset* [about immigration]. *They come from a country, I don't want to pick on a country, let's say somewhere in Asia, and they come over and they don't make an effort to learn the language, they dress in their own way, which is okay, it's fine. But it alienates themselves a little bit... Well some are very nice but others do keep themselves to themselves, speaking their own language when it suits them. Sometimes I'm terrified because I wonder what they are saying, on a train or something. You know, are they going to bomb us? It's terrifying walking around Birmingham, around Christmas time. I'm far from racist, but I just don't know."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Kidderminster

In many of the citizens' panels, integration problems were often linked to specific locations in the UK, with participants naming places such as Birmingham, Rotherham, Bradford, Luton and Tower Hamlets. These were always places with large Muslim communities. We discuss this issue in greater detail in Chapter 13.

In some citizens' panels, participants talked about Muslims "*taking over*" UK cities. They felt that British culture was under threat because people were forced – usually by schools and councils – to pander to "*political correctness*" and the sensitivities of Muslims. We were told in a number of citizens' panels that schools are no longer allowed to put on nativity plays at Christmas or celebrate Easter because of the Muslim community.

Anti-Muslim prejudice underpinned broader views about immigration. In many places, attitudes to Muslims among members of the citizens' panel impacted on how they saw refugees; sometimes references to Muslims and refugees were mixed or conflated in the discussion. Breaking down these stereotypes and building bridges between Muslims and non-Muslims would help to build greater public consent to for immigration. British Muslims should be engaged in developing local integration strategies in a way that builds trust. The framing of much public discourse as a 'them and us' debate about Muslim integration is felt to place British Muslims unfairly under the spotlight. In some areas, this generates suspicion about the Government's motives on integration. Given the prevalence of anti-Muslim hatred on social media, it is essential that platforms such as Facebook and Twitter take down comments that transgress agreed anti-prejudice guidelines.

COMING TO A CONSENSUS

Those who took part in the citizens' panels had often found it difficult in the past to talk about immigration with family and friends. They did not want to provoke arguments, or risk being accused of racism. Many participants felt that the EU referendum campaign, however, had enabled a more open debate on this issue. We believe that such open debate, alongside the expectation of more controls on migration from the EU, account for the shift, highlighted in recent longitudinal research[23], towards more positive public attitudes to immigration.

Clearly, the online immigration debate remains highly polarised. Those with the strongest views – whether against migration or strongly in favour of it – have a legitimate voice in public debate, though maintaining boundaries against prejudice are important. Politicians will listen to those who feel most strongly about an issue and make themselves heard: pro-migration voices have sought to mobilise a stronger approach to the refugee crisis, while those with the strongest concerns about migration pushed hard to secure a referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union. But politicians also need to recognise that the views most strongly expressed online are not representative of those held by the majority of the public – and to ensure that we have a national debate about immigration where all voices can be heard, rather than many people being crowded out of a shouting match by the loudest voices.

Many participants felt that politicians had suppressed an open debate about immigration for their own political ends. They felt that participating in the National Conversation on Immigration was cathartic and an opportunity for their views to be heard for the first time.

> *"The politicians have very little to say on it [immigration], they like to keep away from it to be honest. They have for years. Because someone will speak up and get called a racist and then the opposite. It's been a hot topic, but no-one wants to talk about it."*

Citizens' panel participant, Chesterfield.

The evidence of the National Conversation on Immigration highlights the importance of dialogue in reaching a consensus on immigration policy. Face-to-face discussion gives people a chance to share their views on immigration, debate issues with others, balance positives and negatives and, in many cases, come to a consensus. If the Government wants to engage the public on immigration, and to ensure that all voices can be heard, then we believe that it needs to consider how to institutionalise public engagement on highly salient issues such as immigration. There was support for an official, government-led National Conversation on Immigration from the citizens' panels. This view was also supported in the nationally representative ICM research, with 62% of respondents agreeing that *"the public should be consulted more on important national issues like immigration"*

"I find it's just that a lot of people aren't good at having conversations like that in general. I think today has been one of the best discussions I've been in, in terms of people giving each other the time to speak and listening, like when we had a little challenge towards each other."

Citizens' panel participant, Redbridge.

In face-to-face discussion most people hold moderate, balanced views. They believe that much migration has been beneficial to the UK and that this country should protect refugees fleeing war and persecution. At the same time, they also have concerns that relate to immigration enforcement and security and also to what they see as the impact of immigration in their local area. Engaging with the public and addressing these concerns is key to unlocking public consent for the immigration that the UK economy needs.

5. How people form their views on immigration

Understanding *how* people form their views on migration and integration was a key aim of the National Conversation on Immigration. We set out to look at how we might reach a consensus on immigration. Without understanding how people form their opinions, and the role that different factors play in informing views, this task is much more difficult. Here we set out our findings and look at the different factors that are associated with positive and negative views about immigration.

VIEWS ON IMMIGRATION: AN ECOLOGICAL MODEL

We spent some time at the start of the citizens' panel discussions talking about how people obtain information about immigration and trying to understand the relative importance of different factors in influencing these views. These are questions that have been examined in much other research, both on immigration and on the reproduction of prejudice within communities[24]. Within a mostly academic literature there has been some divergence among researchers about the relative importance of 'top-down' national discourses about immigration, such as debates in the national media and statements from politicians, in the reproduction of public opinion compared with 'grassroots' personal and local experiences. Some research asserts that attitudes are primarily formed as a consequence of local observations, as people cannot easily interpret and make sense of national statistics. Others see the claim-making of national politicians and the national media as being of paramount importance in framing attitudes to immigration[25].

In the citizens' panels, attitudes to immigration were complex and nuanced, varying greatly from person to person. It was clear from the National Conversation on Immigration visits that many different factors had influenced how the citizens' panels came to their views. For some people, their own personal circumstances, for example their career progression, had shaped their view. In the citizens' panels we found that participants who were more confident about their own opportunities in life were less likely to see immigration as a threat than people in more precarious positions. The citizens' panels had also been influenced by what they saw around them in their local communities; we were told in Bexley, for example, *"you've only got to use your eyes."*

It was clear that social contact with migrants influenced participants' views. Where they had positive and sustained social contact with migrants, they were able to base their opinions on these social interactions, rather than what we call 'community narratives' drawn largely from the media and peer group debate. There were many examples of citizens' panels recounting community narratives in the discussions, with the extract below one such an example, where one participant was certain that the Government had banned nativity plays in schools.

– *"There's a school down the road, that at Christmas because of the ethnic minorities that may go, they cancelled the nativity because they thought they might find it offensive.*
– *"It's a government thing. I don't think any school does nativity plays unless it's a church school, then they can celebrate the actual traditional Christmas."*
Dialogue between citizens' panel participants, Chesterfield.

Immigration was a salient issue for about half of those who attended the citizens' panels and something that participants talked about with their family and friends. The themes raised in conversations with peers also had a major role in influencing personal attitudes.

"Don't we all have a mate called Dave in the pub who knows everything? Have a word with Dave, get him a pint, he'll tell you."

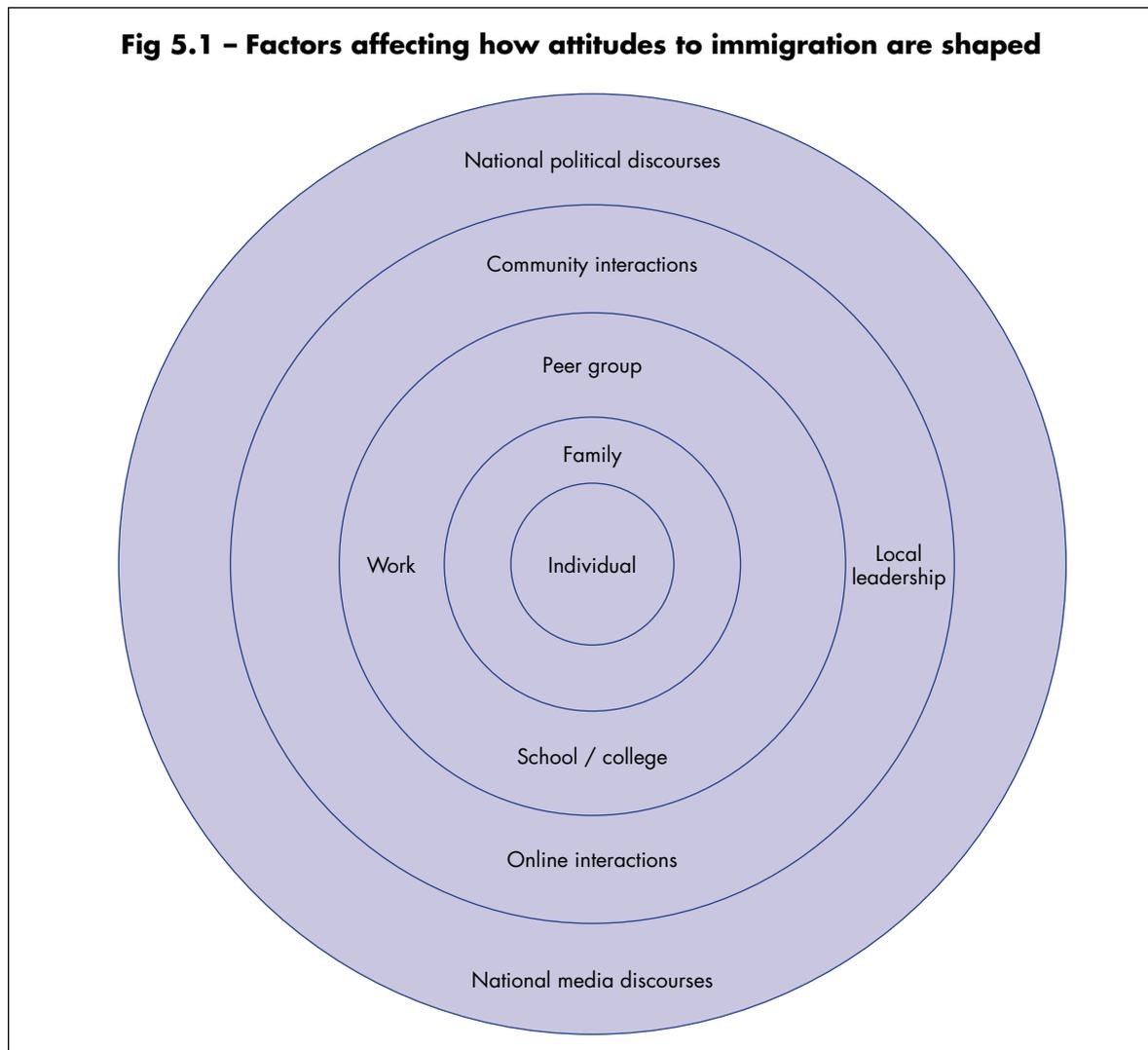Citizens' panel participant, Newcastle-under-Lyme.

All the citizens' panels agreed that online, broadcast and print media had a major role to play in influencing public views.

"I think the media dictates your opinion of it [migration]*, because sometimes they show you the sob stories, then they show the guys that are breaking into the lorries to get into the country. I get quite torn about it sometimes."*

Citizens' panel participant, Bradford.

Participants felt that most media coverage about immigration was negative, as well as often being biased or sensationalist. There was also scepticism that politicians were truthful, but the claims-making of politicians influenced members of the citizens' panels in some cases.

Overall, it seemed that individual circumstances, local factors and national discourses on immigration interact with each other and shape public attitudes. We have set such an ecological model in Figure 5.1 and discuss such factors below.

Fig 5.1 – Factors affecting how attitudes to immigration are shaped

National political discourses

Community interactions

Peer group

Family

Work — Individual — Local leadership

School / college

Online interactions

National media discourses

PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Personal circumstances played a major role in shaping opinions and in framing the nature of our citizens' panel discussions. Although there were many exceptions, it was generally older people, those with fewer qualifications and those who had low-skilled jobs who had most anxieties about immigration. Younger people, those with higher-level qualifications and those in better-paid and more skilled jobs tended to have more positive views and fewer concerns. As we have noted above, those who had everyday social contact with migrants were more likely to have positive views about immigration. Where people lived mattered too, with the citizens' panels in London and other big cities seeing migration in more positive terms than elsewhere. A participant who had a family history of migration was also more likely to express positive views, although in some cases such experiences promoted stories that migration worked better in the past.

"I'm an immigrant, I was born in Ireland. Our country is made up of immigrants and Shrewsbury is made up of lots of different people and it brings lots of positive things. We hear lots of negative things, but we don't hear those positive things because they're not worth putting in the press."

Citizen' panel participant, Shrewsbury.

The impact of age, qualifications, social grade, migration, ethnicity and geography on attitudes was also supported in the nationally representative ICM research. This asked respondents *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK, including your local community?"* The mean scores for groups with different social characteristics are given in Figure 5.2 below.

As Figure 5.2 shows, there was no strong association between gender and views about the impact of immigration in the nationally representative ICM research. In the citizens' panels, men were more dominant in the discussion, and tended to put across stronger opinions than many women, but we found no significant differences in themes raised by men and women. We held two single-sex citizens panels, both in Ipswich, one with men and one with women. Both mostly saw the same benefits of immigration and shared many of the same concerns.

We found an association between where people lived and their attitudes to immigration, which we have discussed in the previous chapter. Much other research shows an association between age, ethnicity, social grade and qualifications and attitudes to immigration[2627] , which was also highlighted in the National Conversation on Immigration.

Age

The nationally representative ICM research suggests that it was the under-35s who felt that immigration had the most positive effects (Figure 5.2). In the citizens' panels there was a great deal of variation between the views of people in the same age groups on migration. However, older participants in the citizens' panels were more likely to feel that British cultural traditions were under threat because of migration, something that we did not generally hear from younger participants, except in Welsh language speaking Aberystwyth. Instead, younger people were more likely than any other demographic group to see cultural diversity as a positive impact of immigration. At the same time younger non-graduates often expressed concerns about the labour market impacts of immigration on their job opportunities and career progression. Younger people were also less likely to see immigration putting pressures on public services and the NHS.

There is a debate as to the extent to which 'lifecycle effects' – where concerns about immigration change with age – or 'generational effects' – where attitudes remain consistent among a cohort as they grow older – impact on attitudes to immigration. The evidence from the citizens' panels suggest both.
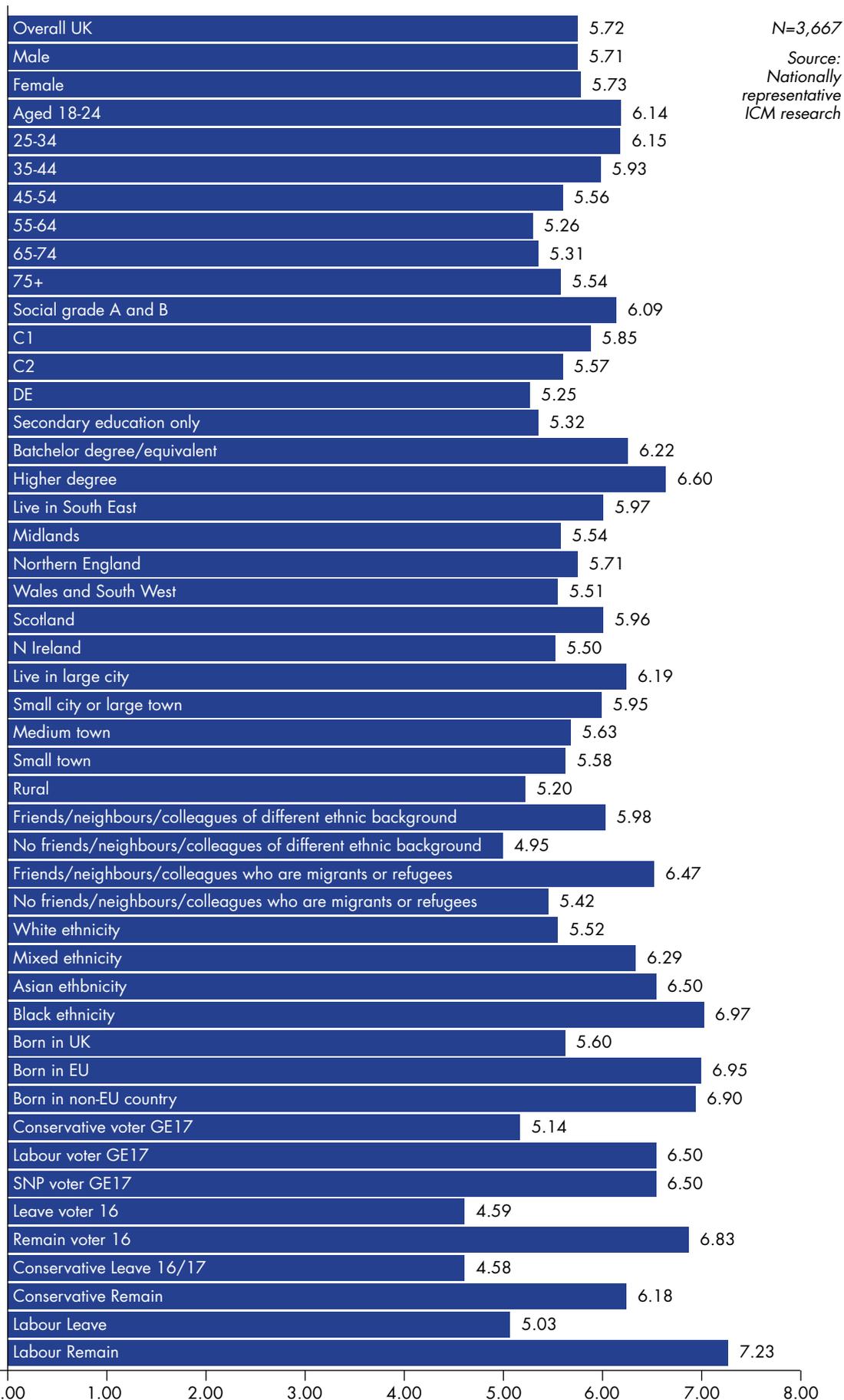
Attitudes about race and ethnicity have changed across the generations, with behaviours that were commonplace in the 1960s and 1970s no longer socially acceptable today[28]. The foreign-born population of the UK was just 4.9% in 1961, compared with 12.7% in the 2011 census, so someone growing up in the 1960s would have been much less likely to know migrants as friends or work colleagues than today. At the same time we noticed life cycle effects in the discussions, with those under 30 less concerned about the pressures on school places and the NHS, although it was younger people with the fewest qualifications who were most concerned about the labour market impacts of immigration.

"I think I've got a different opinion to my parents, slightly. But it's more my grandparents whose views and mine are completely different. I'd say that my grandparents are rather racist in their views towards immigration. Whereas each generation down here seems to think let's not make judgements first hand. We can't judge them until we know what they're like."

Citizens' panel participant, Carlisle.

Many of the characteristics we examined in the nationally representative ICM research also interact with each other. For example, older people are less likely to have higher-level qualifications than someone growing up now, at a time when university participation rates have reached 40%.

Figure 5.2: Mean score to question "On a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK, including your local community?

	Score
Overall UK	5.72
Male	5.71
Female	5.73
Aged 18-24	6.14
25-34	6.15
35-44	5.93
45-54	5.56
55-64	5.26
65-74	5.31
75+	5.54
Social grade A and B	6.09
C1	5.85
C2	5.57
DE	5.25
Secondary education only	5.32
Batchelor degree/equivalent	6.22
Higher degree	6.60
Live in South East	5.97
Midlands	5.54
Northern England	5.71
Wales and South West	5.51
Scotland	5.96
N Ireland	5.50
Live in large city	6.19
Small city or large town	5.95
Medium town	5.63
Small town	5.58
Rural	5.20
Friends/neighbours/colleagues of different ethnic background	5.98
No friends/neighbours/colleagues of different ethnic background	4.95
Friends/neighbours/colleagues who are migrants or refugees	6.47
No friends/neighbours/colleagues who are migrants or refugees	5.42
White ethnicity	5.52
Mixed ethnicity	6.29
Asian ethbnicity	6.50
Black ethnicity	6.97
Born in UK	5.60
Born in EU	6.95
Born in non-EU country	6.90
Conservative voter GE17	5.14
Labour voter GE17	6.50
SNP voter GE17	6.50
Leave voter 16	4.59
Remain voter 16	6.83
Conservative Leave 16/17	4.58
Conservative Remain	6.18
Labour Leave	5.03
Labour Remain	7.23

N=3,667

*Source:
Nationally
representative
ICM research*

Class

The nationally representative ICM research shows that those undertaking low-skilled or casual work and those who were solely dependent on the welfare state saw the impacts of immigration as being more negative. There was an association between social grade and attitudes to immigration, in both the ICM research and the citizens' panels. As we discuss below, those with less secure forms of work, and with less economic security, were more likely to see immigration as a threat than those in professional or managerial occupations and with more savings. In the citizens' panels this was particularly marked among participants in insecure forms of work and single parents struggling to balance employment and childcare.

*"I'm now proudly working for a company which won an award for back-to-work mums. There's plenty of people out there in the market looking for jobs but employers, they don't want to have to deal with people's flexibility – you do as we tell you, you do it, great.
You don't – you go home. At the end of the day you lose it because you can't be flexible."*

Citizens' panel participant, Northampton.

Education had an effect on how immigration was viewed, as seen in Figure 5.2. Qualifications impact on career progression and income. In the citizens' panels, participants who had attended university were more likely to have encountered non-EU migration while studying, so were more likely to value the contribution of international students.

At the same time there were many exceptions, in the citizens' panels, to this trend. We met many people who had a low-skilled job, were unemployed or who had left school at 15 or 16, who nevertheless thought immigration had been more positive than negative. While income, employment and education are all important factors associated with attitudes to immigration, they are not the only factors that have an impact.

Ethnicity and country-of-birth

The citizens' panels included migrants and people from minority ethnic backgrounds, with their representation similar to the UK as whole (see appendices). We also held citizens' panels in Milton Keynes and Preston where half the participants were from minority ethnic groups.

In the nationally representative ICM research, those born in the EU tended to give higher scores to the impact question "*on a scale of 1-10 do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK, including your local community?* (Figure 5.2). EU nationals in the citizens' panels also saw migration from the EU in positive terms. They felt that they had benefitted themselves and made an economic contribution through the taxes they paid and the jobs they did. Many were at pains to point out that they had never claimed benefits, and sometimes challenged the view that migrants came to the UK to take advantage of the benefit system.

"I'm Polish, without free movement I wouldn't be here. I'd be at home, taking some benefits in my own country. Here I'm working hard, I'm getting paid, and I don't have to beg for money, I have a chance to grow, get more skills, be more flexible."

Citizens' panel participant, Hull.

Some EU nationals who took part in the citizens' panels expressed strong opinions about refugee protection, believing that the decision by the German and other western European governments to accept refugees in 2015 had negative impacts on local communities. These concerns related to integration, particularly the perception that Muslims posed a threat to common European norms about gender equality. However, in the nationally representative ICM research 61% of migrants from the EU agreed that *"Britain should offer protection to refugees fleeing war and persecution"*, compared with 55% of those born in the UK.

In the ICM research, migrants from outside the EU also had more positive views about the impacts of migration. In the citizens' panels, this group often expressed the view that free movement rules were unfair. Most had direct experience of immigration controls, for example, of applying for a Tier 2 or family visa.

*"I think it is incredibly unfair to be honest to the folk outside of the EU…
I had to do a highly skilled migrant visa to come here and then I had to
switch to a Tier One visa. It's a highly skilled worker visa and you have
to have a job, you had to have a degree, and all these things, had to
be below a certain age, had to show your English qualification blah
blah blah. We got it, well I got in here, and then they said you have
to go for Tier one or Tier Two. To qualify for Tier One, I had to earn
£25,000 a year, which in Harrogate is very hard to come by.
I ended up working three jobs all at once… A lot of people say
'oh you are married to a British person now, it will be alright' but it
isn't because you still have to show that you are earning, show your
payslips to show you are earning so much in a year, and it is an
absolute nightmare."*

Citizens' panel participant, Harrogate.

The nationally representative ICM research shows that those from minority ethnic groups also had more positive views about the impacts of immigration (Figure 5.2). In the citizens' panels, participants from minority ethnic backgrounds were more likely to have experience, directly or indirectly, with the immigration system. We also heard frustrations about the costs and bureaucracy of the system and some told us they felt it could be inconsistent. Some told us that they felt things were different for new migrants now, and that when they had first arrived in the UK in the 1950s and 1960s, there was more incentive to integrate and become part of their local community than there is today.

OPPORTUNITY

In the citizens' panel discussions we found that participants who were more confident about their own opportunities in life were less likely to see immigration as a threat. Those who lived in more deprived areas, as well as participants in less secure and less-well paid work were more likely to feel immigration policy was unfair to them and their local communities.

While we also met many people who confounded this trend, where job security and greater wealth did not always lead to more support for immigration, economic loss was often spoken about in conjunction with anxiety about immigration. In Kidderminster, for example, we were told that *"the good times have gone"*. The loss of traditional industries and the changing nature of work fuelled concerns that migration had depressed wages and undercut working conditions. This citizens' panel also felt employers turned to migrant workers rather than investing in up-skilling local residents.

Similarly, in Grimsby, a town where unemployment is significantly above average, the labour market impacts of immigration were more dominant in our conversation than in other areas visited. Many of the concerns about immigration expressed in this citizens' panel related to wider issues in their lives. These centred around loss: of status and civic pride, secure employment and optimism about the future. When we asked the citizens' panel if they expected the local economy to get better after Brexit, we were told *"it could hardly get worse."*

The citizens' panels have focussed on immigration but participants often told a broader story about dissatisfaction with their own lives. This was especially pronounced in deprived areas where traditional industries had been lost. These were often industries which shaped the identity of a city or town, such as coal and steel in Merthyr Tydfil, footwear in Northampton or fishing in Grimsby. The nature of this work, and sometimes its dangers, forged a strong sense of community and belonging. Participants in these areas were also more likely to express a sense of national identity that was waning, and felt that they had been forced to pander to the sensitivities of migrants.

In many towns and cities across the UK, rapid immigration has taken place alongside the changing nature of work. Places where traditional manufacturing industries once thrived have lost out to globalisation, with factories relocated abroad where labour is cheaper. The UK economy has adapted and new jobs have been created, primarily in the service sector. Many of the new jobs require higher-level qualifications, but many others are low-waged, low-skilled and often insecure, in new industrial sectors such as distribution and logistics and food packing. In many towns and cities there has been a hollowing-out of the centre of the labour market, with the loss of secure, skilled manual jobs at the same time as rapid migration from the EU.

Many of the citizens' panels made an association between the growth of lower-skilled, more precarious and less enjoyable forms of work and immigration. Many participants saw rapid

migration from the EU as causing the undercutting of wages and working conditions. In such cases, concerns about immigration related to their labour market experiences and to wider anxieties about their own wellbeing and career progression.

"Companies have stopped paying their lower paid workers and use these agencies that couldn't care less who they are, as long as they get somebody into this job. They don't care who they are or getting job satisfaction for the people."

Citizens' panel participant, Kidderminster.

LOCAL EXPERIENCES

As we argue in Chapter Four, local experiences have a major impact on how the public views immigration. In many ways, immigration is a national issue seen through a local lens. Where these experiences are largely positive, immigration is seen in a more positive light. Local pressure points such as poorly maintained rental accommodation, street drinking and long waits for GP appointments can shift public views in a more negative direction. We examine perceptions about the local impacts of migration in greater detail in Chapter Twelve.

SOCIAL CONTACT

There is extensive research over many years that suggests that positive social contact with a member of another social group – particularly a group that is often portrayed in negative terms – can reduce negative attitudes to that group, not only for the individual concerned but for the whole group[2930]. Both the nationally representative ICM research (Figure 5.2) and the citizens' panels supported this view.

In the ICM research, those with friends, neighbours or work colleagues who were from minority ethnic communities or were migrants or refugees were more likely to see migration as economically and culturally beneficial. Respondents who had migrants and refugees among their friends, neighbours or work colleagues were more likely to agree (71%) that "migrants bring valuable skills for the economy and public services such as the NHS", than those who did not have such contact with migrants (61%). Respondents who had friends, neighbours or work colleagues of different ethnic backgrounds to themselves were also more likely to agree that diversity as a good thing for British culture (63%) than those who did not have such diversity in their social circle (43%).

Positive social contact with migrants and minorities may reduce anxieties that are held about these groups, so they are not seen as a threat. Social contact can also increase empathy, making people more likely to see life from a migrant's perspective. In the citizens' panels, the discussion about immigration was often more thoughtful and confident in places where the participants had a lot of social contact with migrants. Here we found that people who worked alongside or socialised with migrants often challenged others' stereotypes. We found that where the citizens' panels had positive and sustained social contact with migrants, they were able to base their opinions about migration more on these social interactions and less on 'community narratives' drawn from the media and peer group debate.

In the citizens' panels, where participants had less direct or indirect social contact with migrants such community narratives, which often had their roots in media coverage, had much more sway.

"I live in a very small town. I don't have any visibility of immigration whatsoever, so it's purely based on what you hear in the media really, which is, you know, is biased one way or the other, so it's very difficult to make up a valid opinion based on that."

Citizens' panel participant, Gloucester

There also seem to be some multiplier effects of social contact. For example, having friends who had Polish friends or work colleagues seemed to reduce concerns about Poles and other migrant groups. In some of the citizens' panels, participants talked about their friends' experiences of immigration.

"My friend, he's the area manager of the meat factory and he's in charge of a couple hundred of them like, and a majority of them in Merthyr, and they crack on with it like."

Citizens' panel participant, Merthyr Tydfil.

While positive and sustained social contact with migrants can lead to more positive views about immigration, negative encounters seem to have the opposite effect, particularly for those who have little overall contact with migrants. In academic literature this is referred to as *'inference ladder theory'* where, in the absence of social interaction with members of ethnic minority or migrant groups, a single negative interaction leads to wider generalisations about a particular group and feeds the development of prejudice.

In the citizens' panels, these one-off negative encounters sometimes had a major impact on attitudes and reinforced an underlying view that people from different backgrounds do not mix well. These were often social interactions in public spaces, with litter, parking, street drinking and 'loitering' a source of conflict.

"If they [migrants] smoke they leave the butts on the floor. They leave their rubbish everywhere – they live differently to us and that's why it doesn't work. You see them hanging around in coffee shops all morning- all the women go out to work, the men are just sitting around drinking coffee."

Citizens' panel participant, Northampton.

THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN SHAPING ATTITUDES

Migration has received extensive media coverage over the last 30 years, with asylum a dominant issue throughout the 1990s and in the early years of this century. From 2005 onwards, immigration from the EU was in the spotlight. During the period of the National Conversation on Immigration visits, a number of immigration and integration related events received significant media coverage: the situation in Calais and the Windrush scandal as well as other major events including the terrorist attacks in Manchester and London.

These 'trigger events', such as the terror attacks and the Windrush scandal, were all raised in the citizens' panel discussions. The Manchester and London atrocities in particular, though most were not carried out by migrants, had a strong and sustained impact on the themes and concerns that were raised in the citizens' panels. For a seven-month period from late May 2017 until December 2017, security was a prominent concern of many of those who took part in the citizens' panels. Trigger events are rarely positive, with many of the citizens' panels aware that good news stories about immigration are not newsworthy.

"I only talk about immigration when things go wrong, and there is a bad news story… when it's good news, not that you don't talk about it you just don't notice it. All the doctors, the health service, the teachers as well. There is a lot of good work. But we tend to only talk about immigration when there are problems with immigrants."

Citizens' panel participant, Milton Keynes.

Clearly, media coverage has a major impact on public views about immigration, sometimes for a protracted time period. Although the acceptance by the UK of the age-disputed children and young people from the Calais camps took place in October 2016[31] this issue was raised in 56 of the 60 citizens' panels, right up to our last visits in April 2018. Participants also recounted information from stories that had been covered in broadcast media or local news.

"I don't know if anybody else feels this, but you know when you're watching Crimewatch, it's always foreign people that they're looking for."

Citizens' panel participant, Dumfries.

As we have discussed in Chapter Four, online media sources had a major impact on public views. These included the online media sites of national and local media outlets, blogs, news disseminated by political organisations and pressure groups, local online forums, as well as the individual sharing of content through platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

Sometimes media stories that did not directly relate to immigration influenced the citizens' panel discussions. In January and early February 2018, there was extensive media coverage of the NHS 'winter crisis'. Concerns about the pressures that migration placed on the NHS were raised in all the citizens' panels.

It was not only stories, but also images that had an impact on the citizens' panels' views. These often related to the Mediterranean crisis and flows of migrants across Europe, as well as images of clandestine migration, groups of young men, and the camps at Calais. Certain emotive images, such as pictures of Alan Kurdi, the Syrian toddler found drowned on a beach, were well known and were referenced during many citizens' panel discussions.

Some media stories resonated strongly and were remembered by those who took part in the citizens' panels, for example the age disputed children from Calais. Other media coverage had little impact. For example, we undertook citizens' panels on four of the days that quarterly migration statistics were published in February 2017, May 2017, December 2017 and February 2018. Although these migration statistics received prominent media coverage in national broadcast media and tabloid and broadsheet press, we estimated that only one in ten of the participants could recollect this coverage. This suggests that a filtering process applies to information on immigration. Participants mainly absorbed and remembered stories about immigration policy when they supported the narratives they told themselves about immigration, a process known as cognitive bias[32]. Media stories about age disputed young people arriving in the UK from Calais were remembered because they resonated with a narrative that not all asylum-seekers are genuine.

We were also likely to hear narratives from media and social media when these were grounded through direct or indirect experience. For example, where participants heard different languages being spoken in doctors' waiting rooms, this reinforced media stories about health tourism or pressures placed on the NHS by immigration.

This filtering or cognitive bias is of relevance to business advocates of immigration reform and civil society organisations who work with migrants and refugees. Rebuttals of media coverage and 'myth busting' exercises are rarely effective in changing attitudes. The public tend to disbelieve statistics or facts that run counter to their personal narratives and worldview.

The trustworthiness of the media

In the UK, media coverage about immigration has often been noisy and polarised. As might be expected, print, broadcast and online media were all important sources of information on immigration for the citizens' panels, although many participants were sceptical about the accuracy of many stories. In almost all the citizens' panels, participants felt that much media coverage was sensationalised.

– *"People believe everything they read."*
– *"Stopping the newspapers printing absolute nonsense like saying 56 billion West African pickpockets in London or nonsense like that."*
– *"But unfortunately, people believe it, don't they?"*
– *"They do because it's in the papers."*
– *"And then they click on the share button and it's out there, so it only needs a few of their friends to share it, and it goes global."*

Dialogue between citizens' panel participants, Aberystwyth.

The nationally representative ICM research reflected this mistrust of media sources on immigration. Respondents were asked how much they trusted different sources of information to tell the truth on immigration (Table 5.3). Over a quarter of people (26%) told us that they felt social media never told the truth on immigration and nearly a fifth (18%) of people felt that newspapers never told the truth. Television was slightly more trusted as a source, but only 26% of people felt that television coverage told the truth all or most of the time. Local news was a more trusted source, as 34% of respondents felt it told the truth all or most of the time.

Table 5.3 For each of the following sources of information about immigration, how much do you trust each to tell the truth?

	Tell the truth all of the time	Tell the truth most of the time	Tell the truth sometimes	Never tell the truth	Don't know
Members of Parliament	2%	11%	51%	28%	8%
The Government	3%	14%	48%	28%	7%
Your local council	3%	20%	47%	17%	12%
Television	3%	23%	55%	12%	7%
National newspapers	3%	17%	55%	18%	7%
Local news	4%	30%	48%	9%	9%
Social media	2%	8%	52%	26%	12%
Business leaders	2%	16%	53%	18%	12%
Academics/experts	7%	40%	36%	6%	10%

N=3,667. Source: Nationally representative ICM research.

Some 53% of respondents in the nationally representative ICM research agreed that migrants faced discrimination in the media and on social media. While agreeing that media coverage was biased and sensationalist, some citizens recounted stories which had been drawn from media coverage and were inaccurate or distorted. Many citizens' panels adopted this position of stating that media coverage was distorted but also recounting media-derived stories.

Clearly, the media plays an important role in influencing attitudes. Despite scepticism about its truth and accuracy, the views of many participants in the citizens' panels had been influenced by media content. Achieving a consensus on immigration is made more difficult by some media coverage.

There are guidelines against hate speech which apply to all broadcast, print and online media. Some of the responsibility for dealing with online hatred sits with the technology companies who have sometimes been slow to take down hate speech. The Government needs to address this. In the UK, broadcast and print media are subject to some regulation, through bodies such as Ofcom, IMPRESS and the Independent Press Standards Organisation. These organisations have taken action against biased and inaccurate media content, as does the UK Statistics Authority, which guards against the misuse of official statistics.

Retractions and corrections, however, tend to be printed as small stories in less-read sections of newspapers. They can therefore have only a minor effect in addressing the impressions given by a front-page headline shared tens of thousands of times. Much greater impact will be likely from a commitment to a robust but responsible editorial stance that seeks to avoid inaccuracy and approaches that stoke up prejudice.

Much media coverage about immigration does not breech hate speech guidelines. Moreover, a free press underpins democracy and any moves to close down media debate about immigration would be highly undesirable. The media plays a vital role in our democracy in holding government to account, including for mistakes and poor performance in immigration policy, such as failures to meet the net migration target or deport foreign criminals.

Civil society refugee protection and migrants' rights advocates will also need to become more adept at working with the media to reach audiences who are not already onside. This should include greater efforts to place positive stories in media outlets that are not typically sympathetic to immigration.

In many cases, bias and inaccuracy lie not so much with initial media coverage about immigration, but in how it is embellished among peer groups and online, turning into a 'community narrative'. The National Conversation on Immigration shows that positive social contact with migrants helps build resistance to such community narratives taking hold, by enabling the public to base their opinions on migration more on these social interactions, and less on commonly repeated tropes.

6. Contribution

Contribution was a common theme in all the citizens' panel discussions. Participants want the migrants who come to the UK to make a contribution, through the jobs they do and the skills that they bring, through their contribution to their local communities and culturally, mostly through food. Migrants who were not seen as contributors were viewed less positively.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONTRIBUTION

Although migrants' 'contribution' is usually seen in economic terms, many citizens' panels also felt that migrants had made a social and cultural contribution to their local communities and to the UK. A few of the participants described the social contribution that migrants had made through their involvement in local community life, as volunteers or as good neighbours.

In many citizens' panels, participants also felt that migrants had enriched the cultural life of the UK, making their local communities more interesting places to live.

> *"I think it [migration] brings diversity... why do we all want to be clones of your quintessential English person?"*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, March.

In places such as Bradford and Leicester, the cultural contribution of migrants had fed into an inclusive civic pride and identity. In Southampton, we were told that Polish migration had led to the regeneration of previously deprived parts of the city, with some participants now enjoying visiting the shops that had sprung up.

This cultural contribution of migrants was most usually seen in relation to food, shops, the appearance of the high street and public events such as Caribbean carnivals and Mela festivals held around the UK. At least half the citizens' panels mentioned food as one of the benefits of that immigration had brought to the UK. Younger people were more likely to mention food, shops and broader cultural enrichment as benefits of migration, although such sentiments were expressed by people of all ages.

> *"There was someone on the telly who came from Syria and within five months they set up a halloumi shop in Yorkshire. Except you can't call it halloumi, you have to call it squeaky Yorkshire cheese, and they're employing people, so I think migration is a good thing. Like my parents came from Ireland and people came from East Africa and came from India, then from Pakistan, and then people came from the Caribbean and now people have come from Poland and Lithuania and other countries. It just makes Leicester a good place really. You know just going down the road it's quite entertaining, you see people, all sorts. It's a diverse city."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Leicester.

A small number of participants in the citizens' panels were unsettled by seeing new shops in their high street, or they disliked specific types of food brought to the UK by migrants. But they comprised a minority of participants.

Overall, the citizens' panels divided into those who were enthusiastic about the cultural contribution of migrants and those who had no strong opinions. This division was evident in the nationally representative ICM research, with 60% of respondents agreeing that "diversity is a good thing for British culture", but nearly a quarter (23%) neither able to agree nor disagree. The under 45s, those in social grades A, B and C1 and those who live in large cities where all more likely to see diversity as positive.

However, it was in relation to EU referendum choices where there was the biggest difference between those who agreed that "diversity is a good thing for British culture" and those who did not.

Some 78% of Remain voters agreed with this statement, 16% were neutral or did not know and 6% disagreed. Of Leave voters, 38% agreed that diversity was good for British culture, 32% were neutral or did not know and 30% disagreed. These findings support other research about the social characteristics of Leave and Remain voters in relation to their propensity to cultural conservativism.

ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION

While some participants mentioned social and cultural factors, contribution was more often raised in relation to the economic contribution that migrants make through the skills they bring, the jobs they do and through taxation. The citizens' panels saw immigration as being positive when migrants brought skills and undertook work of strategic importance to the UK. The contribution that migrants make to the NHS was mentioned in all citizens' panels and often by people who had some major concerns about other aspects of immigration.

> *"I'm a bit so-so about immigration. If you think about the NHS, all the consultants, a lot of the staff are foreign, that's a positive. But the negatives are that you get immigrants living on benefits."*

Citizens' panel participant, North Tyneside.

Highly-skilled migrants were seen as bringers of much-needed skills to the UK. Typically, the citizens' panels saw highly-skilled migrants as doctors and nurses, engineers and scientists, as well as those undertaking skilled manual work, such as carpenters or electricians. As we set out in Chapter Nine, the citizens' panels, nationally representative ICM research and the open survey showed much support for highly-skilled migration and only a minority of people wanted to reduce their numbers. Even in the open survey, a third of whose respondents were people with the most negative views about all migration, 81% of respondents were happy for the numbers of highly-skilled migrants from the EU to be increased or remain at the same level.

> *"I look at my own job, I work in a team of eight people, work on a trading floor, it's quite a high-level job and I'm the only English person there. So, it's not just the low paid jobs, it's not just people coming over, it's actually a lot of foreigners come over and bringing value."*

Citizens' panel participant, Hammersmith and Fulham.

The citizens' panels had positive views about migrants who undertook intermediate skilled jobs such as care workers. However, participants had ambivalent views about migrants who came to do low-skilled jobs, which were typically seen as manual labour, routine jobs in manufacturing and distribution, cleaning and farm work. A sizeable number of those who took part in the citizens panels wanted their numbers to be reduced and for the UK Government to have greater control over immigration by this group. In the nationally representative ICM research some 45% of respondents wanted to reduce low-skilled migration from the EU and just 12% wanted numbers to be increased. There were also concerns raised about the impacts of rapid, low-skilled migration – on wages, employment conditions, public services and on neighbourhoods where large numbers of migrant workers live in private rental accommodation. Migrants doing low-skilled work were also seen as a group who had less command of the English language.

At the same time the work ethic of some migrants from the EU – particularly Polish nationals – was praised, with other national groups sometimes described in less favourable terms than *"hard-working Poles"*.

> *"For a place like Harrogate…the hotel work for instance is very hard work, unsocial hours and long shifts….if you go into any hotel in Harrogate behind the scenes, ever so many Polish, and these hotels run exceptionally well and these Polish people work exceptionally hard."*

Citizens' panel participant, Harrogate.

In the ICM research, 63% of respondents agreed that *"migrant workers support the economy by doing jobs that British people don't want to do"*. This view was reflected in the citizens' panels, which saw migrants making an economic contribution by undertaking low-skilled work that British

citizens were unwilling to do, such as fruit-picking. While 45% of respondents to the nationally representative ICM research wanted to reduce the numbers of generic low-skilled workers, this figure dropped to 23% when specific 'useful' jobs were named, such as fruit-pickers.

"Now the farming community, where you are looking at fruit picking for example, our native population is not interested in doing it. The immigrants from Europe come in and do the picking…without it a lot of farms will struggle."

Citizens' panel participant, Gloucester.

While migrants were undertaking work that British nationals did not want to, some of those who took part in the citizens' panels believed these jobs should be done by the local unemployed, or students during vacations. This view was more prevalent in areas of higher unemployment and also expressed vociferously in the open survey. Many people held the view that there are large numbers of British residents who were unwilling to work and would rather claim benefits.

– *"I think it would make those people on the dole get up and actually get a job."*
– *"The thing is they're doing jobs that we don't want to do, it's been happening since the 60s."*
– *"People on dole are getting paid more than people who are actually working, I think people like that should be made to work when there's nothing wrong with them."*

A dialogue between citizens' panel participants, Dumfries.

Despite concerns about low-skilled migration, there was little personal resentment towards migrants undertaking low-skilled work, as they were seen as contributors. As the discussion in many citizens' panels progressed, participants who had initially voiced more negative views about immigration would offer more positive views when important and 'useful' jobs were named, and they acknowledged that most migrants from the EU were working. The extract below came from a participant who initially thought that immigration had been largely negative in terms of its impacts on the UK:

"I think if they come here, they want to work. Great. They come here, they want to scrounge, sod off – they can do it somewhere else. You come here, you're looking for work, you attempt to work, support your family."

Citizens' panel participant, Shrewsbury.

Overall, detailed and often abstract economic arguments about the fiscal and macroeconomic contribution that migrants make to the UK economy did not resonate with the citizens' panels. In the 60 citizens' panels, just two participants quoted such economic research. Rather, economic contribution is seen through a 'common sense' fiscal lens, with participants having positive views about migrants who pay their taxes, bring vital skills and fill vacancies and negative views about those who work off the books, send money home or come to the UK to claim benefits. Such 'common sense' economics often emerged in the process of discussion.

CONTRIBUTORY WELFARE

Although all the citizens' panels acknowledged the economic contribution that migrants made through their employment, many participants had concerns that not all migrants were contributors. The view that some migrants came to the UK to take advantage of the welfare system was one that was widely held in many parts of the UK.

"I'm all for if somebody's contributing to the system, then I think they have a right to live in this country. We let them in and they're contributing, fine. But if there are people here who are not contributing to the system then they should go back to their country. It's not trying to be too harsh, but I think we need people who are contributing, we can't have people sucking the land dry so to speak, really I think people should be contributing."

Citizens' panel participant, Sutton Coldfield.

Concerns about welfare dependency tended to be more widely held in deprived areas. In a few citizens' panels this view has been so strong that we have asked about participants' sources of information on the 'pull' of benefits. Five factors appear to have informed their views.

First, the flight of refugees across Europe has reinforced the view that this group is drawn to the UK through the generosity of its benefits system.

Second, there has been a steady stream of tabloid media stories about migrants and benefits, with coverage usually involving 'undeserving' parents and a large number of children who are housed in temporary accommodation in a wealthy part of London. Such accounts are also widely circulated on social media.

Third, groups of (usually male) migrants who are seen in cafes or loitering on the streets during the day are almost always perceived as unemployed. They may be asylum-seekers who are not allowed to work, but they may also be shift workers taking time off during the day.

Fourth, some of those who attended the citizens' panels had recent experience of receiving benefits or undertaking precarious work. The prevalence of zero hours contracts or agency work in locations such as Merthyr Tydfil and Grimsby led to some citizens' panels feeling that migrant workers – like the local population – could easily lose their jobs and be forced to claim benefits. In some cases, participants' own difficulties negotiating the welfare system appear to have led to resentment and the view that migrants receive preferential access to benefits.

Fifth, most of those who have taken part in the citizens' panels have little or no knowledge of the current free movement rules, and do not know that there are restrictions that prevent EU migrants claiming benefits in the UK until they have been judged to be habitually resident[33]. Instead, most participants believe that 'free movement' means that an EU national can move to the UK and immediately receive benefits. Former Prime Minister David Cameron's failure to implement a 2015 Conservative Manifesto commitment and the EU's refusal to agree to restrict access to in-work benefits, tax credits, child benefits and social housing appears to have reinforced a public view that EU nationals have immediate access to benefits.

In many citizens' panels, participants expressed a desire for a welfare system with a greater contributory element "*where you get out what you put in*". When asked what policy changes would help to rebuild their trust in the Government's management of immigration, a significant number of people wanted a contributory principle to be embedded in the immigration system.

"If you come over, whether you are an EU citizen or whoever you are, you can get working benefits and tax credits. I think for people who have lived here for a long time, if you've put money into the pot then you should be entitled to it. I have an issue with people coming over who haven't put into the pot and they're just coming over and, all of a sudden, they are able to get the benefits that people who put into the pot for a long time could get. I think that was an issue that Cameron before the referendum went over to fix and said we'll try and block it."

Citizens' panel participant, Wrexham.

In the nationally representative ICM research and the open survey we asked how long migrants (excluding asylum-seekers and refugees) should have to be working and paying tax in the UK before they became eligible for benefits and social housing. Table 6.1 shows the response of the nationally representative ICM research. A majority (59%) settled for between one and five years. This suggests that public opinion is more generous than policy in relation to benefits for non-EU nationals but less generous in relation to EU nationals. Currently, it would take a minimum of five years for a non-EU migrant with a Tier 2 work visa to obtain settled status (indefinite leave to remain) and become entitled to benefits. However, an EU national can receive in- and out-of-work benefits if they are judged to be 'habitually resident' in the UK. As well as showing that the UK is their permanent home, an EU national needs to have lived in the UK for more than three months. Out-of-work benefits for EU nationals are restricted to three months.

Table 6.1 How long should migrants, excluding asylum seekers and refugees, be working and paying tax in the UK before they are eligible for benefits and social housing?

12 months or less	11%
1-3 years	30%
3-5 years	29%
6-10 years	9%
More than 10 years	9%
Only UK citizens should be eligible for benefits and social housing	15%

Source: ICM nationally-representative research. N=3,667.

LOCAL SPENDING AND REMITTANCES

Many discussions on welfare and contribution often focused on child benefit and, in particular, the rules which allow child benefit to be sent to other EU countries. The citizens' panels saw this as a drain on the public purse, at a time when other areas of public spending were being cut. Participants also felt that this money should be spent in the UK.

> *"There are a lot of silly rules that can be abused so, for example, a foreign national who lives in the UK can claim child benefit for kids that don't live in the UK, which is a massive abuse. I've no issues with the children in the other country. But if they're claiming child benefit for a family and children [who] aren't in this country, that's a lot of money that we're wasting."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Hull.

Some participants knew that some of their migrant colleagues saved money from their wages to send to their families in their countries of origin. This transfer of remittances was judged to be one of the negative aspects of immigration, as the money that migrant workers earned was not spent in the local area. Conversely, international students were seen in a positive light, as they spent money in the places where they were studying.

> *"Overseas students coming to UK universities, I want to see them increased. If they're coming over here they're probably wealthy, so then all the money goes to the area."*
>
> Citizens panel participant, Middlesbrough.

CONCLUSIONS

The citizens' panels had little knowledge about the complex regulations that prevent EU nationals from accessing benefits until they are judged to be habitually resident in the UK. They were also unaware of the academic analysis that shows that most recent EU migrants are in work. Media coverage of the academic evidence about fiscal, labour market and overall economic impacts of migration had largely not been understood and assimilated by members of the citizens' panels. At the same time, participants were aware of the Dublin regulations which oblige asylum-seekers to lodge their application in the first EU member state that they enter. This suggests 'cognitive bias', a phenomenon we discussed in Chapter Five, with the citizens' panels only remembering and absorbing facts about immigration and immigration policy which resonate with their own personal narratives on this issue. It means that complex, micro-policy changes on benefit entitlement may have little impact on changing attitudes and securing a consensus.

Instead, we should be looking towards a more open debate and public dialogue as a means of securing a consensus. In the citizens' panels an agreement that migrants undertaking low-skilled work were contributors emerged during the course of the discussion.

7. Control and trust

Control was a key theme of all the citizens' panels. Many participants wanted migration to be 'controlled' and many of the concerns they held about immigration centred on sovereignty and the UK government's lack of control over EU migration flows, or views that immigration regulations were not enforced.

The perception that some migration flows are 'uncontrolled' has impacted on attitudes to migration and damaged public trust in the Government's ability to manage this area of policy. We found overall trust in the Government and in politicians to be very low among our citizens' panel participants and in the nationally representative research conducted by ICM. This lack of trust in politicians to manage migration adds to a broader mistrust of politicians and politics.

WHAT 'CONTROL' MEANS

When asked what would restore their trust in the Government's ability to manage migration, many of those who took part in the citizens' panels simply stated: "*more control*". For the most part, the citizens' panels wanted the Government to exercise greater control over migration flows, but control meant a mixture of things to participants. These included:

- UK sovereignty over immigration policy;
- A selective migration system which makes sure that all new migrants are able to support themselves financially and contribute to the economy;
- Better data and information on who is in the UK;
- A clear and well-communicated 'plan' or strategy for immigration, which matches immigration to the needs of the economy and makes sure that there are fewer strains placed on public services;
- Control over numbers of migrants and the rate of immigration;
- Tighter security controls: criminal record checks and vetting of all potential migrants;
- Competent immigration enforcement.

The migration of EU nationals under free movement rules was seen as the prime example of 'uncontrolled' migration over which the Government had no say. UK sovereignty over immigration policy was a key demand of some participants, who wanted the Government afforded the power to select who is admitted to the UK.

> *"I don't think that the system we've got at the moment is correct. I think it's an open border policy, which is wrong, it has been controlled by Europe. We haven't got a say in it, we've got people like Juncker who we can't vote to get out."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Sutton

Feelings that migration from the EU is 'uncontrolled' and unselective were magnified when the citizens' panels encountered local problems such as street drinking or pressures on public services.

> *"It's the quality of immigration, not the immigration itself that's the problem. And it needs to be controlled. It needs to be capped at a certain level. Because at the end of the day, there's only limited resources and there's only limited housing for all the immigrants."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Bolton.

The strong visual image of the movement of refugees across European borders had also reinforced a view that immigration was uncontrolled.

Undocumented migration was a concern raised spontaneously in some citizens' panels. As discussed in Chapter Eight, undocumented or irregular migrants were largely understood to be clandestine entrants rather than visa overstayers, and were closely associated with criminality. Media

images of migrants climbing security fences at Calais and hiding in freight had added to a view that immigration was not controlled.

> *"There's thousands of containers coming in every single day, they can't check every single one of them. But it's happened quite often where they've found a group of illegal immigrants that come out of containers right down the road. But you still can't check every single one."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Ipswich.

Most citizens' panels associated control with competent immigration enforcement. High profile policy failures such as the Windrush scandal or the failure to remove foreign national offenders from the UK added to a sense that regulations were not enforced. Control was sometimes viewed through a local lens, particularly in relation to cases where undocumented migrants had been found in the local area.

Some citizens' panels voiced major concerns about security and migrant criminality. The arrival in the UK of age-disputed children from Calais in October 2015 was raised spontaneously in 56 of the 60 citizens' panels. This was seen as a security threat and evidence of a lack of vetting. For most citizens' panels, 'control' entailed vetting and criminal record checks for would-be migrants.

For a significant number of people, control was associated with caps or quotas on numbers. But many of the citizens' panels were equally concerned that data on immigration is inaccurate and that the Government has no clear idea of who lives in the UK, legally or illegally. This spoke to people's concerns about contribution, criminality and security, and controlling the rate and pace of immigration.

Others felt that the UK had no clear plan for immigration. Control meant a system where immigration was matched to the needs of the economy, and spending on public services kept pace with population growth.

> *"It's best to have a structure in place, where we perhaps account for what we are going to do and the amount of people this country needs."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Edinburgh.

THE AUSTRALIAN POINTS-BASED SYSTEM

When control emerged as a theme in the discussion, some participants referred to their own experiences at international borders or when travelling to other counties. Most of the citizens' panels felt that border control at UK airports was secure. Rather, they felt that the problems lay with those who evaded control as clandestine entrants, with ineffective enforcement and that the immigration system was insufficiently selective.

Some participants felt that the United States had a better controlled immigration system, basing their judgement on applying for visas and visiting this country. Criminal record checks and visible security measures at ports of entry added to perceptions that the United States had a better controlled immigration system.

For many of the citizens' panels, the Australian points-based system typified a well-controlled immigration system. In all 60 citizens' panels, participants have argued for an Australian-style points-based system, which appeared to be shorthand for a controlled and selective immigration system that meets the economy's needs. This was something most participants felt that they did not have with EU free movement.

"I think bring in something like the Australian system. They've got it right to be honest. You can't really move to Australia unless you've got some kind of trade or education, that you can bring to the country. For example, I had a friend who's a barber, he's not a rocket scientist but that's how he was able to go because he could provide a service in Australia."

Citizens' panel participant, Knowsley.

In the citizens' panels many more people have heard about the Australian points-based system than the UK's net migration target. For many participants, this was based on their experience of applying for visas when visiting or migrating to Australia, or having friends and family who had done so. It is much harder to get an Australian work visa for low-skilled jobs, and visa applicants to Australia also have to declare any criminal record. The emphasis on criminal record checks and visibly high levels of bio-security at ports of entry into Australia also give an impression of tighter border control than in the UK. These factors mean that the 'Australian points-based system' has come to exemplify a well-controlled immigration system that the UK has not yet achieved.

PAYING FOR IMMIGRATION CONTROL

Evidence from the citizens' panels shows that failures of immigration enforcement add to a view that immigration is uncontrolled and damage trust in the Government to manage immigration. Many stakeholders we met were concerned about delays and backlogs in the system, as well as poor quality decision-making by the Home Office. Effective immigration control costs money to deliver, however, and successive spending reviews have imposed budget cuts on the Home Office.

Just under half (48%) of respondents in the nationally representative ICM research felt that increasing the Home Office budget would give them more confidence in the Government's ability to manage migration into the UK. While the citizens' panels clearly wanted more robust immigration control, this would inevitably mean increasing the Home Office budget, something that could only be achieved by diverting the spend of other departments or increasing taxation.

We wanted to explore the trade-off between more robust immigration controls and higher taxation, asking each citizens' panel if they would be willing to pay £5 more each year in tax per year for better Home Office technology and more immigration officers. It was made clear that the high-waged would pay more and those with low incomes would pay less. About half of those who took part in the citizens' panels stated that they would be happy to pay a little more through taxation if it meant better immigration control. But there were many objections to this proposal. Some participants felt that the Government wasted money, so the Home Office budget could be increased by making reductions to spending in other areas, with defence and MPs' expenses popular choices for cuts. Others felt that the Home Office was a lower priority for extra expenditure than the NHS.

"My priorities would not be with the immigration system. It would be with the NHS, or social care, the amount of homes and disability places that have been closed down. My mum works in social care, she says at the minute it's been cut to shreds…I'd rather spend my £5 there."

Citizens' panel participant, Wolverhampton

Many of those who took part in the citizens' panels did not trust the Home Office to spend its money wisely and were not confident that additional financial resources would necessarily lead to better immigration control. There was a belief that the tax system was unfair and it was the wealthy who should pay more, not the 'average' person.

"I am objecting to giving any more money. I'd agree to better technology and better equipment, but why should it come out of my pocket? I'm sorry, as a taxpayer, I pay a lot of tax. I feel like I'm paying my share, when the Googles and the Amazons are not even paying a fraction of what they're supposed to be paying."

Citizens' panel participant, Preston.

The public clearly want competent immigration control, but this comes at a cost. There is a clear need for a more open and honest debate on this issue and for politicians to acknowledge that the level of border controls that the public wants will entail a larger Home office budget, and ultimately greater taxation.

TRUST

Perceptions that immigration control is not enforced have led to a lack of trust in the Government to manage immigration and a broader lack of trust in politicians. This theme was expressed in all the citizens' panels. Just 15% of respondents in the nationally representative ICM research felt that the Government had managed immigration into the UK competently and fairly. Only 14% of respondents agreed that *"politicians have shown strong leadership on immigration."* Younger people, graduates, those from higher social grades, Remain voters, those who lived in large cities, migrants and people from minority ethnic communities were more likely to agree that the Government had managed immigration into the UK competently and fairly – with 29% of those of Black ethnicity agreeing with this statement. Although there were Leave-Remain differences (10% to 17%), only 15% of Labour voters (GE 2017) and 15% of Conservative voters agreed that the Government had managed immigration into the UK competently and fairly.

But mistrust over immigration was also linked to a broader mistrust of politicians, that they only engaged with the electorate during election campaigns, that politicians were "in it for themselves" or were not held accountable for their mistakes. In the nationally representative ICM research, just 13% of respondents trusted MPs to tell the truth most or all of the time.

"The Government, I don't trust them, they're just money grabbers. Even if you vote Labour, they're all public school educated, they're not interested, they've all got their nose in the trough, they've got no interest. I think this Brexit thing has caught them totally off guard."

Citizens' panel participant, Hull.

Over-promising on immigration enforcement

As noted above, citizens' panels did not trust the Government to enforce immigration policy competently or follow through policy commitments. There was much criticism of politicians who over-promised on immigration control, then failed to deliver what they had pledged. High profile policy failures such as the Windrush scandal, failure to deport foreign national prisoners and failure to meet the net migration target added to political mistrust.

"There is all this talk, talk, talk about immigration, then nothing gets done. We just lose confidence and go round in circles… the system is wholly inadequate."

Citizens' panel participant, Aberystwyth.

Misuse of statistics

Perceptions about the misuse of statistics by both sides in the EU referendum campaign had added to feelings of mistrust and that the public were being duped on immigration.

"In the Brexit vote, we were told lies, one paper says one figure, another newspaper says another. I have no faith, not even in the civil servants who handle the figures. I don't think politicians want to give us the truth, they manipulate them [statistics]."

Citizens' panel participant, Ballymena.

Many participants felt that politicians had tried to shut down debate about immigration, or had used biased or inaccurate statistics when talking about the issue. Citizens' panels were also sceptical about politicians using the issue of immigration for party political advantage:

"We want a bit of honesty and not politicising immigration so much. It'll be a good day when they actually tell us the truth instead of what they want us to hear… Less politicising – a lot of good bills and good debate is shut down because people follow party lines."

Citizens' panel participant, Northampton.

The net migration target

The net migration target was seen to exemplify a statistic that had been used for party political advantage. We found that in each citizens' panel only one or two people had heard of the net migration target[34], whereby the Government committed to reduce net migration to under 100,000. But among those who had heard of this policy, failure to deliver on this commitment had further damaged trust in the Government's ability to manage immigration.

"I just think they said something that people wanted to hear. They've not actually done anything about it."

Citizens' panel participant, Enfield.

The net migration target is one of the Government's headline immigration policies. It is also a policy that has faced considerable opposition, mostly from business, universities and civil society organisations working with refugees. These groups argue that the net migration target has set the over-arching aim of immigration policy as a reduction in numbers. Because of its importance as a government policy, we asked the citizens' panels, the open survey and in the nationally representative ICM research whether this target should be retained, replaced with a more flexible system of targets, or whether the Government should not set targets at all. Most of those who took part in the citizens' panels wanted a more flexible system and different targets for different types of immigration, a view that was also supported in the nationally representative ICM research.

Table 7.1 Which one of the following do you most agree with

The Government should keep the net migration target	21%
The Government should have different targets and approaches for dealing with different kinds of immigration i.e. different for higher skilled and lower-skilled migrant workers, overseas students etc.	57%
The Government should not set targets for immigration	10%
Don't know	11%

N=3,667. Source: Nationally representative ICM research.

RESTORING TRUST IN THE IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

Clearly, trust in the Government's ability to manage immigration is low. There is clearly a need to address this issue and put in place an immigration system in which the public can have greater confidence. The last question we posed in each of the citizens' panels asked what changes they would like the Government to make in order to be afforded this trust. Responses could be grouped into the following themes:

- Greater transparency about policy and statistics;
- Increased political accountability, with politicians held responsible for their mistakes;
- Delivering on policy commitments;
- Greater democratic engagement and a change to political culture, with genuine dialogue between politicians and the electorate;
- Control over numbers and greater selectivity over who is admitted to the UK;
- More competent immigration enforcement;
- Better ways to deal with the local impacts of immigration;
- Greater integration, with support to help migrants speak English and become part of their local communities.

Changing politics

About half of the changes that the citizens' panels wanted were related to the broader way that politics is done, with demands for greater transparency, more openness, greater accountability and a commitment to follow through policy commitments.

> *"It can't be one thing for the population and another thing for the people in government. If they've done something wrong they should be banned, just like everybody else would. Transparency is the way to deal with that but then how can you trust the supposed transparency? It's difficult."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Aberdeen.

Greater transparency and more information were also changes that the citizens' panels felt would restore trust. Participants wanted clearer and more accessible information on immigration. In some citizens' panels we discussed how this information might be communicated, with participants suggesting an independent website where policy and statistics were set out clearly and without jargon.

> *"I don't think there's enough information readily available, unless you can look up white papers and this sort of thing, about what's going on. It's not given to you in basic English… you've got to really, really look for it. We're not given the facts really enough about what goes on."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Yeovil.

Greater political accountability was also a demand of some citizens' panels, with ministers and officials who failed to deliver on policy required to face sanctions. In the nationally representative ICM research we asked if the Government's performance should be reviewed through an annual Migration Day in Parliament. Respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed that "the Government's performance on migration should be reviewed every year, through an annual migration day in Parliament which should involve consulting members of the public." 61% agreed and 12% disagreed with this proposal.

> *"We need a clear defined plan* [for migration], *it's got to be transparent, it has got to be visible, it's got to be monitored."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Gloucester.

Many of the citizens' panels also wanted broader changes to the political culture and greater democratic engagement. Participants wanted to be heard by politicians, and to feel that their opinions were valued, rather than only being addressed at election time.

> *"I think there are far too many one-sided conversations between the Government, not just the current one but generally the way that politicians and the Government talks down to people and doesn't listen and hear and respond."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Exeter.

Changing immigration policy

The citizens' panels also suggested changes to immigration policy, many of which focussed on control and enforcement. Many wanted criminal checks and security vetting. A few participants wanted controls over numbers, but a more common sentiment was the desire for the UK government (and in a few cases the Scottish Government) to have sovereignty over immigration. Many participants saw the introduction of an Australian-style, points-based system as the policy change that would win their trust. In a few cases, participants also argued for greater fairness and compassion in the immigration system. At the same time, knowledge of immigration policy is patchy and selective, indicating that changes to immigration policy alone will be insufficient in rebuilding public trust.

Dealing with local issues

Many of those who took part in the citizens' panels also wanted local changes. For some participants, making sure that rapid immigration did not put more pressure on public services and housing was key to winning their support and trust. Some 57% of respondents in the nationally representative ICM research felt that "better ways of dealing with the local impacts of migration on housing and public services" would make them more confident in the Government's handling of migration (Table 7.2). Making sure migrants could speak English and policies that increased social integration were also key to winning trust for some citizens.

"Help those in need, and deal with the problems with illegal immigrants. We need to be more inclusive, we need to welcome people and make them feel part of society. I don't want people living on the periphery and not involved. I know it's going to be difficult."

Citizens' panel participant, Aberdeen.

Table 7.2 For each of the following, please tell us whether it would make you more or less confident, or would make no difference, in the ability of the Government to manage migration into the UK?

	A lot more confident	A little more confident	No difference	A little less confident	A lot less confident	Don't Know
A simple and independent website that sets out statistics, government policy, and its performance	14%	34%	35%	5%	2%	10%
A system where the UK government had more control over the numbers of migrants coming to the UK	25%	33%	23%	7%	3%	9%
Increasing the Home Office budget so it can employ more immigration officers and make better use of technology	14%	34%	31%	6%	3%	10%
Better ways of dealing with the local impacts of migration on housing and public services	17%	40%	26%	5%	3%	9%
Better support to help migrants integrate and become part of their local communities	14%	33%	33%	7%	4%	9%
Government ministers held to account and were forced to resign if they make serious mistakes	28%	33%	22%	5%	3%	8%

N=3,667. Source: Nationally representative ICM research.

COMING TO A CONSENSUS

Politicians now have to square the public's desire for control and selectivity over future EU migration, with employers' need for high- and low-skilled workers. The public do see the need for such migration, but they want it to be regulated. The Government needs to consider the features of a future EU migration system, and address other issues, in order to make the public feel that the Government has immigration under control.

Perceptions that regulations are not enforced, as well as high profile policy failures, have damaged public trust in the Government's ability to manage immigration in a competent and fair manner. But mistrust on immigration sits within a wider context of political mistrust and the perception that politicians do not listen and only act in the interests of the City of London and the elite – both in relation to immigration and wider economic issues.

Restoring public trust in the immigration system needs to be a Government priority. This will only be achieved by:

- Introducing regulations covering migration from the EU;
- Improving the performance of the Home Office;
- Replacing the net migration target;
- Dealing with the local impacts of immigration and investing in integration;
- Institutionalising public engagement on immigration; and
- Building greater transparency and accountability into the immigration system.

8. Fairness and decency

As well as control and contribution, fairness and decency were themes that emerged from the citizens' panels. Participants want immigration policy to be fair to migrants and to receiving communities. They also wanted an open and decent immigration debate and for their views to be heard. Views about fairness and decency underpinned how the citizens' panels saw the immigration debate.

A FAIR IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

While the citizens' panels wanted immigration to be controlled, they also wanted policy to be flexible, fair and humane. 'Fairness' was a central theme of the discussions.

The participants wanted refugees fleeing war and persecution to be treated fairly and compassionately – we examine refugee protection in greater detail in Chapter Eleven.

In the citizens' panels we presented participants with a range of policy choices for EU migration after Brexit and asked participants to indicate in a voting pack which option they preferred. Most people rejected temporary visa regimes for EU nationals, as they felt these would be unfair by stopping people putting down roots and settling. In this exercise, many people voted for a system that treated EU and non-EU migrants in the same way, because this was perceived to be 'fairer'. We examine this issue in more detail in Chapter Nine.

The treatment of the 'Windrush' generation received much media coverage towards the end of the National Conversation on Immigration. The final citizens' panel, in Bedford, included some participants who thought that migration had more negative than positive impacts, yet the Bedford citizens' panel unanimously thought the treatment of the 'Windrush Britons' was unfair. Some of the most vocal support for the Windrush group came from participants who were sceptical about many other aspects of immigration.

> *"What about what they're doing now to the Jamaicans that came over here and fought in the war, they've got no passports, and they want to send them all back?"*

Citizens' panel participant, Bedford.

The Bedford citizens' panel felt that the Windrush group had entered the UK legally, had worked hard and made a contribution to this country. They were in this position through no fault of their own. They had been mistreated by a heartless and inefficient immigration system. The citizens' panel participants believed that compassion and decency should underpin how migrants are treated.

> *"I think the Government just needs to be a bit more kind, is that the word? You know, kind and actually see people as people and not as like cattle. Does that make sense? I think we could be learning from the mistakes, but always treat people as if they're humans."*

Citizens' panel participant, Bedford.

Family migration

In some of the citizens' panels we discussed family migration, although in many places we visited it was not a hugely salient issue. Most participants in the citizens' panels had no knowledge of the rules governing family migration from outside the EU.

Family migration was only raised spontaneously in about a third of the citizens' panels. In some places, participants voiced concerns about abuse of marriage visas, or that there were insufficient restrictions on who was granted a family visa, leading to large extended family groups arriving in the UK. In Bradford, a city where most recent migration from South Asia has been through family routes, a few participants felt that family migrants lacked the skills needed in the UK.

"I think with Pakistani families, coming back to join their spouses because in the culture with arranged marriages, I think you can be someone born and bred in the UK and have an arranged marriage to someone in Pakistan, and then they're automatically able to come over without any skills or anything to bring forward."

Citizens' panel participant, Bradford.

In other citizens' panels, participants raised family migration because someone in the group had applied for a family visa or had family or friends who had done so. In most cases, they found the process to be demanding, but felt it was a challenge for the Government to balance ease of application with robust immigration controls.

"I wouldn't say I'm happy with it. I go along with it, it's fairly tricky, there's a lot to it, like 12 months bank statements, certain amount of money shown in your account, like your work history. I think there's no real reason for it to be so strict but at the same time it can't be easy, it's a tricky one. I don't really have the answer to tell the truth."

Citizens' panel participant, Wolverhampton.

Many in the citizens' panels admitted having conflicting views on family migration. They had some concerns about abuse of the system, but at the same time they found it easy to put themselves in the position of a family concerned, and voiced sympathy.

When citizens' panel members were asked whether they wanted the numbers of family migrants to be increased, reduced or remain at the same level, over half (52%) were happy for these numbers to remain at the same level and 11% were content for numbers to be increased. Some 26% of those who voted wanted the numbers to be reduced, but 11% of participants did not vote on this question, usually because of these conflicting views. The same trend was observed in the nationally representative ICM research: 55% of respondents were content for the numbers of family migrants to be increased or remain at the same level, but nearly one in five (17%) answered 'Don't know' to this question.

Since July 2012 UK nationals and those with settled status in the UK have had to meet a minimum income threshold to secure a family visa for a non-EU national. Set at £18,600 per year to bring in a spouse/partner, this income threshold does not account for savings or the potential earnings of the non-EU partner. This requirement has been criticised for dividing families, with an inquiry by the Children's Commissioner for England suggesting that 15,000 British children are growing up without one of their parents as a result[35]. Some civil society organisations such as the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants have made the minimum income threshold a focus of campaigns.

In some of the citizens' panels, we explored participants' perceptions about the minimum income threshold for family migration, debating whether they thought it was a fair policy. The citizens' panels were divided on this: some thought that the threshold of £18,600 was set at a reasonable level. Younger people and those who lived in parts of the UK where wages were lower often thought the threshold was set too high. The citizens' panels had many questions, for example whether savings or family gifts could be included. When it was explained that they did not, the participants felt that this was unfair. Generally, the citizens' panels believed that it was fair to expect newly-formed families to be able to support themselves. It was the lack of flexibility of this policy that the participants felt was unfair, with savings and gifts not counting. This view was supported in the nationally representative ICM research, with just 12% of respondents disagreeing with the statement *"UK citizens should be allowed to bring in immediate family (eg. spouse/partner, children under 18) irrespective of their income, as long as they can support themselves and provide housing."*

Undocumented migration

Undocumented or irregular immigration is an issue that causes public concern; it is seen as a security risk and as a failure by the Government to enforce immigration controls. We found this issue varied in it its salience in citizens' panels. Media coverage of migrants found hiding in lorries or trying to breach the security at Calais sometimes prompted discussion of this subject. In a few citizens panels – in Bexley, Ipswich, Folkestone and Milton Keynes – participants referred to cases where clandestine entrants had been apprehended in their local area, hiding in freight or as motorway 'drop offs'. Participants almost always saw undocumented migrants as clandestine entrants, although research suggests that most undocumented migrants enter the UK legally but overstay[36].

"I think if people watch the news or the newspapers and you see a guy jumping out the back of a lorry on the M20, it just sends out the wrong picture, that it's a free for all and any minute now they will be running through the tunnel. That's how it looks to us, that at every point migrants are jumping out of vans and lorries and are hidden, it's what we read about all the time. It's madness."

Citizens' panel participant, Bexley.

All the citizens' panels explored attitudes to undocumented migration, with participants given one of three real-life case studies and asked to decide how the Government should approach each case. The case studies included a New Zealand visa overstayer who fathered a child in the UK but was now separated from his partner; and a clandestine entrant from Nigeria who was refused asylum in the early 1990s but never removed, and now found himself the carer of his elderly mother who was a British citizen. The third case study was a young person born in the UK to a mother who had overstayed her visa; she was soon to turn 18 and so would no longer be considered a dependent. There are humanitarian provisions within UK immigration law to grant leave to remain on a case-by-case basis to undocumented migrants. The dilemma for the girl and her mother was that by coming forwards to the Home Office, the mother could be removed, and the family separated.

All the case studies are given in the appendices to this report. Participants were asked to decide how they thought each case should be treated. We found that our citizens' panels made pragmatic decisions on these case studies, using moral and economic arguments to justify their conclusions. While most felt that immigration enforcement is important and should be applied uniformly and fairly to everyone, the citizens' panels generally supported flexibility and compassion as principles too.

"Not everything is black and white. Sometimes, situations happen and everybody in this room has got a different story to tell about something or other. So, for the government, it should probably be someone with a bit of a heart, who can see what's going on, and see it for what it is."

Citizens' panel participant, Bedford.

Most participants favoured allowing the Nigerian clandestine entrant to remain in the UK, although a few believed that rules must be applied consistently. Many citizens' panels admitted divided feelings and being torn between their heads and hearts.

"I think there's got to be an awareness on his part that he was breaking the law, an awareness that he wasn't paying taxes when he was working. However, I don't think he should be sent back either. However, the real question is the cost of him staying versus the cost of him leaving. If one is going to be greater than the other, then is it economics or is it a from-the-heart sort of thing?"

Citizens' panel participant, Chesterfield.

Only a minority of participants wanted the New Zealand overstayer to be granted permission to remain in the UK. As he was now separated and only saw his child a few times each year, it was felt that the child could visit the father in New Zealand.

There was near universal support for the UK-born child of an undocumented migrant to be allowed to stay. Her length of residence in the UK and that she knew no other country than Britain, were important moral arguments raised in the citizens' panels. They argued for flexible and humane policies that treated people on a case-by-case basis. Many participants assumed that because she was born in the UK she was British. We later tested this view in the nationally representative ICM research, asking whether *"children born in the UK should be eligible for British citizenship"*. Just 12% of respondents disagreed with this statement.

EXPLOITATION

About half of the citizens' panels voiced concerns about the exploitation of migrant workers. They felt this to be unfair. Participants sometimes gave examples of exploitation taking place in their local community, in car washes and by gang masters who supervised groups of migrant workers in farming. While this exploitation was sometimes visible, participants held the view that most of it was hidden.

"I think the point no-one's looked at is the exploitation of these people as well... getting your car cleaned, a lot of them are forced to work in those…There is usually an English gang boss…A lot of them don't have a choice, they're forced to do what they do. It's not just cleaning cars, there's a lot of things going on people don't know about, because its buried, there's a lot of exploitation of them."

Citizens' panel participant, Middlesbrough.

Some of the citizens' panels were concerned about the welfare of exploited workers. For example, many of those who took part in the citizens' panel in Berwick-upon-Tweed believed that migration brought more disadvantages than benefits and yet participants became very animated about conditions faced by Filipino fisherman, who were crew on boats that landed their catches in nearby Eyemouth. They felt that felt these migrants were being exploited and their lack of experience at sea exposed them to danger. When their case was brought up, the tone of the citizen's panel discussion changed and became more empathetic.

A few of the citizens' panels talked about modern slavery, the terminology used by the Government in its efforts to end labour exploitation. Overall, this issue was more salient than we expected it to be, and anecdotes voiced by the panel suggest it is widespread.

UNFAIRNESS TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES

As well as wanting immigration policy to be fair to migrants, the citizens' panels wanted it to be fair to local communities. In some discussions, participants believed that immigration policy was very unfair, particularly in relation to the allocation of public services and social housing and in the perceived labour market impacts of immigration.

A few participants described the direct and negative impact on their own lives, giving examples of being unable to secure social housing, educational support or healthcare.

"At the end of the day I am just thinking about my son, he had to wait [for speech therapy] because there are children in there, it's not their fault, but there's children in there who can't speak English... My son has been put on the backburner because these kids can't speak English. And what makes me more angry is when you are stood there waiting to go in and the parents can't even speak English. Now you are in this country, you need your child to speak English, speak English to your child."

Citizens' panel participant, Basildon.

The benefit system was a source of anger and frustration, with some participants believing that it was unfair that they worked hard and paid taxes, while migrants and *"lazy Brits"* did not contribute.

Business practices were also felt to be unfair to local communities. Some employers had come to rely on migrant workers who were seen as being willing to work for lower wages and less secure working conditions. Young people who took part in the citizens' panels were particularly concerned about the labour market impacts of migration. The behaviour of businesses who used employment agencies to recruit staff from abroad was seen as unfair in some citizens' panels.

*"The big companies get the deal for the cheap labour.
We've got all these people coming from agencies, constant agency
work. They are getting trained, they get the job and the businesses get
money. Instead of giving it to the workers, they are giving it to all these
immigrants who are coming for one or two years and going off again,
so they are getting trained for nothing."*

Citizens' panel participant, Kidderminster.

But this sense of unfairness was not only related to specific examples and issues such as public services and social housing. In almost all the citizens' panels outside London and the south east there was a much stronger sense that all government policy was unfair to them, and the direction that immigration policy had taken was only one aspect of this unfairness. Participants felt that their views were not heeded by the Government and that their communities had received very little infrastructural investment.

*"One of the region's biggest employers just shut down a year ago,
they're gone... They never think about money up here, not just in
certain areas. It's like we are the forgotten area of the country.
We always seem to be the last to be thought of."*

Citizens' panel participant, Berwick-upon-Tweed.

These views were not restricted to deprived, post-industrial areas. A significant number of citizens' panels adopted a strongly anti-elitist tone. In Scotland and Wales, perceptions that the Westminster government did not take Scottish and Welsh economic conditions into account has resulted in some people wanting powers over immigration to be devolved. In many locations, the citizens' panels felt that the UK Government only acted in the interests of the City of London and the so-called 'metropolitan elite', both in relation to immigration and broader policy issues. This was seen as unfair.

*"I'm just a bit concerned that all they [in the negotiations] are really
concerned with is, and we saw a bit of it this week, preserving the
status of London rather than every other community up and down the
country. We saw that with the fishermen. So if they're trying to bargain
away certain things to keep the status quo in regards to business in
London, I wouldn't be in favour of that because you've got to have an
agreement that benefits everybody rather than the social and political
elite in London. You've got to help the people at the lower end."*

Citizens' panel participant, Edinburgh.

The citizens' panels across the UK understood that immigration bought both gains and pressures, but many felt that the balance of gains to pressures was unfairly tipped towards those who were already doing better in life. The economic and social benefits of immigration also need to be felt by communities that have been left behind by globalisation and changing economic structures.

THE NORMS OF A DECENT CONVERSATION ON IMMIGRATION

Both the citizens' panels and the nationally representative ICM research show that the public have balanced views on immigration. Generally, the discussions were decent, although sometimes members of the citizens' panels stereotyped or made discriminatory comments, especially towards Muslim communities, an issue we discuss in Chapter Four.

We found that the majority of participants engaged constructively with our discussions. Many felt the experience to be cathartic, as they had not had the chance to give their views on immigration before, nor to consider policy. Many of those who took part in the citizens' panels also stated that they were wary about expressing their opinions on immigration, for fear of being dismissed as racist.

We asked each citizens' panel whether they felt that we can have a conversation on immigration that is decent and does not allow for prejudice to emerge. A few of the citizens' panels struggled

with this issue, but most had clear views. Many participants believed that a decent conversation on immigration drew on evidence and avoided emotion. Not using derogatory terms and stereotypes was also felt to be important.

> *"Don't clump all people together as one group. Don't assume people from the same country are all the same."*
>
> Citizens' panel, participant, Nottingham.

But for most people, it was not what was said that determined decency, but how it was said. Many citizens' panels felt that a decent conversation about immigration involved dialogue: listening to the views of others and acknowledging there would always be some disagreement.

> *"It's about listening, it's about being open, it's about considering the other person. It's about equality and not arguing, it's about listening and giving a point of view, a balance, and accepting what people believe in, to a degree."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Sheffield, Group B.

REACHING A CONSENSUS

The citizens' panels and the nationally representative ICM research found that immigration is viewed through a framework of fairness. The direction of much recent immigration policy, and other areas of policy, was seen as unfair to communities outside London and the South East. The public want effective immigration controls, but they also want migrants to be treated decently and fairly.

The reaction to the Windrush scandal shows there is no public support for an immigration system which is seen as unfair and without compassion. The consensus among our citizens' panel was that the Government will need to learn from past mistakes and make sure that the post-Brexit immigration system balances control with fairness.

9. Migration for work

Economic migration was the major theme of most of our National Conversation panels, everywhere across the UK. Participants had much more to say about migration from the EU than non-EU migration. Almost everybody had come into some contact with EU nationals and we heard mixed views about the pressures and gains of European immigration. This was a major theme of the EU referendum, though the Government has given little indication of what changes it is likely to propose next. Our citizens' panels illustrated why this is probably the most challenging issue for trying to secure consensus on a future system.

The years since 2000 have seen the large-scale migration of EU nationals to the UK, mostly from the new EU member states in central and eastern Europe, but also from counties such as Portugal and Spain. Some 3.8 million EU nationals now live in the UK, up from 857,000 in 2000[37]. Most have come to work: 7.3% of the UK's labour force were EU nationals in 2017[38].

The scale and nature of recent migration from the EU is different to previous waves of migration. Recent migration flows have been larger, more rapid and EU nationals have settled in all parts of the UK, including in places which have little previous experience of international migration. In the past much immigration to the UK was permanent or semi-permanent in nature. Today, migrants from the EU move around much more, within the UK, or between here and their home countries.

This rapid population change and the wider distribution of migrants throughout the UK have helped make migration a high-profile issue across the nation. It was a factor in how some people cast their vote in the EU referendum, and leaving the EU will lead to changes to immigration policy affecting EU nationals. Prime Minister Theresa May has made clear that freedom of movement rules in their current form will not apply after the transition period ends, most probably now after 2021.

Potential policy changes are likely to be set out in an immigration white paper in 2018 or 2019 and will form part of the Brexit negotiations with the EU27. At the time of writing, little information has emerged about the outline of a post-Brexit immigration system, although the UK government is considering mandatory registration for EU nationals and temporary visa regimes.

Whatever immigration policies are put in place will have to secure the support of the EU, unless the UK leaves without a final deal. This may rule out some policy options. Despite this constraint, Brexit still offers an opportunity to put in place an immigration system that works for employers but also has greater public confidence and support. This chapter sets out public views on EU and non-EU migration for work and examines the policy changes that might be capable of securing public support.

VIEWS ABOUT EU LABOUR MIGRATION

Of all the subjects that we examined in the citizens' panels, migration from the EU was the most salient issue that generated most questions and concern. In the discussions, participants balanced the positive impacts of migration from the EU with their views on negative impacts, which tended to vary from place-to-place.

"I think immigration is a good thing and not a major issue in Scotland compared to certain parts of England, but I think the limitations is that when you have too much immigration that is uncontrolled that can have an effect on labour costs and wages, and affect working people in their careers in this country."

Citizens' panel participant, Dumfries.

The citizens' panels saw EU migration through the lens of contribution, control and fairness. They felt that many EU migrants were making a contribution, through the skills they bring, the vacancies they fill and through taxation. However, there were also widespread concerns that many EU nationals were claiming out-of-work benefits, who were seen in a negative light.

"If they are coming over here, making a life for themselves, benefitting themselves, doing the jobs, that's good. But when they're coming over here and coming on the housing system, the benefits system, that's where we kind of say, no, there's a bigger problem."

Citizens' panel participant, Folkestone.

At the same time, the citizens' panel members expressed wide-ranging concerns about the control of migration flows from the EU. Many participants, both Leave and Remain voters, felt that the current free movement regulations mean that the UK government has no overall control over the numbers and types of EU migrants who enter the UK. The Government having *"no idea who is here"* was a common sentiment. Criminality was a significant concern in 56 out of 60 citizens' panels, although most people were careful not to generalise about EU migrants as a group, or particular nationalities. Yet many participants believed that free movement rules allowed criminals to enter the UK, posing a threat to personal safety.

"One of the things that strikes me as being incredible is that ok, if there's freedom of movement – why can't they be checked? We should be in a position to look at potential terrorists, people with criminal records and say 'sorry, no'."

Citizens' panel participant, Northampton.

As already discussed in Chapter Four, few of those who took part in the citizens' panels knew any detail of the current freedom of movement rules, which only permit an EU national to remain in the UK for three months unless they are employed, self-sufficient, a student or a family member of one of these three groups[39]. When we explained the current free movement regulations, we were almost always told that visa free travel for EU nationals meant that these rules were not and could not be enforced.

While wanting EU migration to be controlled, most participants also wanted migrants to be treated fairly. No-one in the citizens' panels thought EU nationals who were already living in the UK should be removed. The consensus was so overwhelming that we ceased to ask this question after 20 citizens' panel discussions, though participants sometimes brought it up spontaneously. There was also strong opposition to temporary visa regimes for EU nationals, as these were considered unfair to migrants themselves and unenforceable.

As noted above, participants balanced what they saw as positive and negative impacts of EU migration. The positive impacts were almost always seen as economic with a dominant view that EU nationals were doing low-skilled jobs that UK nationals did not want to do. This view was supported in the nationally representative research by ICM, which found that 63% of people agree that *'migrant workers support the British economy by doing jobs that British people don't want to do.'*

"I live near a fruit farm in the forest. If you speak to the director he will say that the reason he uses Polish people to pick the strawberries is because English people don't want to know. So, they have no option but to employ people from Poland or Ukraine. They live in portacabins on the farm. They come for the fruit season and then they go home."

Citizens' panel participant, Southampton.

EU nationals undertaking low-skilled work were often described as "*hard-working*" by the citizens' panels, particularly if they were Polish. EU migrants were less frequently seen as bringing key skills, unless participants had had direct personal contact with a skilled migrant, usually at work. This confirms a dominant image of an EU national as a low-skilled worker. EU migration was rarely seen as bringing cultural benefits, although a few participants enjoyed shopping in Polish delicatessens.

"We've got a shop down the road called Osman's. Polish, they've come and they've opened a few shops, and they're bloody good. They're making money, they're paying back into the community, that's the people who should stay."

Citizens' panel participant, Group A, Sheffield.

There was also a marked hierarchy of preferences for different national groups of EU migrants in some places. Poles were most popular because of a perceived strong work ethic. Polish nationals comprise the largest group of non-UK citizens who live in Britain and more of those who took part in the citizens' panels reported having Polish friends than other EU national groups. Positive social contact may have also contributed to this view. Romanians were viewed as less hard-working and well-integrated in some locations. Some less favorable attitudes towards Romanians could also be attributed to the confusion of Roma with Romanians.

The negative impacts of EU migration varied significantly from place-to-place. In many locations the citizens' panels associated EU migration with residential segregation, neighborhood decline and groups of young men who loitered in town centres. EU nationals, particularly from eastern and central Europe, were perceived as a group who did not always integrate and tended "*to keep themselves to themselves.*" Street drinking by EU nationals was a particular concern in some places, with a few participants reporting feeling intimidated by this practice. This issue was also raised by stakeholders and we believe that there are large differences in how councils and the police approach street drinking. In some areas, authorities had taken a zero-tolerance approach, but in other places we visited street-drinking was not being addressed.

"There's a bench and there will be a group of gents who clearly speak another language, sitting there midday drinking and I can't help but wonder if you're not at work what are you doing? Where are you getting the money from? I'd love to sit around all day drinking."

Citizens' panel participant, Northampton.

In south eastern England and in some rural areas, over-population and pressures on public services were the dominant negative impacts associated with EU migration. The labour market impacts of migration, on the availability of jobs, wages and employment conditions, were issues that were raised less frequently than we expected. When negative labour market issues were raised, it tended to be by younger people or associated with particular employers or industrial sectors. It was younger non-graduates who were more likely to feel that free movement within the EU gave employers access to a large labour force that was willing to undertake poorly paid and insecure work. This then depressed wages and undercut employment conditions in a way that they felt was unfair to British nationals.

"I am concerned that cheap immigrant labour is undermining things like the minimum wage and it's certainly corporate interests above people working. I personally think the minimum wage needs to be raised in this country to get people into employment and not to be dependent on benefits. At the moment, for a lot of British people, it's not worth them working, because they would lose so much in benefits. And I've read about agencies who have gone to Eastern Europe and recruited cheap labour from Eastern Europe but not advertised those jobs in Britain, and I think that's wrong."

Citizens' panel participant, Penzance.

As we discuss in Chapter Twelve, concerns about the labour market impacts of immigration were more prevalent in some places, for example, Basildon, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Chesterfield, Kidderminster and Northampton. Here these views could often be linked to a particular employer – for example, Sports Direct in Chesterfield. Places where food processing, hospitality and the distribution and logistics sector provided a significant number of local jobs were also locations where the labour market impacts of migration were raised by the citizens' panels. The treatment of staff in these sectors by unscrupulous employment agencies was often a significant issue of concern.

Generally, cultural concerns about EU migration were rare in the citizens' panels, although a small number of participants reported feel unsettled by hearing foreign languages or seeing the character of particular neighbourhoods change. In Aberystwyth, many participants felt that large-scale migration from the EU could threaten the Welsh language and culture.

"There are more positives than negatives to it I would say, but it is a balance. I've known quite a few Poles and Eastern Europeans and got on really well with them and their wanting to work stands out really, they're hard workers. I think there is a place for immigration, but I think some different policies need to be put in place in regard to the culture, which I am very much for – the Welsh language".

Citizens' panel participant, Aberystwyth.

We have asked some citizens' panel participants what they know about the regulations governing free movement from the EU and access to benefits. The majority of people do not know that there are regulations that require EU nationals to be in employment, to be self-sufficient or to be a student in order to remain in the UK under EU law[40]. Where participants do know about these regulations, they feel the regulations are not enforced. Most people also do not know that there are restrictions on EU nationals' access to benefits, requiring migrants to have worked in the UK and to be 'habitually resident'. Instead, most participants think that free movement means that any EU national could move here and immediately claim benefits.

Participants are also generally unaware of the academic analysis that shows that most recent EU migrants are in work. This raises important questions about how immigration statistics and policy are communicated and understood by the public. This finding also poses significant challenges for politicians and advocates of immigration reform. If a post-Brexit immigration system is to work for employers, be fair to migrants but also secure public support and trust, then it is a pre-requisite that the public knows about and understands the new policy. As in 2016, when Prime Minister David Cameron secured from the EU an 'emergency brake' mechanism on in-work benefits received by EU nationals as a means of addressing public concerns, there is a risk that post-Brexit policy change is too complex for the public to understand, or that people believe it cannot be enforced.

LABOUR MIGRATION FROM OUTSIDE THE EU

In contrast to EU migration, labour migration from outside the EU was not an issue of salience to the citizens' panels. We feel there are four reasons that non-EU migration is not a high-profile issue of concern for the vast majority of the public. First, non-EU migration has received much less media coverage compared to migration from the EU. In the citizens' panels very few people knew anything about the regulations governing non-EU migration for work.

"The emphasis is always on [people] from the EU which is what we always hear about, we don't really know what the situation is from outside of the EU."

Citizens' panel participant, Bexley.

Second, most people believe that migration from outside the EU is better controlled.

"It's more filtered, it's more controlled, and it's only immediate, like your spouse or child coming through. They're not coming through, twenty of them, living in a flat."
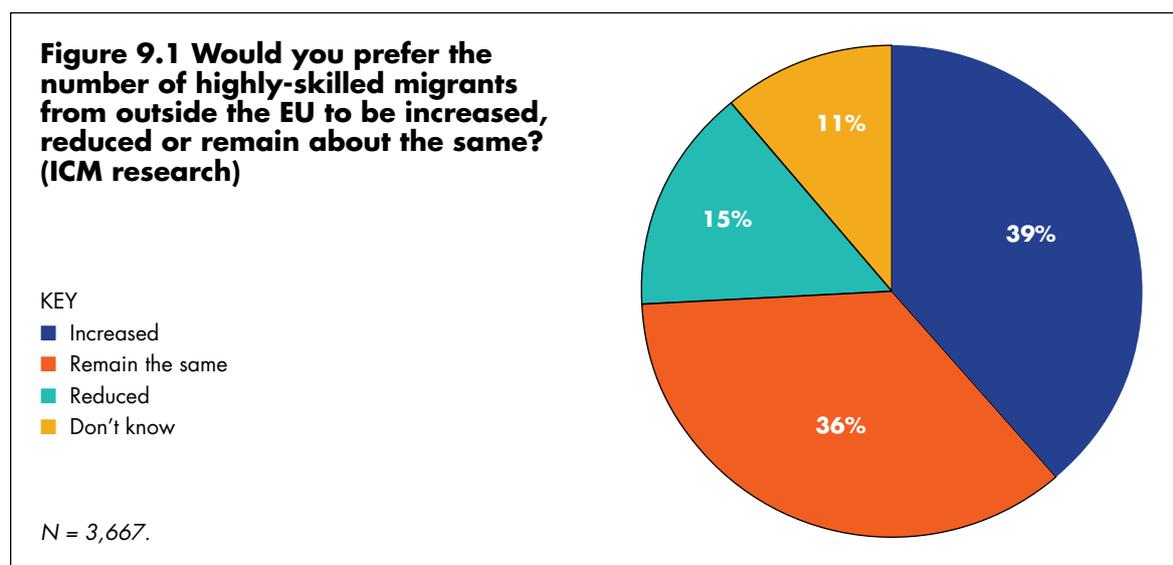
Citizens' panel participant, Grimsby.

Third, we believe that there is greater public support for non-EU work migration because it is associated with flows from countries with which Britain has historic connections through the Commonwealth.

Fourth, many citizens' panels saw non-EU labour migrants as being highly-skilled, which reflects current Government policy. (Apart from schemes for seasonal agricultural workers there have been no low-skilled migration programmes for non-EU nationals since the UK joined the EU in 1974). In the citizens' panels, many participants associated non-EU labour migration with health workers who have come to the UK to work in the NHS. As noted, doctors and nurses who worked in the NHS were seen as characterising the best qualities of migration.

The citizens' panels did not voice any desires to change policy as it applies to this group. Some 86% of those who took part in the citizens' panels were happy with the numbers of highly-skilled workers from outside the EU to be increased or remain at the same level, with just 7% of those who took part in the discussions wanting to decrease the amount of highly-skilled non-EU migration for work.

These views were also supported in the nationally representative research by ICM (Figure 9.1). Here, support for the numbers of highly-skilled migrants from outside the EU being increased or remaining at the same level was held by people from all social backgrounds and political allegiances: 78% of Remain voters and 74% of Leave voters felt that numbers should increase or remain the same.

Figure 9.1 Would you prefer the number of highly-skilled migrants from outside the EU to be increased, reduced or remain about the same? (ICM research)

KEY
- ■ Increased
- ■ Remain the same
- ■ Reduced
- ■ Don't know

N = 3,667.

THE CHANGES PEOPLE WANT

The majority of those who attended the citizens' panels wanted changes to the current free movement rules, although not everyone was confident that this would happen. In three locations, all strong Leave voting areas, we were told by the citizens' panels or the stakeholders that there was a risk of far-right extremists stirring up unrest if the UK did not leave the EU and change its immigration policy. We were told in Grimsby that: *"obviously if we don't try to sort out immigration or change it there might be a big…not brawl, but an outbreak."*

In the citizens' panels, participants usually had clear ideas about the policy changes they wanted with regard to EU migration. They wanted EU migration to be better controlled and also to make sure that public services were not put under pressure as a consequence of rapid population increase.

"At the moment I think it's very much, 'if you come over, you're welcomed with open arms', whoever you are, pretty much. But there are obviously bad people coming over, who do bad things. So some kind of background check, or something like that."

Citizens' panel participant, Sutton.

The changes that various citizens' panels proposed for EU migration included:
- UK government sovereignty over EU migration.
- Changing the current free movement rules, with a number of options suggested, including an Australian-style, points-based system.
- Background checks on prospective migrants from the EU and the exclusion of those with serious and unspent criminal convictions.
- Caps on the numbers of migrants coming to do low skilled jobs.
- A contributory welfare system, requiring EU nationals to have paid taxes for a number of years before they can access benefits and social housing.
- The requirement for EU nationals to have health insurance to reduce pressures on the NHS.
- Rules to prevent child benefit being sent abroad.
- Better enforcement of the minimum and Living Wage.
- The requirement to speak English before being allowed to enter the UK, or for migrants to show that they are committed to learning the language.
- Making sure that funding for schools, hospitals and other public services respond to population change.

Some of the citizens' panels included EU nationals themselves, both those long-settled in the UK and more recent arrivals. They were acutely aware that migration from the EU had been controversial and that free movement rules had not commanded public consent. In the discussion, most EU nationals made a positive case for EU migration and often provided alternative perspectives to those being aired by other members of the group. The EU nationals in the citizens' panels also suggested many changes they would like to see introduced, with the specific aims of securing greater public support for EU migration.

> *"It's quite difficult when you are an immigrant. You see both sides and you see the people you know and are close with and you know they might not be doing things right. I'd definitely set a barrier: you have three months to find a job. If you don't find a job, three months is plenty to find a job, then if no work, go back."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant born in Poland, Southampton.

The introduction of criminal vetting processes was by far the most frequently articulated change that people wanted to rules governing EU migration. Many people also argued for UK sovereignty and the introduction of an Australian-style, points-based system for EU migration. Curbs on new arrivals claiming benefits and better ways of easing pressures on public services were other popular demands.

> *"We need criminal vetting and a specific thing that they have a job that we need filled that no-one else can fulfil in this country. And that they actually pledge allegiance to this country rather than turning up and turning it into their own country, same as they do in America".*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Basildon.

As we have argued in Chapter Seven, an Australian-style, points-based system has come to exemplify a well-controlled and selective immigration system which meets the country's needs. While not knowing the detail of Australian policy, many participants knew that unspent criminal convictions usually barred prospective migrants from receiving visas.

A minority of those who attended the citizens' panels took the needs of employers into account when considering what they would like to change. However, the nationally representative survey showed that the public can take a pragmatic approach to labour migration and acknowledge the needs of business and public services to recruit migrant staff. Some 76% of respondents in the nationally representative ICM research agreed that *"businesses should be able to recruit the highly-skilled workers that they need."* When asked a question about low-skilled migrants, 63% of those surveyed by ICM agreed that *"Farmers should be able to recruit seasonal migrants from the EU that they need."* There was majority support for this position across a broad range of social backgrounds and political views, with just 11% of those surveyed by ICM disagreeing with the statement.

Fewer of those who attended the citizens' panels prioritised reducing the numbers of migrants from the EU. Those who took part in the citizens' panels as well as the open survey and nationally representative ICM research were asked to decide whether they wanted the numbers of migrants from the EU to be increased, reduced or remain about the same. Those who completed the open survey had polarised views on this question, a sentiment also reflected in many of the comments that were submitted.

> *"Cut the numbers of EU migrants to the tens of thousands and keep to it. This will help all those that live here already with jobs, housing and local services."*
>
> *"Keep freedom of movement as it is, don't have caps, just restrict people applying for benefits until they have contributed to the system."*
>
> Comments posted in the open survey.

Table 9.2 sets out the views of those who took part in the citizens' panels and the research by ICM. Very few people want to reduce high-skilled migration from the EU and there is broad support for keeping numbers the same or increasing them. Even among social groups with a tendency to hold more sceptical views about immigration this view held, with 75% of Leave voters, 83% of those aged 64-75 and 72% of those in social grades D and E wanting to increase the numbers of high-skilled migrants from the EU or to keep current numbers at the same level.

It can also be seen that among the citizens' panels and the nationally representative research by ICM, smaller proportions of people wanted to reduce the number of seasonal workers compared to generic low-skilled workers. Naming the job – such as a farm worker – may account for this increased level of public support for seasonal migration, as participants see these jobs as important for the economy. We have often found that in rural areas or places that depend on tourism there is stronger support for the migration of seasonal workers.

"For the farming community, where you are looking at fruit picking for example, our native population is not interested in doing it…The immigration from Europe, come in and do the picking and it fills a requirement for the business. Without it, a lot of farms will struggle."

Citizens' panel participant, Gloucester.

Table 9.2 Should the numbers of the following groups be increased, reduced or remain about the same?

	Increased - Citizens' panels (n=572)	Increased - ICM research (n=3,667)	Reduced - Citizens' panels	Reduced - ICM research	Remain the same - Citizens' panels	Remain the same - ICM research	Don't know - Citizens' panels	Don't know - ICM research
High-skilled workers from the EU	47%	39%	5%	14%	42%	36%	6%	10%
Low-skilled workers from the EU	8%	12%	45%	49%	43%	31%	7%	12%
Seasonal workers at farms and hotels	12%	17%	38%	23%	54%	46%	6%	14%

Despite numbers being at the forefront of political and media debates, most participants do not see EU migration primarily through a numeric lens. The citizens' panels talked less about the rates of immigration than about issues such as criminal vetting, neighbourhood decline and welfare dependency. Although about four in ten people want reductions to the numbers of low-skilled migrants from the EU, there was still much support for low-skilled migration from the EU when it was deemed important for the economy.

"It should be a points-based system after Brexit, like they have in Australia. We need to audit where the gaps are, and give people points if they want to fill them…we need stricter checks on those who come here."

Citizens' panel participant, Ipswich.

THE POST-BREXIT IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

At present, the UK Government's position is that freedom of movement in its current form will end sometime after Brexit. At the time of writing, this position is one of the British 'red lines' in the Brexit negotiations. There are a number of approaches that the Government could take to future EU migration, which could include:

- Reforms within free movement – for example, mandatory registration, exclusion of those with unspent convictions, further restrictions of EU migrants' access to benefits and public services.
- Free movement with a job offer.
- Free movement with a resident labour market test where a job has to be advertised locally at a Job Centre in the UK before being recruited more widely.
- An emergency brake – applied when numbers reach a certain level or when it is judged that EU migration places excessive demands on the welfare system and other public services.
- Caps or quotas covering all or some EU migration.
- A regionalised immigration system in which immigration policy is devolved to administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales control immigration.
- Temporary visa regimes where some or all EU migrants are issued with time-limited visas.
- Using non-EU labour migration systems, such as Tier 2 visas, for EU nationals[41].

The UK Government may need to agree its future approach to immigration with the EU27 if it is to achieve some of its other objectives, and so reaching this position will be a significant part of the Brexit negotiations. It is also important that the post-Brexit immigration system meets the needs of employers *and* is capable of securing public support. So we wanted to find out how the citizens' panels viewed some of these policy options. After a general discussion about the things that participants wanted changed, we presented them with a range of policy choices and asked participants to indicate in a voting pack which option they preferred. We included the same question in the open and nationally representative surveys. There were four choices in the voting packs:

Option one – keep free movement rules for EU migrants in the UK and for UK nationals who want to live in the EU.

Option two – set an annual cap covering EU migrants in low-skilled jobs, but not for EU nationals in highly-skilled work.

Option three – apply the same restrictions on immigration for EU migrants and those coming from outside the EU, even if it means more restrictions placed on British citizens who might want to live in the EU.

Option four – offer temporary visas, lasting a maximum of three years, to EU nationals.

We found that we had to give an explanation of how options two and three might work, with a few participants finding this question difficult. Table 9.3 sets out the results. It shows that there is little support for temporary migration, but also no emerging consensus on the way forward.

Table 9.3 Decisions on future options for EU migration

	Citizens' panels (n=572)	Nationally representative ICM research (n=3,667)
The Government should keep free movement rules for EU migrants in the UK.	18%	27%
The Government should set an annual cap covering EU migrants in low-skilled jobs, but not for EU nationals in highly-skilled work	35%	27%
The Government should apply the same restrictions on immigration for EU migrants and those coming from outside the EU	37%	30%
The Government should only offer temporary visas lasting a maximum of three years for those coming to do low skilled jobs	10%	16%

In the citizens' panels, those participants who opted to keep free movement were more likely to be young, live in big cities and supported Remain in the EU referendum. Some made this choice because they believed that the current free movement rules worked well. Others felt that they or their children might benefit from reciprocal free movement in the future and wanted to keep the option to live or work outside the UK.

"I don't really see a need for change, I think that it works perfectly well as it is at the moment, I don't feel like this country is overrun by EU migrants and probably from a selfish perspective as well, I would like to have free movement anywhere in the EU, potentially retire in Spain, Italy or France without having rules imposed on me."

Citizens' panel participant, Edinburgh.

There was a small third group who chose option one but specified in the discussion or in the voting packs that they wanted free movement but with some reforms. In some voting packs, participants wrote comments such as *"free movement but no criminals."*

Most participants were divided between quotas covering EU migrants undertaking low-skilled jobs, or a single system that treats EU and non-EU migrants in the same way.

Those who argued for a cap or quota system covering EU migrants in low-skilled jobs usually used pragmatic economic arguments to justify their position. They see the jobs that might be covered by such a quota system as those that do not require qualifications, such as cleaning, fruit-picking or bar work. Many participants who lived in rural market towns expressed a preference for this system. While participants understand the contribution of low-skilled migration to the local economy, they generally felt this system offered the controls and UK sovereignty that they wanted.

"I think it's got to a stage where in order to keep everyone happy, there should be some changes there, because otherwise it's going to cause a bit of a problem. I think the businesses want low skilled people to do jobs, especially farming, coffee shops and this and that. They can bring people in, get job guarantees before they arrive here."

Citizens' panel participant, Macclesfield.

A system that treated all economic migrants the same tended to appeal to Leave voters, those with family links to the Commonwealth and those who said they wanted migration policy to be fair. Many people saw non-EU migration as a better managed system and, although knowledge of non-EU immigration policy was patchy, chose this option because they saw it applying non-EU controls to EU migrants.

"I don't think it matters where you come from in the world. It shouldn't. We should all have the same restrictions."

Citizens' panel participant, Yeovil.

There was much less support for temporary migration regimes for EU nationals, although some people felt that a temporary visa could act as a 'probationary' period:

"It should be three years and then the option to renew."

Citizens' panel participant, Redbridge.

However, the majority of those in the citizens' panels voiced objections to temporary visa regimes; most importantly they had little confidence in the Government's ability to enforce such regulations. Many of the participants with the most sceptical views on immigration did not see a three-year visa as temporary and felt this approach would do little to reduce numbers or lessen negative local impacts. Many participants also saw temporary visas as being unfair to migrant workers who had put down roots in their local communities and wanted to settle in the UK. Some people also argued that temporary visas would not help integration. Other citizens' panels participants used economic arguments against such an approach, as employers risked losing good workers when their visas expired.

"Even with low-skilled jobs, think of the people who run businesses, perhaps in hospitality or maybe in building – the business managers need the continuity."

Citizens' panel participant, Harrogate.

Just 16% of the respondents to the ICM research supported temporary visa regimes. We further probed views on temporary migration in this survey, asking respondents to choose between permanent and temporary migration, with the results given in Table 9.4 below.

Table 9.4 When migrants do come to Britain, which of the following options, if you had to pick one, do you think is better? (ICM research)

"It is better when migrants commit to stay in Britain, put down roots and integrate."	61% agree
"It is better when migrants come here to work for a few years without putting down roots and then return home"	39% agree

N=3,667.

Many business advocates of immigration reform have argued against temporary visa regimes for EU nationals, largely on practical grounds. Evidence from the National Conversation on Immigration also shows little public support for such a policy.

SHOULD THE DEVOLVED ADMINISTRATIONS AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT HAVE MORE IMMIGRATION POWERS?

In Scotland, some of the stakeholders we met have argued for the devolution of immigration powers. This is the official position of the Scottish Government, which aims to drive economic growth through population increase and sees skilled migration as a means to achieve this aim[42]. The Scottish Government wants immigration policy to be a devolved power and in 2018 argued for a Scottish visa within the Tier 2 Points Based System. It also made the case for keeping free movement for EU nationals, but with an emergency brake[43]. Similarly, the Mayor of London and a number of local authorities in the north east want to drive economic growth by encouraging more skilled migration.

We asked all our citizens' panels in Scotland and Wales whether their respective governments should be given more powers over immigration policy. Most of the citizens' panels were divided on this issue. Reviewing the ten citizens' panels we held in Scotland and Wales, participants' views about the devolution of immigration powers are complex, reflecting not just views about migration

policy but broader views on devolution and independence too. Broadly, opinions fall into one of four different groups.

First, there are those who want immigration powers to be devolved because they strongly support Scottish or Welsh independence.

A second group also wants the Scottish or Welsh government to have more of a say over immigration policy. While they may not have voted for independence in Scotland's 2014 referendum or support Plaid Cymru in Wales, this group wants more immigration powers to be devolved because they think that the Westminster government only acts in the interests of London and the City. In Edinburgh we were told:

"All they are really concerned with is preserving the status of London rather than every other community up and down the country. We saw that with the fishermen this week. So if they're trying to bargain away certain things to keep the status quo in regards to business in London… You've got to have an agreement that benefits everybody rather than the social and political elite in London."

Citizens' panel participant, Edinburgh.

Similarly, we were told in Wales:

"I think rather cynically it is the lesser of two evils on that one. Who are you going to trust? Are you going to trust somebody from your country who knows the dynamics of the area, the Welsh assembly members, or are you going to trust someone in Westminster? Some of them haven't even been to their constituency."

Citizens' panel participant, Aberystwyth.

There are also those who oppose the devolution of immigration powers. In ICM's nationally representative research, which surveyed 700 people in Scotland, 18% of Scottish respondents did not want the governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to have powers to decide how many visas are issued to people who might want to work in these parts of the UK. They include a third group those who strongly support the Union.

But we have found that there is a fourth group which includes people with a diverse range of views on the devolution of powers and independence. They may want the Scottish and Welsh Governments to have more powers, but nevertheless do not want these to include immigration. This group is made up of people who think a Scottish immigration system would be impractical and difficult to enforce.

"I think that the idea of Scotland controlling the immigration levels within Scotland is quite difficult in a devolved Scotland rather than an independent Scotland because we have no border control, there's an obvious issue there. It would be nice for Scotland to have a say on the immigration policies but I don't think it's very practical with the way our political situation stands".

Citizens' panel participant, Aberdeen.

Overall, more people do appear to support the devolution of some immigration powers, not only in Scotland and Wales but also in England. In ICM's research for the National Conversation, 55% of all respondents agreed that the governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland should have powers to decide how many visas are issued to people who might want to work in these parts of the UK, with a further 20% neither agreeing nor disagreeing with this policy or saying that they do not know. Support for this policy was higher in Scotland, with 64% of respondents who lived there agreeing with it. But this policy is also supported by half of those who live in the Midlands (50%) and the south east (54%) and by Leave (50%) and Remain (61%) voters.

"There needs to be devolved regional responsibility for immigration rather than a blanket approach. Not all regions and boroughs are equal, socially, economically or demographically and these are integral to the success of a positive immigration approach in the UK."

Respondent to the open survey.

These findings have a bearing on Scottish politics but there are also lessons for Westminster. Some people who live in England are merely indifferent to the devolution of immigration powers to Cardiff, Edinburgh and Stormont and the ICM research shows that at least half of people across the UK agree with this policy. The belief that the UK Government only acts in the interests of the 'London elite' is not confined to those living outside England and was voiced by citizens in places such as Berwick-upon-Tweed, Grimsby, Kidderminster and Yeovil. This geographic polarisation needs to be addressed.

APPROACHING THE BREXIT NEGOTIATIONS

The progress of the Brexit negotiations was headline news at various times during the National Conversation on Immigration visits. As we describe in Chapter Four, the EU referendum and Brexit were raised in many of the citizens' panels. In both the citizens' panels and nationally representative ICM research, we asked questions about the position that the UK Government should take in the negotiations. Our questions examined whether the UK government should prioritise getting better access to the single market over more restrictive immigration controls. We also further examined public views on an immigration system that gives preferential access to migrants from the EU.

Prime Minister Theresa May has indicated that in the long-term, the UK will assume control over its immigration policy. This has been one of the Government's 'red lines' in the negotiations, set out in the Lancaster House speech of January 2017. But it is possible that the UK Government will have to accept fewer restrictions on EU migration to secure greater market access for UK business. We explored this dilemma in the citizens' panels and in the ICM research for the National Conversation.

Four in ten (39%) respondents in the ICM research were willing to keep the current free movement rules if it meant a better deal for British business (Table 9.5). One third (33%) of respondents felt that the UK should not offer a preferential immigration deal to the EU, even if this limited the trade deal that the UK could strike. These two options divided respondents along social and party political lines much more than the other policy choices we posed in the survey.

Remain voters (59%), Labour voters (50%) 18-24s (47%), students (56%) and those who live in large cities (45%) were more likely to favour compromising on freedom of movement in return for a better deal for business. In contrast, 53% of Leave voters believed that the UK should not offer a preferential immigration deal to the EU, even if business would lose out, compared with 16% of Remain voters. Conservative voters, older people, those without higher level qualifications and those who live outside big cities were also more likely to favour this option.

The ICM research findings suggest that choices about Britain's post-Brexit immigration system is the immigration issue most likely to divide people along party political and referendum lines.

Even if it meant a better deal for British business, less than a third (28%) of respondents would be happy to give preference to EU nationals in a future immigration policy. However, this option does not divide respondents so deeply by political affiliation and background. Some 25% of Remain and 33% of Leave voters opted for this policy. Support was similar by age, social grade, place of residence and political affiliation.

Table 9.5: If you had to pick one, please indicate which approach you would like the UK Government to take in the Brexit negotiations.

"If it means a better deal for British business, the UK government should end free movement but offer the EU an immigration deal where EU nationals get preferential treatment to migrants from outside the EU".	28%
"The UK Government should end free movement with no preferential immigration deal with the EU, even if this limits the trade deal Britain can strike.	33%
If it means a better deal for British business, the UK Government should keep the free movement of EU citizens in and out of the UK and stay in the single market"	39%

N=3,667

In the citizens' panels it was clear that many participants struggled to follow the Brexit negotiations. Many participants did not understand the content of the negotiations and felt that the Government should "just get on with it" and leave the EU without a deal if necessary. Only a handful of participants, across the sixty citizens' panels, expressed any interest in returning to the question of the UK's membership of the EU through a second referendum.

We asked the citizens' panels if they would be willing to accept a policy of fewer restrictions on EU migration to get a better deal for business. Some people struggled to understand this question, but many in the citizens' panels were not willing to make concessions on immigration for a better trade deal. We were told quite forcefully in some citizens' panels that it would only be big business and the City of London that would benefit from such a deal, not ordinary people. Some older participants reflected back to the period before the UK's accession to the EU in 1973, arguing that the UK was a global economic power at this time and therefore it did not need a trade deal with the EU. Participants sometimes argued that there would have to be a sensible deal on trade without keeping free movement, so they wanted the UK government to 'call the EU's bluff' rather than to accept a version of the current rules in the negotiations.

Others stated that they would only accept this trade-off if they could see large and tangible benefits.

"It would depend what the alternative was. At the moment, we don't know what those deals are going to be, and how that trade deal is going to work. If it's a difference of a third of a percent, it's probably going to make no difference, if it's ten per cent either way, then obviously it would make a difference."

Citizens' panel participant, Sutton.

Significantly, we found some local differences in how the citizens' panels considered this trade-off. In Knowsley and Macclesfield, participants were willing to accept fewer restrictions on immigration if this would guarantee a better trade deal. In Knowsley, the citizens' panel was concerned about the car industry, a major local employer, which would suffer without access to the single market. In Macclesfield, the citizens' panel unanimously agreed that this trade-off was essential for their big local employer, the pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca, as well as for the area's growing bioscience sector. In both Knowsley and Macclesfield the citizens' panels saw the migration/market access trade-off in concrete terms that related to local employers and the wellbeing of their local area. Citizens' panels in Edinburgh and Hammersmith in London joined those in Knowsley and Macclesfield in favouring keeping free movement because of the trade-off with the single market, but participants across the majority of our sixty panels did not agree that this was desirable or necessary.

EMPLOYERS' VIEWS

Views about future policy towards EU migration also dominated some of the stakeholder discussions. We heard of the difficulties that some sectors of the economy are experiencing in recruiting sufficient staff. These staff shortages also extend to the NHS and social care in many parts of the UK. The NHS, councils and business groups that attended the stakeholder meeting had three sets of demands.

First, they were concerned about losing their current EU staff and wanted the Government to take immediate steps to secure the status of EU nationals in the UK. In December 2017, the UK government reached an agreement with the EU on the rights of EU nationals in the UK and UK

nationals in EU countries. This will guarantee the rights of all those who arrive in the UK before 29 March 2019. Since then, the Home Office has set out how it will process applications for temporary residence permits and settled status. While greater certainty was welcomed, some employers worried that this would be jeopardised if a 'hard Brexit' looked likely.

Second, employers wanted the post-Brexit immigration policy to guarantee them access to a supply of flexible labour from the EU, but without time-consuming bureaucracy and costs associated with non-EU migration. In Scotland, Wales and some parts of England, stakeholders saw migration from the EU as a means of stabilising the population and driving economic growth.

Third, employers wanted changes to regulations affecting non-EU nationals to make it easier to recruit and retain skilled staff. Stakeholders believed that the uncertainties of Brexit and a fall in the value of sterling had made the UK a less attractive destination for highly-skilled workers from the EU. This had a knock-on effect of increasing the demand for skilled workers from outside the EU, most of whom use Tier 2 visa routes to enter the UK. There were many criticisms of this visa route and some employers, including those representing the NHS, also wanted the reintroduction of post-study visas (see Chapter Ten).

We discussed the range of options that the Government might introduce to regulate EU migration after Brexit. Free movement with a job offer was the policy option most favoured by stakeholders. Employers did not want temporary visa regimes for EU nationals, as they wanted to be able to keep and invest in hard-working and skilled staff. We also found that there was little appetite for devolving immigration powers except in Scotland. Stakeholders felt that regional visas would not work for industrial sectors such as construction where business needs to move workers around the UK. Stakeholders in some of the UK's smaller cities also feared that a regional visa system would risk them losing out to London and other core cities.

Employers' representatives often said in stakeholder panels that they understood that a majority had voted for more control, and that this needed to be addressed, but hoped that new controls could be as 'light touch' and as flexible as possible, given economic needs and impacts. There is an ongoing debate among economic stakeholders to try to identify specific reforms which could satisfy the public expectation of controls while maintaining flexibility for employers, but there is very little public engagement in this debate.

We also heard many of the frustrations that employers face when trying to recruit skilled staff from outside the EU through Tier 2 visa routes. We were told that the Home Office "*was not business friendly*" and "*every person we bring in through Tier 2 feels like a battle.*" There was a specific concern that the Tier 2 (General) visa regime places an overall cap on employer Restricted Certificates of Sponsorship, currently set at 20,700 per year and allocated monthly. This cap was, for a number of consecutive months in 2018, preventing employers such as the NHS bringing into the UK essential staff that they had already recruited.

Some business groups, NHS employers and universities felt that visa fees, alongside the Immigration Skills Charge and the Immigration Health Surcharge, were now a barrier to recruiting the skilled staff that they need. At the same time, employers felt that the Immigration Skills Charge was ineffective in incentivising the training of British staff to fill skilled jobs. Many employers also felt that the Home Office did not understand their needs. In particular, stakeholders found the process of bringing in staff through Tier 2 routes to be time consuming and bureaucratic and was particularly burdensome for small business.

"The government makes things very, very difficult for us…. Tier 2 needs an immense overhaul. It's a money-making waste of time. There are so many hoops to jump through before we even get sight of a person."

NHS stakeholder, West Midlands.

Both the citizens' panels and the stakeholders recognised the contribution that skilled and high-skilled migrants made. Employers wanted policy change that would make the recruitment of highly skilled migrants easier, now and after Brexit. The citizens' panels expressed no desire to restrict highly-skilled migration, so there was there was consensus on this issue. There was also consensus between employers and the public on other issues: on securing the rights of EU nationals in the UK and on opposition to temporary visa regimes.

In many places, employers recognised that they needed greater public consent for low-skilled migration. Some of the business groups suggested ways of gaining more public support, for example, by giving local authorities prior notice of the recruitment of large numbers of migrant workers.

"Companies and local councils need to be far, far more in tune with each other so they can build the infrastructure around the numbers… I can't recall at any time anything passing my desk from local authorities willing to assist integration."

Business stakeholder, East of England.

However, in some locations there was a disjuncture between the views of business stakeholders and those of the public. Here, stakeholders often seemed unaware of the strength of public concerns about issues such as neighbourhood decline. In several cases, stakeholders described the public as *"misinformed"* and *"misled by the Daily Mail"*, with the implicit assumption that being supplied with the proper facts about immigration would help change minds. Yet much evidence on public attitudes shows that such a 'myth-busting' approach has little impact on people's views.

Although many of our business stakeholders stressed their difficulties recruiting staff, the rate of unemployment among 16-25 year olds is 12%, nearly three times the rate for the overall population[44]. Underemployment and precarious work also disproportionately affect this group. It is, therefore, unsurprising that some of the strongest concerns about the labour market impact of migration came from young people, most often non-graduates. In many parts of post-industrial England there is a strong historic memory of the 1980s recession when many people lost their jobs. Being told that employers cannot fill vacancies in Bolton, Chesterfield and Middlesbrough does not chime with local views. After 15 years of static wage growth, being told by a business group that "immigration is good for the economy" may trigger the thought that "it's working better for you than for me."

In our stakeholder meetings in Scotland we spent time discussing population. As already noted, Scotland has a target to increase its population, with the aim of driving economic growth and making rural services more sustainable[45]. But as we argue in Chapter Twelve, the rationale for this policy does not resonate with the public, who have yet to hear or engage with this demographic case for immigration.

It is natural for business advocates for immigration reform to argue for the needs of the specific sector that they represent. Reviewing our 60 visits, however, we feel that these organisations would be more successful in achieving their aims if they did more to work across sectors, to acknowledge public concerns, and to engage with local residents, migrants and councils to find solutions.

IS CONSENSUS POSSIBLE?

We set out to examine public views on labour migration and better to understand the issues that concern them. We also wanted to find out what type of immigration reforms would be capable of securing public consent. Our citizens' panels and two national surveys demonstrate broad public support for highly-skilled migration, both from within and outside the EU. There is also support for intermediate and low-skilled migration, where people see migrants as fulfilling an economically important role, and contributing. There are, however, widespread public concerns about low-skilled EU migration into the UK. Some of these anxieties focus on the lack of control the UK Government has over migration from the EU, in particular the absence of criminal vetting of would-be migrants. Other concerns focus on negative local impacts associated with large-scale migration, particularly neighbourhood decline in areas housing many migrant workers. Engaging with and addressing these concerns is key to gaining public consent.

Participants in the citizens' panels tended to have similar views about different flows of immigration, which spanned referendum and party political divides. Yet broad agreement on many of the pressures and gains of immigration will not easily translate into a consensus on the post-Brexit system without much stronger political leadership on this issue. Participants with broadly similar views of how to manage migration in principle have different priorities when it comes to balancing that against other issues, such as the merits and risks of Brexit itself, or the priority to be given to economics, sovereignty and migration control in a post-Brexit settlement. The current freedom of movement rules are likely to change after Brexit, though the timescale and nature of those changes remain unknown. A proposed white paper on immigration setting out the UK Government's preferred options has been delayed. It was originally promised for autumn 2017, but has been delayed until autumn 2018 at the latest.

The Government has put off engaging in the migration debate for the first two years after the referendum. As a result, debate on the most difficult political issue of Brexit seems likely to begin in earnest, only during the most highly politicised phase of the Brexit negotiations so far, coinciding with Parliament being asked to approve the Withdrawal Agreement deal that the Government has

been able to negotiate, or to consider the fallout of a 'no deal' outcome. While the Government acknowledges that any new post-Brexit system will take time to develop and deliver, there has been little effort to communicate this to the public.

The task for the Government is to put forward a system that works for employers and is capable of securing public support. We believe that such a system needs to pass seven tests, showing that it is:

- workable for the economy and employers;
- simple and deliverable as policy;
- fair to migrants;
- fair to local communities and will not lead to negative impacts;
- capable of securing public consent across social and political divides;
- capable of securing political support in the UK;
- negotiable with the EU27.

There is little support for temporary migration regimes covering EU nationals, either from employers or the public. We believe that a resident labour market test, where a job is advertised locally at a job centre for a period of time before being advertised more widely, would also fail to gain broad public and employer support, although the EU allows the Swiss government to take such measures. (Since July 2018 Swiss residents registered at a job centre must be given five days' advance notice of any job vacancy before it is published more widely, a measure permitted by European community law)[46]. But many UK employers rely on word-of-mouth recruitment and/or employment agencies to fill vacancies, which are not covered by such policies[47].

Although there is public support for an overarching labour migration system covering EU and non-EU nationals, we believe that an expanded points-based system would struggle to be practically workable. It would be overly bureaucratic for employers and migrants. It is also an approach that would restrict the UK's options in negotiations with the EU27, and in other trade and economic negotiations. The very different levels of public consent for different flows of migration give ministers scope to agree to preferential migration deals, both within the EU and beyond it, especially for those skilled and student migration flows for which there is the broadest public support. Securing consent for low- and semi-skilled migration, whether from within the EU or beyond it, will require concerted efforts.

Looking at the evidence, there are four policy options that could be explored in an effort to meet these seven tests. These options assume UK sovereignty over immigration policy (though other economic and political choices over Brexit options may come to restrict this). They are:

1. Free movement with mandatory Home Office registration and the exclusion of those with unspent criminal convictions.

2. Free movement with mandatory registration and a job offer, which could also include the exclusion of those with unspent convictions.

3. Mandatory registration with a bar on recruiting EU nationals into jobs that pay less than the hourly National Living Wage.

4. A preferential work-permit system for EU nationals, covering some or all low-skilled work. Here, EU nationals would register with the Home Office and then receive a work permit, which would be needed before starting work. Such an approach could act as an emergency brake, or could actively seek to limit the numbers of EU nationals working in specific industrial sectors.

Securing a consensus for any of these options will be one of the biggest political challenges for the Government after Brexit.

Those options which involve 'light touch' reforms to free movement will be preferred by politicians whose strong priority is to protect trade and single market access. This approach will also be popular with employers. It will be easier to make the case for relatively modest reforms to voters and parts of the country that would have preferred to remain in the EU, but these options will struggle to secure broader political and public consent, particularly among those who voted to leave the EU, who are expecting more significant changes to immigration policy. The National Conversation suggests that it would be all the more important, if this is where we end up, to have concerted action to address the local impacts of immigration, dealing with issues such as neighbourhood decline and integration.

Options which involve more sovereign control over immigration will land better with those sections of the public who would be disappointed by a 'light touch' approach. However, the Government may struggle to convince business that such reforms can be delivered without significant economic impacts on the market and trade access that the UK seeks to secure after Brexit. It would also need

to communicate how such reforms would be phased in, to avoid over-promising and raising public expectations of greater control that are unlikely to be met.

Our experience in the citizens' panels, and the divided opinions in the ICM national research findings, show that significant numbers of the public, some of them with concerns about immigration, will struggle to understand the UK's chosen approach, whatever the final policy package turns out to be. This makes the need for Government communication on this issue even more necessary. During the Brexit negotiations, and again once they have concluded, we believe the Government needs to communicate its policy to members of the public through a properly resourced information campaign on all the publicly salient aspects of Brexit. This should take place alongside on-going public engagement on immigration and integration that we also recommend in this report.

Whatever the shape of the post-Brexit settlement, changes to immigration policy alone will not be enough to secure public consent for immigration. We believe that the Government must also prioritise addressing some of the local impacts of rapid migration, particularly those that relate to integration and neighbourhood decline that we discuss in Chapter Twelve.

10. Universities and students

Half of all international migration has come from outside the EU in recent years and international students are a large component of non-EU migration to the UK. In the academic year 2016-2017, some 442,375 students from outside the UK were studying in UK higher education institutions, 19% of the total higher education student body[48]. Analysis undertaken by Universities UK suggests that international students generated £10 billion of export earnings and that on- and off-campus spending of international students produced £25.8 billion in gross output for the economy, supporting 206,600 full-time equivalent jobs across the UK[49].

Many of our universities are global leaders, with international students contributing invaluable economic, diplomatic and cultural benefits for the UK. Yet the policy debate about student migration has been polarised in the UK, with universities pitted against Government ministers. Universities UK, the body representing the higher education sector, argues that that Government policies in terms of its ambitions for growth *"are modest compared to our competitors, and our visa regime is also more restrictive."*[50] The organisation believes that including international students in the net migration target – which the Government still aims to reduce – sends out the wrong message to potential students, discouraging them from coming to the UK.

While immigration is a high profile issue, there has been little attempt to understand the detail of public attitudes to student migration in the UK. Is the Government's decision to include international students in the net migration target reflective of a public preference for reductions in the numbers of international students? Or do the views of university vice chancellors more accurately reflect what people think? Are attitudes to international students different in university towns? This chapter draws from our citizens' panels and two surveys and sets out opinion about student migration.

STUDENTS, NOT MIGRANTS

Citizens' panels across the UK generally see international students as students and not as migrants. In Guildford we were told *"If they're studying you don't really think about that as immigration. It's when they start work, you start thinking that"*.

Most of those who have taken part in the citizens' panels see migration as a permanent or semi-permanent condition. Almost all participants believe that most students return to their home countries at the end of their courses and do not remain in the UK, so felt they are not 'migrants'. There is also a perception that most international students come from outside the EU, and that non-EU migration is better controlled by the Government. Participants expressed significant concerns about abuse of student visas in only three of the 60 citizens' panels, with reference made to media coverage of bogus colleges. Overall, there seems to be a high degree of public confidence in the integrity of student immigration regimes and little concern about the risk of over-staying visas.

> *"There are a lot of restrictions on students from outside of the EU. They can't just come in. There are those who are a lot better and probably more qualified but because they've got to jump through a lot of hoops, they can't just get in."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Sutton Coldfield.

CONTRIBUTION

The citizens' panels generally saw international students as people who made a positive contribution to the universities in which they studied and to the wider community. Many participants know that international students from outside the EU pay much higher tuition fees than UK and EU students. A few citizens' panels described how the fees of international students benefited the whole student body as it enabled the universities to provide better facilities. Some participants believed that if non-EU student numbers were reduced, UK students would have to pay higher tuition fees.

"They are paying £60,000 a year. So we need them to support the universities and the universities actually encourage them to come in, which is fine because they need an education."

Citizens' panel participant, North Tyneside.

The citizens' panels also saw the local spending power of international students. In Middlesbrough, where Teesside University is located, we were told: *"they're normally very wealthy so they do bring a lot of money to the area."* In many parts of the UK, citizens' panels felt that off-campus spending of international students was beneficial for local retailers and had led to the regeneration of high streets.

"I think any city which has a significant student population, those people do contribute. The only people I ever see spending the real money in town are the Chinese students in designer shops. It may not be what we're traditionally used to but now Loughborough it's a dynamic place, with all of its new eateries. Without the university, it would really be a bit of a dead town."

Citizens' panel participant, Leicester.

Some citizens' panels believed that student migration had helped universities to expand and bring additional skilled jobs to the area. In Aberystwyth, the university had helped to reduce population decline in Ceredigion by providing skilled work in a county where much employment is low-skilled and low paid.

'National gain, but local pain' is a sentiment that many of our citizens' panels associated with EU migration. Most people felt that EU migration has brought benefits, but not enough has been done by business and the Government to manage the local pressures of EU migration. This contrasts with their views on student migration. Here, most of those who took part in the citizens' panels saw the *local* gains of international student migrant and generally did not associate this type of migration with negative local impacts such as pressures on housing and public services. This view was consistent in all areas and tended to be held irrespective of a person's background, job or level of education.

THE WIDER SOCIAL BENEFITS OF STUDENT MIGRATION

In addition to economic benefits, a number of citizens' panels described other benefits to student migration. The citizens' panel we held in Exeter was aware of the 'soft power' of international students. Significant proportions of the world's political and business leaders have been educated in the UK and it is argued that this experience cements diplomatic good will and makes it more likely that a former student will invest in this country[51].

"They're studying and enhancing their skills which could then be used if they come back to their home country. I also think it improves good will between our country and other countries and I assume the people who come here will end up with responsible jobs in their own country and will have a feeling of good will towards this country".

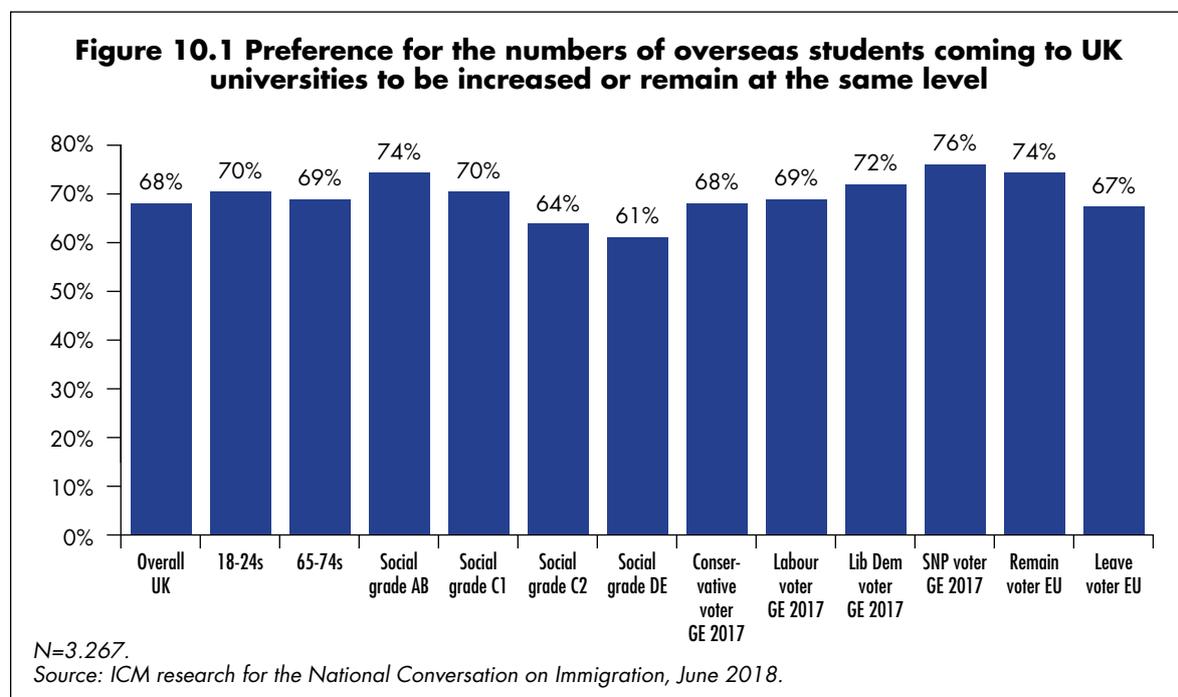Citizens' panel participant, Exeter.

In a number of places, for example, Aberdeen and Lincoln, participants felt that the presence of international students had enriched the everyday life in the UK's towns and cities. In Aberystwyth, one participant described eating food cooked for him by a group of Malaysian students. The majority of citizens' panels included graduates, with some participants describing long-lasting friendships with international students.

Citizens' panels and stakeholders in Aberdeen, Aberystwyth, Hull and Lincoln believed that the presence of international students had contributed to a more internationalist and outward-looking ethos in these places. Until the arrival of migrants from the EU, students were the main source of ethnic diversity in many of these places. The long history of student migration made more recent cultural change seem less unusual and threatening, and helped towns and cities absorb newcomers.

We were also struck by the pride that some people took in their local university, with many of these institutions described as the "*finest in the world*" or excelling in particular subjects. This feeling was not only associated with the UK's leading Russell Group universities; participants also praised new institutions such as Central Lancashire, Lincoln, Nottingham Trent and Teesside universities. The presence of a university in a town can help generate a stronger and more inclusive sense of a local, civic identity which is capable of embracing newcomers.

From the evidence we gathered in our visits across the UK, we believe that the majority of the public feels that international student migration is beneficial to this country. International students are seen as bringing tangible benefits to local communities and there are few concerns about the abuse of the student visa system. This support for student migration was also shown in our two surveys. Although the open survey was largely taken by people who had the strongest opinions about migration, both positive and negative, only two negative comments (out of 9,256 responses) were made about international student migration. There was a significant number of participants in the open survey whose general views about immigration were largely negative, yet expressed no desire to reduce the numbers of international students.

In the nationally representative ICM research, some 68% of respondents were happy for the number of international students to be increased or remain at the same level (24% increase and 44% remain at the same level). Only 21% of respondents wanted to reduce international student numbers. Support for international students was evident across all age groups, ethnicities, social grades, political affiliation and places (Figure 10.1). Those who voted UKIP in the 2017 general election were the only outliers, with 40% of this group wanting to reduce international student numbers.

Figure 10.1 Preference for the numbers of overseas students coming to UK universities to be increased or remain at the same level

N=3.267.
Source: ICM research for the National Conversation on Immigration, June 2018.

DISSENTING VOICES AND TOWN-GOWN DIVIDES

While there is broad public support for international student migration, there were some dissenting voices. A few participants who had recently been students felt that universities had become too big as a consequence of increased recruitment from within and outside the UK. This made their experience of being a student less positive.

> *"In Southampton it was just really straining the town like the infrastructure. If I wanted to go to the library, you had to get there really early and leave really late as well. It was just so busy."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Bexley.

In four of the five citizens' panels we held in Scotland – in Aberdeen, Dumfries, Edinburgh and Paisley – some participants felt that international students were taking the place of Scottish students. This view was more surprising, given that these four citizens' panels held many positive views about other forms of migration. Students who live in Scotland (or are from EU countries) do not have to

pay tuition fees in Scottish universities. This seems have fuelled a belief that Scotland's universities prioritise international students from outside the EU over Scottish students for financial reasons. However, our nationally representative ICM survey did not indicate any statistically significant difference in the desire to reduce the number of international students in Scotland (22%) compared with all of the UK (21%). Some 69% of the respondents who lived in Scotland were happy for the numbers of international students to be increased or remain at the same level.

> *"I know with universities it's a strain, because they pay fees, and it can take away from Scottish students who don't pay fees. And then if you have international students who pay £38,000 you obviously want your university to boost them. I don't know how you would resolve this."*

Citizens' panel participant, Paisley.

The view that universities prioritised international students over those from the UK was occasionally voiced outside Scotland, sometimes with the accusation that a particular university was not interested in local students and the local community. This view was particularly strongly held in Durham, Swansea and Banbury, the latter located 20 miles north of Oxford.

– *"Well presumably they [students] are bringing money into the country, students coming here. A lot of Chinese want to go to Oxford and Cambridge universities. They all want to bring money in for education here and I presume afterwards some might stay, but a lot of them go back."*
– *"I think this might be a little off track, but our higher education system seems to do well for others coming into our country to access, but what about our children? Why aren't they doing these highly skilled jobs, working in the NHS as doctors?"*
– *"They have to pay. Well obviously everyone has to pay to go to university now."*
– *"But why isn't it available for our children? It's there, but they're coming in and they're getting a good education here at Oxford."*
– *"I think it's because they're paying."*
– *"Yes, but there should be a way of supporting our children to have success."*

Dialogue between citizens' panel participants, Banbury.

We also found tensions emerging in more isolated areas, usually places where low-wage, low-skilled jobs were now predominant and where traditional industries had declined. Berwick-upon-Tweed, Carlisle, Chesterfield and North Tyneside were among the places where participants shared concerns that there was insufficient skills training for young people and policy had become too focussed on the higher education sector. Many people wanted to see greater investment in training so as to better equip local residents with the skills they need to find work and lessen reliance on migrant workers.

> *"There is so much emphasis on going to university that we have forgotten about the 50% who don't."*

Citizens' panel participant, North Tyneside.

There were some significant town-gown tensions in some of the places we visited, particularly, Aberdeen, Durham, Edinburgh, Lincoln, Southampton and Swansea. Conflict over parking, pressures on GP practices, late night noise and poorly-maintained private rental accommodation appeared to be issues of concern for some people. In Durham, someone who was reasonably positive about migration and a graduate himself told us that he *"hated all students."* In some of these places, participants felt that new student accommodation had changed the character of some neighbourhoods. However, it was notable that in Durham and Swansea, where the town-gown conflict appeared greatest, the citizens' panel did not specifically see international students as a problem, rather the overall student body and the university institutions.

The stakeholder meetings included representatives of universities. They were generally aware of these town-gown tensions and in some cases described initiatives that had been taken to deal with them. The City of Lincoln Council has brought in landlord licensing schemes in some areas to make sure that rental property is maintained. This helps prevent neighbourhoods with large amounts of such accommodation going into a spiral of decline. The council, together with the police, a number of neighbourhood associations and the two universities run an annual 'shush' campaign to reduce late night noise in the city.

Overall, the concerns that were raised about student migration and universities were minority views, apart from in Banbury, Durham and Swansea, where they appeared to be held by most citizens'

panel participants. And as noted above, international students were not blamed for town-gown tensions; rather they were seen as the responsibility of all students and the university.

The number of students studying for full-time first degrees increased by 31% in the years between 2006-2007 and 2015-2016[52]. Student numbers are increasing in most higher education institutions, boosted by ambitious expansion plans, some of which are causing tensions[53]. Across the UK, support for international student migration is currently high and most people see the benefits that universities bring to towns and cities. But local residents do not have an endless supply of goodwill; already in some places there are signs that this support is starting to unravel. Academic staff, students and local communities are starting to ask questions about the size of universities and whether bigger always means better, both in terms of students' experiences and the impact on the local community. This suggests a case for reviewing the size and the community links of universities, moving to a landscape of more institutions that are smaller in size and more widely distributed across the UK so as to spread higher education's economic and social benefits.

We also believe that some universities need to renew their links with their local communities. Many already do much good work, through activities such as student volunteering and programmes to widen the participation in higher education of under-represented groups. But in some institutions, community links are weak and uncoordinated, being left to individuals or particular departments. In our visits we saw some universities making much of local commitments, but others who expressed ambivalence about these links. It was often the research-led universities that saw global reach and local engagement as an either/or issue, with an implicit contrast between globally and locally-engaged institutions. Indeed, one stakeholder from a Russell Group university said that local engagement "was the role of the other university", a post-1992 teaching university in the area.

It is not good that some of our leading universities are resented by those who live near to them and are felt to be prioritising, for financial reasons, international students over locals. Universities must also better address the impact a large student population can have on housing and the NHS.

Such renewal of community links is even more necessary since the EU referendum, where almost all university staff backed Remain[54]. In the months after the June 2016 vote, academics have been among the most vocal critics of Brexit, with some of our universities emerging as Remain islands in a sea of Leave voting communities. As the National Conversation on Immigration has progressed, we have become concerned that not enough is being done by universities to bridge these social divides. We are also troubled that some academic staff who have attended stakeholder events have sounded contemptuous of those who voted Leave or been unwilling to engage with those who voted differently, for example, accusing them of being *"misinformed Daily Mail readers"*. If universities are to retain public support, including public consent for recruiting international students, they need to reach out and have strong links into their local communities.

POLICY CHANGES AND CONSENSUS

The stakeholder meetings, citizens' panels and open survey asked participants about the policy changes they wanted, so as to make migration work better for everyone. It was notable that almost no-one in the citizens' panels or who took our open survey wanted changes to regulations on student migration, even in places such as Durham and Swansea where attitudes were less positive.

University staff attended stakeholder meetings in many places we visited, both academic staff and those responsible for international student recruitment and welfare. They raised five issues that they wanted changing, first and foremost the removal of international students from the net migration target and clarity on post-Brexit regulations for university staff and students.

The higher education sector has advocated taking students out of the net migration target since 2012. Universities have argued that as most students return home at the end of their studies, the impact of students on net migration is negligible, an assertion supported by the Home Office's own administrative data[55]. Stakeholders who attended our meetings argued that including students in the net migration target had impacted on Home Office policy. In addition to applying for a Tier 4 student visa licence to enable them to bring in international students, educational institutions also have to indicate to the Home Office the numbers of non-EU international students they intend to recruit – a process known as submitting Confirmations of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) allocations[56]. The CAS allocation acts as a type of quota. Universities feel that the net migration target has damaged their relationship with Home Office officials and that they no longer enter into a constructive discussion about how many CAS allocations to request.

It is still the Government's aim to reduce net migration to less than 100,000. Stakeholders also felt that this sent out the wrong message in countries from which the UK recruits international students. British universities now have many more competitors in the international student market, with Australia, Canada and Germany moving to attract more students. UK immigration policy is an issue

that has received some online and print media coverage, including in India and south east Asia. University staff from a range of different institutions argued that the reporting of the net migration target was a deterrent to student recruitment.

"The debate about immigration and the net migration target means that students in India are now looking elsewhere, to our competitors."

University stakeholder, London.

University stakeholders also wanted greater clarity on the post-Brexit immigration system. Some 11.8% of people directly employed by higher education institutes were thought to be EU nationals in 2016-2017, in both academic and support roles[57]. At the time of the first National Conversation on Immigration visits, the Government had not yet announced its plans to secure the status of EU nationals currently living in the UK, so this uncertainty was an issue raised by some stakeholders. The Government has since reached an agreement with the European Union on their rights and the Home Office has started to develop a new registration system for this group. There is, however, little indication about the Government's future intentions on student loans and tuition fees for EU nationals, save guaranteeing home fee status for current students until 2019-2020. Some university stakeholders were concerned that any move to significantly increase tuition fees for EU nationals either partially or to a full international fee would impact on student enrolment. There have been attempts to model the impact of EU and international fee harmonisation, with one paper suggesting that all UK universities apart from Oxford and Cambridge would experience a reduction in fee revenue as a consequence of such a scenario.[58] The decrease in student enrolments and this tuition fee income would be most strongly felt by the post-1992 universities – often the institutions that have strong local links and tend to see their role as educating local students.

Stakeholders from higher education also felt that operation of the Tier 2 work visas system made it more difficult to recruit academic staff, an issue that we discuss in the previous chapter. Many stakeholders wanted the re-opening of post-study work visas for non-EU graduates, a demand that was shared by NHS and business stakeholders as it would enable them to recruit skilled staff who are already in the UK. Although there are small and specific visa allocations for graduates, the main Tier 1 post-study work visa closed in 2012. With Canada, the United States and Australia all offering post-study visas, stakeholders felt that the UK's position puts its universities at a disadvantage.

There were many complaints about the administrative demands placed on universities by the Home Office. Higher education institutions are required to monitor the attendance of international students – in addition to the requirement for students to register with the police. While appreciating the need for immigration enforcement, university stakeholders wanted the Home Office to have more consideration for students' experiences in the UK which shapes their perception of this country. Given that compliance with visa conditions is now high among international students, stakeholders argued that regulations could be simplified.

"The whole system does not feel welcoming to students... It places huge demands on us [the university]. *The Home Office guidance runs to 800 pages. A gargantuan amount of data is collected on each student, but is that ever used? I don't know."*

University stakeholder, Scotland.

University stakeholders wanted the time that international students spent in the UK to be enjoyable and positive. A final set of requests for policy change were not aimed at the Home Office, rather at the higher education sector. They felt that universities needed to look at the experiences of international students in the UK, particularly in relation to their integration. They felt that more effort was needed to help Chinese students, in particular, to integrate into the wider student body and the life of the places where they study. This is an issue that has been highlighted in a number of recent studies, from the US, UK and elsewhere[59]. UKCISA is the organisation that advocates for international students and in 2004 its research suggested that just 15% of Chinese students said they had a British friend[60]. We were also told about racially motivated attacks on Chinese students in the UK. Students from China comprise over one fifth of the non-UK domiciled student body and their numbers far exceed any other national group[61]. Moreover, they tend to be over-represented in some subjects such as the sciences and economics and often tend to live in the most expensive halls of residence. There is obviously a financial risk to universities if recruitment from China falls due to student dissatisfaction. Although we were told about initiatives to help the social integration of Chinese students – for example, combining home and international student enrolment or having a conversation about integration with all students – stakeholders felt that these could be adopted more widely across the UK.

CONCLUSIONS

The citizens' panels did not see international students as migrants, because they believed that most of them returned home at the end of their studies. Participants also had very few concerns about the abuse of the student visa system. Generally, international students were seen as contributors, both culturally and economically. Moreover, the benefits of international student migration were felt tangibly and locally, and few of those who attended the citizens' panels wanted to reduce their numbers, a finding supported in the nationally representative survey. Policies that directly or indirectly discourage the recruitment of international students are simply not endorsed by most people in the UK.

The UK's universities are one of this country's greatest assets. Apart from the US, no other country has so many academic institutions in the world's top 100. Politics and policy needs to maximise the benefits that universities bring to the UK, both economically and in terms of soft power. International student migration, if well planned, benefits the whole student body, with the additional income generated by international students invested in new facilities, research, teaching and outreach.

There are many arguments in favour of increasing international student migration to the UK. With growth, however, comes a greater responsibility to local communities. Success should not mean complacency and a culture of expansion at any cost. Universities must be seen to serve local communities if they are to retain public support, including support for recruiting international students. Any major expansion of student numbers must be led and coordinated by the Government, with the aim of spreading the economic and social benefits, that universities can bring, more widely than at present. We believe that there are social and economic arguments for a new wave of university building, akin to the establishment of the 'plate glass' universities of the 1960s, with institutions set up in locations such as Berwick-upon-Tweed, Chesterfield-Mansfield, Grimsby, Peterborough, Southend-on-Sea and Wigan-St Helens.

11. Refugees

Refugee protection and integration were themes raised by in the citizens' panels and stakeholder meetings. For members of the public, refugees, as with other groups of migrants, were seen though a framework of contribution, control and fairness. Most citizens' panel participants were also sympathetic to the plight of refugees and believed that the Government should help them, both in and outside the UK. But at the same time this support was qualified and contingent on international and national events.

COMPASSION WITH CONTROLS

For the majority of the citizens' panels refugees were seen as a distinct category of migrants. Most citizens' panel participants voiced their sympathy for the plight of refugees fleeing war and persecution, although a minority expressed a view that *"charity begins at home"*. Views about refugees were often overlaid with concerns about security and stereotypes about Muslims or people of Middle Eastern origin.

Just one citizens' panel – in Berwick-upon-Tweed – showed little sympathy towards refugees. Here local stakeholders felt that a combination of the loss of key industries and recent migration to an area without much history of welcoming newcomers had led to some resentment being felt towards all migrants, including refugees.

We asked citizens' panel participants to write down five words that came into their mind when they heard the word 'refugee'. The analysis of these responses is given in Table 11.1. Terms associated with helplessness were the mostly commonly cited words, followed by the theme of 'war' and fleeing conflict. This activity showed that almost everyone who took part in the citizens' panels was aware of the factors that caused refugees to flee.

Table 11.1: Words that the citizens panels associated with 'refugee'

Frequency mentioned	Theme
1st (most mentioned)	Helpless - includes help/need or want or seeking help/helpless/help them/desperate/needy/in need
2nd	War - includes war torn/fleeing war/war zone/wars/conflict/bombs
3rd	Homeless – includes homeless/no home/home
4th	Poor – includes poor/poverty
5th	Incentive – includes benefits/housing/NHS/health provision/money/drain/better life/new life
6th	Fleeing - includes fleeing/running/escape/boats
7th	Fear – includes fear/scared
8th	Family – includes children/child/kids/family/toddler
9th	Sceptical – includes genuine? /economic migrant
10th	Sad – includes sad/sorry
11th	Victim – includes victim/victim of circumstance
12th	Terror – Includes terror/terrorism

The majority of participants believe that the UK should offer sanctuary to refugees. A compassionate but controlled policy towards refugees was a common demand of many citizens' panels.

"We do need immigration, and we also need compassion as well, for people who need refuge. I think it should be controlled but it should be controlled with a heart, but not some open door policy."

Citizens' panel participant, Durham.

Compassion for refugees was matched by a desire for effective controls on refugee flows. Many participants wanted the UK government to have control over the numbers of refugees admitted to the UK. Images of the movement of refugees across Europe fuelled perceptions that refugee flows are uncontrolled and that "*the gates open.*" Very few people were aware of the application process for asylum, yet many in the citizens' panels had the view that that not all asylum claims were genuine. When asked, many participants wanted more rigorous security vetting of asylum-seekers and robust procedures to assess whether asylum-seekers were genuinely fleeing war and persecution.

"If you are a genuine refugee you should be taken in. When you see the bombing in places like Iraq you can't even imagine what it would be like. Like if you were a family of four trying to keep your kids safe as bombs are going off and you don't know who to turn to because on one side you've got the militants and then on the other side you've got the Government and they're both as bad as each other. So it is a very difficult situation, but genuine refugees we should help."

Citizens' panel participant, North Tyneside.

Just 13% of those surveyed in our nationally representative ICM research disagreed with the statement *'Britain should protect refugees fleeing war and persecution'*. A majority of those surveyed (55%) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Although the open survey was largely completed by people who had strong opinions about immigration – very positive or negative – there was support for refugees across the spectrum of views. Among many of those who might be termed immigration rejectionists, who gave 1 or 2 on the impact question[62] and shared hostile views, there was an acknowledgement that the needs of refugees were different from other groups of migrants.

"Asylum policy is outdated and applies to the events of World War Two. We should give refuge to those in need but those that have been granted asylum should be monitored and checked. If refugees return to the country they have fled from for holidays then the asylum claim must be revoked. Child refugees should actually be children. Asylum should be considered as temporary and reviewed over time."

Open survey respondent who gave 1 to the impact question.

The ICM research showed that there is more support for refugee protection among those who have professional, managerial or supervisory jobs, than those in lower-skilled forms of employment. But this survey showed that support for protecting refugees was held by people across all social backgrounds, ages and ethnicities. Indeed, we found sympathy for refugees in locations where people were sceptical about the benefits of labour migration. For example, in Merthyr Tydfil, where the citizen's panel was often sceptical about the benefits of immigration, participants drew on Britain's proud history of taking in refugees during the Second World War. In Basildon, where participants felt that migration from the EU had a direct and negative impact on their lives, the tone of the discussion changed when we discussed refugees. The image of Alan Kurdi, the Syrian refugee child who drowned in the Mediterranean, was remembered by this group who saw refugees as people who were "*desperate*" and "*scared*". Most of the Basildon citizens' panel wanted to keep refugee numbers at the same level.

"I do think if we didn't have as much immigration, maybe we could take in more [refugees]. *I'm all about keeping our country British, but also to be British you have got to understand what people go through. Like what the Jews went through in World War Two, same with those in Syria. These people are running for their lives, and some might not be genuine, and we've seen that, but there are true ones."*

Citizens' panel participant, Basildon.

There is a long history of public support for refugee protection in the UK, although sympathy is often matched with questions and concerns. Indeed our reactions to refugees arriving from Syria can seem remarkably similar to responses hundreds of years ago to groups such as the Huguenots[63]. The desire for compassion with controls is a sentiment that has long been present in the UK, but three factors now appear to sway current attitudes to refugees:

1. Greater awareness of the Syrian Crisis

News coverage of the Syrian crisis appears to have led to a better understanding about refugees, although in some cases the citizens' panels differentiated between refugees from Syria and those coming from elsewhere. The Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme has also brought refugee protection closer to home, raising awareness of the plight of refugees in the local authorities that have taken part in the scheme.

– *"Wasn't it not too long ago that the Syrian people who had come over had been dropping off flowers on different doorsteps to thank the locals?"*
– *"Refugees."*
– *"Yeah refugees."*
– *"That was nice, they should do more of that."*
Dialogue in the Aberystwyth citizens' panel.

In September 2015, soon after the drowning of Alan Kurdi, Prime Minister David Cameron committed the UK to evacuating 20,000 Syrian refugees from camps in the Middle East through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. Running until 2020, local authorities – and sometimes community and faith-based organisations – are responsible for organising a package of support for the refugees who have been brought to the UK. Over two thirds of local authorities across the UK (including district councils in England) had accepted Syrian refugees through this scheme by March 2018[64], with the arrival of the refugees usually accompanied by local media coverage.

There has been some local opposition to taking in Syrian refugees but this has come from a very small number of people. Moreover, some local authorities, as well as faith and civil society organisations, have taken the opportunity of Syrian resettlement to have an open and public debate about the UK's responsibilities to refugees. This engagement has been particularly important in areas with little or no history of accommodating asylum-seekers and refugees.

In some places, council staff or charities have talked to the future neighbours of the Syrian refugees before they moved into their new homes. Other councils have held public meetings or proactively encouraged the public to give their views. In many areas, local authorities encouraged the public to donate money or items such as toys and clothes. This engagement, alongside local media coverage, seems to have provoked a more open public debate about refugee protection, reinforcing norms of decency and fairness. The Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme was a topic that was brought up in about a third of citizens' panels, with most people agreeing that their local councils have been right to take in refugees.

"I think in Shrewsbury, locally to me, there are about three Syrian families and I think Shropshire could do a bit more... I think in the end, we're all human beings from planet earth, all humanity."

Citizens panel participant, Shrewsbury.

While a comparatively small number of people have had direct contract with Syrian refugees, there seems to have been 'multiplier' effects within the local authorities concerned. The decision to take in Syrian refugees appears to have shifted social norms about responses to refugees – the contextual effect described in academic research[65].

2. The image of Alan Kurdi

Although Alan Kurdi drowned in September 2015, this tragedy was brought up in nearly half of the citizens' panels. Many people talked about being shocked and upset by the image of a dead child. Participants also tried to put themselves in the place of families fleeing fighting in Syria.

"The image that always stays in my brain was that little boy that was washed up on the beach….If I was that mum, and I had to protect my two children, would I get on a boat to get out of that country? Hell, yeah. I would be the first person on that boat."

Citizens' panel participant, Bedford.

3. Political and religious leadership

Political and religious leadership affects attitudes to refugees. Parliamentarians and council leaders who state their support for Syrian resettlement send out a clear message of welcome. In Scotland, leaders of all the main political parties have voiced their support for Syrian refugees and all but one local authority has taken refugees brought to the UK through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. This political leadership does seem to have had an impact on the way that the Scottish citizens' panels talked about refugees.

In many parts of the UK faith groups are at the forefront of initiatives to help refugees and faith leaders are among the most vocal advocates of refugee protection. The involvement of faith communities in refugee protection may partly account for stronger support for refugees in Northern Ireland and Scotland, compared with other parts of the UK. Our nationally representative survey showed that 55% of the overall UK population agreed that *'Britain should protect refugees fleeing war and persecution'*, but this figure rose to 62% among those living in Northern Ireland and 60% in Scotland. In Ballymena the citizens' panel comprised many middle-class church and chapel-goers. Some of them described the work of their churches to help newcomers.

"I would like to see us do our part. Like people have said, we have a duty of care to the existing population, but we should do as much as we can for refugees."

Citizens' panel participant, Ballymena

CONTINGENT SUPPORT

While 'compassion with control' was a majority view in almost all citizens' panels, we found that participants often had complex and conflicting opinions about refugees. A small number of participants had forebears and family members who were refugees or they had come to the UK as refugees themselves (in Bolton, Chesterfield, Enfield, Leicester and Redbridge). But this did not always lead to greater sympathy, rather a view that *"things worked better in the past."*

"Most people maybe round here tonight have families who came in as immigrants in this country. But the difference is, our families actually worked to make themselves better in the country, as opposed to trying to destroy the country."

Citizens' panel participant, Redbridge.

We asked the citizens' panels if they knew or had met any asylum-seekers or refugees. Some people had professional contact with refugees, because they worked as teachers or social workers. One of our citizens' panels included a foster carer who looked after unaccompanied refugee children. Sometimes these people voiced frustrations at a system which they felt did not offer adequate support for asylum-seekers and refugees.

Citizens' panels in the dispersal areas used to house asylum-seekers reported seeing young men who they assumed to be refugees 'loitering' in town centres. Apart from these professional and chance encounters, it was noticeable that very few participants – 3 out of 572 – reported having met refugees. The absence of positive and sustained social contact between refugees and the rest of the population means that most people rely on the media or these chance encounters to inform their views.

Public views about refugees seemed to have little to do with the numbers of asylum- seekers and refugees living a particular place, with attitudes being fairly consistent across the UK. Generally, refugee protection was not a more salient issue in places where the Home Office houses asylum-

seekers – 'dispersal areas' – than elsewhere in the UK. However citizens' panels in dispersal areas were more likely to report concerns about occasional negative encounters, generally young men *"hanging around"* on the streets, which made some people – particularly women – feel threatened. Indeed, there were sometimes gendered differences in responses to refugees, with female panel members in dispersal areas such as Hull, Leicester and Middlesbrough reporting that they felt intimidated by groups of young men, often described as asylum-seekers, hanging out in town centres. These were often the same people who showed the most sympathy towards refugees.

> *"If you go into Leicester town you'll find there's a lot of males, you can tell they're from wherever, there are a lot of males hanging around. And you think 'why are you are all around here?' If you're here to do a job, why do you hang around Leicester town centre? You notice it a lot more now, when I walk around, there are lots of frightening men hanging around. And I thought – brilliant, I'm going to get harassed. That slightly unnerves me."*

Citizens' panel participant, Leicester.

As we have stated, most people have sympathy for refugees, but many people also had questions and anxieties about security, numbers, welfare dependency and the behaviour of young, male asylum-seekers. At times, support for the principle of refugee protection felt fragile, and contingent on international and national events.

Many citizens' panels had concerns about refugee numbers or felt overwhelmed by size of human displacement in countries such as Syria. Many people talked about the flight of migrants and refugees across Europe and the large numbers of people involved. They had clearly been affected by the imagery of the 2015 'migration crisis.' In Knowsley we were told: *"I always have this image not of an individual refugee, but of thousands"*. Concerns about numbers contributed to the citizens' panels' desire for robust controls on refugee flows. However, about half (52%) of participants in the citizens panels and respondents in the nationally representative ICM research (45%) were happy for the numbers of refugees to be increased or to remain the same. It was common for the citizens' panels to voice support for refugees, but also to want to reduce their numbers or admit feeling confused or torn by this question. At the same time, participants tended to over-estimate the number of asylum-seekers arriving in the UK.

A number of international and national events appear to have dented support for refugees, including the flight of refugees across Europe, conditions in Calais, the evacuation of age-disputed children to the UK, shock events such as terrorist attacks and views about the integration of refugees.

Many citizens' panels talked about the Calais camps, particularly those held in southern England. Significant numbers of participants had visited this French town and described feeling threatened by what they saw. Others had seen coverage of Calais in the media and felt what was happening was evidence of a security risk and a lack of state control over refugee flows.

> *"I don't think there is any control over numbers. There is at least 30,000 in Calais, I think. You come along the ferry route and they try and get in your car. There are lots of them. So think those numbers are very under-rated. I think we should offer refuge for people who are in war zones. For humanity I think we have to. But I also understand that there are some rules about when you're seeking asylum you're supposed to do it in the first country you come to, and some of these countries are a long way away from us. I've been to Calais several times and you see it in the papers all the time and the press and I don't think that British borders have any control whatsoever."*

Citizens, panel participant, Shrewsbury.

The arrival of age-disputed children from Calais to the UK in late 2016 was mentioned in all but four of the citizens' panels. It was seen as further evidence of the untrustworthiness of refugees, as a security risk and further proof that the UK government could not be trusted to manage immigration.

– *"I honestly don't know whether the people who say they are refugees are refugees. I know that a lot of people are, but you get people coming over who aren't. You hear – again is it spin or not – people who are lying about their age or that they've got families and stuff like that. I just don't know what to believe."*

– *We had those three boys didn't we? Do you remember those three boys? We were thinking children, like they were five or six, but they had moustaches."*

Dialogue between citizens' panel participants, Bexley.

Refugees were also perceived as a security threat by some people. While many participants acknowledge that refugees from the Middle East are often fleeing from ISIS, participants sometimes argued that refugee flows could include extremist 'fifth columns'. This sentiment was heightened following the attacks on Manchester and London. In Trowbridge we were told: *"You have to think about Syrians, 995 are probably brilliant, the other five are probably terrorists."*

In many places, the citizens' panels' attitudes to Muslims impacted on how they saw refugees and sometimes references to Muslims and refugees were mixed or conflated. As already noted in Chapters Four and Eight, we are concerned about widespread prejudice towards Muslims, which takes two forms: stereotyping and construction of all Muslims as a threat. Some citizens' panels assumed that all or most refugees were Muslim. Views about security, residential segregation of Muslims in the UK and violent extremism were often brought up in the part of the discussion which covered refugees. As Table 11.1 shows, a significant number of the citizens' panel members associated the word 'refugee' with terrorism.

Perceptions that refugee integration was not working in mainland Europe was an issue raised in some citizens' panels. Here anti-Muslim prejudice underpinned some participants' views, with the underlying assumption that Muslims do not integrate and that Islam is incompatible with a British way of life. Particular reference was made to the sexual assaults on women in a number of German cities during New Year celebrations at the start of 2016, sometimes by women who were otherwise sympathetic to refugees.

"[Refugees] became a topic of conversation when Germany took so many in, and they seemed to be having trouble. And I kept thinking, why are these men on their own? That's one thing that did worry me, especially because of what's going on with ISIS and things like that. I kept thinking if it was families coming, you can see all of these families, it wouldn't bother people. It did bother me a little bit when I saw a lot of the men".

Citizens' panel participant, Newport.

Reponses to refugees were also far more gendered than to other groups of migrants. Although there are differences across counties of origin, there are proportionally more asylum applications lodged by men and boys in all western European countries than by women and girls. (In the UK in 2015 some 73% of primary asylum applicants were male). Indeed, the gender balance within Europe's asylum-seeking population is something that many women – and some men – in the citizens' panels had noticed. This provoked questions and anxieties about security, gender equality within refugee communities and, as we discuss below, the integration of young, male asylum-seekers.

Unfair and arbitrary treatment of asylum-seekers and refugees can also generate anxieties and concerns about the ability of the Government to manage immigration. In a number of citizens' panels, participants described high profile cases that had been in the media, for example, Bashir Naderi, the Cardiff teenager who fled Afghanistan aged 10 and faced removal from the UK when he turned 18. While expressing sympathy for the individuals concerned, these citizens' panels also felt these decisions were illogical, and saw such policy failures as further evidence of Government incompetence.

WORK AND INTEGRATION

A significant concern voiced by the citizens' panels was the perception that many asylum-seekers were not genuine. Rather than fleeing war and persecution, the groups often expressed concern that asylum-seekers were drawn to the UK by the perceived generosity of welfare benefits. The movement of refugees across Europe appears to have reinforced this view, with participants questioning the motives for such a journey.

"Well when they fear for their lives, I know it's a terrible thing. You see terrible things on the news. But isn't it the rule that they have to go to the first safest place, and if so why do they all suddenly chance coming here? Is it because once they're here it all boils down to the benefits system? I don't know whether I'm right, aren't you're supposed to go to the first safest country."

Citizens' panel participant, Wrexham.

Almost no-one in the citizens' panels knew that asylum-seekers are not allowed to work in the UK. At the same time, almost everybody knew that asylum-seekers were obliged to lodge their application in the first EU country they enter, although no-one mentioned the Dublin Regulation by name. This again shows the 'cognitive bias' or selectivity in what the public know about migration, an issue we discuss in Chapter Five. The citizens' panels remembered the requirements of the Dublin Regulation because it concurred with their view that asylum-seekers are drawn to the UK – and willing to travel across numerous other countries – because of the perceived generosity of the welfare system.

We encouraged further discussion about refugees by explaining that since 2002 asylum-seekers have not been allowed to work in the UK. Prior to this date asylum-seekers who had been in the UK for six months and not received a decision could apply for permission to work. Almost all participants were surprised that asylum-seekers could not work and thought this policy was illogical. They did not see work as a pull factor encouraging migration to the UK. Rather the citizens' panels believed that allowing asylum-seekers to work would allow them to make an economic contribution and prevent some of the misunderstandings attached to bored young men 'hanging around'.

"Where I work, I go to for coffee on an afternoon and I sit outside at this coffee place, Cafe Ten where they are all asylum-seekers. They sit there for a few hours and all they do is smoke and drink coffee. They're lovely fellows they all say 'hello' to you because you see them every day. But that's what people perceive that's what they do, that they sit there smoking and drinking coffee."

Citizens' panel participant, Middlesbrough.

In some discussions participants felt that allowing asylum-seekers to work would aid immigration enforcement as the Home Office would be able to track someone down through their National Insurance number. But the strongest argument for allowing asylum-seekers to work was that such a policy would help asylum-seekers to integrate. We also probed this view in the surveys, asking if they agreed or disagreed with the statement *'when people come to the UK seeking asylum it is important they integrate, learn English and get to know people. It would help integration if asylum-seekers were allowed to work if their claim takes more than six months to process'*. Overall, 71% of those who took part in the ICM research agreed with this statement. Support for such a policy was expressed by people from different social backgrounds and political outlooks, with 63% of Leave voters and 78% of Remain voters agreeing that asylum-seekers should be allowed to work.

"I think the ones that come over for work, integrate themselves more than those who don't work, the ones you work with and things come and hang out with you outside of work and make more of an effort, but some of their family members who don't work seem to have a less or limited social group."

Citizens' panel participant, Durham.

PUBLIC VERSUS STAKEHOLDER VIEWS ON POLICY CHANGE

In all the citizens' panels we have asked what policy changes they would like to see, in order for the Government to gain participants' trust and support. We also asked how the UK might improve the way it treats refugees. Some citizens' panels wanted more robust vetting of asylum-seekers to make sure that they did not pose a security risk and to make certain their application was genuine. (Most people knew very little about asylum determination processes and the checks that were already in place). In Bexley, where undocumented migration emerged as an issue, some participants wanted

asylum-seekers to be monitored so they did not go "under the radar" while their application was being processed. A few citizens' panels felt that the Government should give more help to enable refugees to integrate into their new homes. Using more of the UK's overseas aid budget to help refugees in the Middle East was another policy change that a small number of participants wanted.

In citizens' panels where participants had professional contact with refugees, there were usually some requests that centred around the processing of asylum claims or help for integration. In Ipswich, a social worker wanted the asylum-decision making process to be speedier, with policies put in place to help those who were rejected to return to their home countries. In Bolton, a participant felt that there should be a more equitable system for dispersing asylum-seekers across the UK. (At the time of our visit, Bolton had proportionately one of the largest populations of asylum-seekers of any local authority in the UK[66]).

> *"It is always the same couple of councils who take them on, it needs to be a bit more spread out."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Bolton.

Overall, few citizens' panels felt that changes to asylum policy would increase their confidence in the Government's handling of immigration, reflecting the lesser salience of refugee protection compared with migration from the EU. This view contrasted with the stakeholder meetings where refugee protection and integration formed a major part of the discussion. A significant number of those who attended our local stakeholder meetings were representatives of local authorities, civil society and faith organisations who were working directly with refugees. These organisations are listed in the appendix. Stakeholders voiced many frustrations and wanted a large number of changes which we have summarised in Table 11.2.

Table 11.2 Issues and changes wanted by stakeholders

Area of concern	Specific change
Asylum determination	Reduction in backlogs and the length of time to get an initial asylum decision.
	Improvements to the quality of initial asylum decisions.
	Better and more honest support for those who are refused asylum, to enable them to make the best decision about their future.
Asylum support	Better communication between the companies that organise accommodation for asylum-seekers (G4S, Serco and Clearsprings) and receiving councils and local charities.
	Making sure that there are fewer mistakes and delays in allocating Section 95 support for asylum-seekers.
	The up-rating of Section 95 support for asylum-seekers in line with inflation.
	Making sure that asylum-seekers supported by the Home Office are more equitably distributed across the UK.
	The enforcement of minimum standards for asylum accommodation.
Detention	Ending the use of indefinite detention for all immigration cases.
	Greater judicial oversight of detention.
Refugee resettlement	Addressing the failure by the UK Government to take the full quota of unaccompanied refugee children and young people who qualify for admission to the UK under the Dubs Amendment (Section 67) of the Immigration Act 2016.
	Addressing the practical and legal barriers to refugee family reunion, including for Syrian refugees admitted to the UK through the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.
	An early decision made about the future of Syrian resettlement, with the current programme set to end in 2020.
	A reduction of bureaucracy and delays for local organisations that want to become involved in the community sponsorship of refugees.
Integration	Recognition by the Home Office that help for integration should begin on arrival and not after refugee status has been granted.
	Fewer postcode lotteries in integration assistance, particularly in respect to English language classes.
	More funding for initiatives to help asylum-seekers and refugees who arrive in the UK through their own arrangements to integrate – along the same lines as the support offered to those who arrive through the Gateway Programme and the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.
	Changes to the Education and Skills Funding Agency rules, applying to England, which prevent asylum-seekers from attending subsidised – usually free – English language classes.
	More orientation courses to make asylum-seekers aware of UK traditions and norms, including behaviour towards women.
	Allowing asylum-seekers who have waited more than six months for a decision to work, to promote their integration and minimise adverse mental health impacts.
	Ending of the delays in getting Home Office documentation and National Insurance Numbers once refugee status has been granted and a longer grace period during which asylum-seekers are allowed to remain in asylum accommodation before being required to move on.

There were some differences in the changes that different stakeholders wanted. Civil society organisations that worked with refugees were more likely to want changes to the asylum determination process, or to voice frustrations about the treatment of specific clients. The views of these organisations also reflected current national campaigning priorities of refugee and human rights organisations, for example, on the Dubs Amendment or indefinite detention.

"My priority would be to change the quality of asylum decision making. It is crazy that so many people are rejected and then win their appeals. Nobody wins, not asylum-seekers and not the tax payer either."

Stakeholder, Middlesbrough.

Councils were more likely to want an early decision on the future of Syrian resettlement and also wanted changes to asylum support.

"Our generosity is spilling; it's been pushed and stretched. And the affordability of housing here has made it a very appealing proposition for people to come and seek additional housing for asylum-seekers, which places additional pressures on the city that will reach a tipping point. We are a very welcoming city, we're very proud of our history of accepting people fleeing violence and oppression. But there will come a point where there is a struggle to maintain that in light of the fact that we cannot afford it."

Council stakeholder, Bradford.

Many stakeholders also completed the open survey. We asked respondents what changes they wanted to (i) improve integration and (ii) to enable them to trust the Government's handling of immigration. Some 9% of all responses to these questions mentioned refugees. The comments often reflected the campaigning priorities of refugee and human rights organisations and were generally posted by those who had the most positive views about immigration.

"The Government should follow through on Dubs Amendment. Close Yarls Wood and treat refugees especially women and children more sensitively."

Online survey respondent.

In many cases, the public supports the changes that the stakeholders wanted, particularly in relation to improving refugee integration. As we have shown above, there is support for allowing asylum-seekers to work if they have waited for more than six months for a decision on their case. In our ICM research, 65% of respondents agreed that the Government should provide English lessons for those that need them. There was public support for fair and effective controls, in contrast to the current asylum system where long waits for decisions have become the norm.

Other changes that stakeholders wanted simply lacked public salience or were too complex or detailed for most people to understand. In some citizens' panels we asked questions about citizenship and immigration detention. We found that participants were confused by these questions. Immigration detention was simply not a salient issue. Most people do not know that some non-UK nationals can be detained, or they have no clear idea about the type of people who are held in detention centres, with most assuming these places hold criminals.

There were other changes that stakeholders wanted that would incur some public opposition, for example, the up-rating of asylum support. Asylum-seekers currently receive £37.75 per week to cover their living costs under Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 Section 95 support. A number of organisations have campaigned to peg the amount that asylum-seekers receive to the rate of inflation. Asylum support was discussed in some places. In wealthier areas such as London and Harrogate this allowance was considered insufficient. In more deprived areas such as Middlesbrough we were told that the £37.75 allowance was too generous as asylum-seekers had their utilities paid for them. This, in turn, fed a view that asylum-seekers were offered more generous welfare provision than British citizens. Of course, public opinion should not act as veto on such a policy change, but

at a time of 'contingent support' for refugees, it is harder to make the case to politicians for policy changes that many members of the public would oppose.

SECURING A CONSENSUS ON REFUGEE PROTECTION

We expect faith and civil society organisations to stand up for refugees and we need them to continue to do so. As well as having a devastating effect on the individuals concerned, high profile asylum policy failures can undermine public confidence in the Government to manage immigration in the UK competently and fairly. The activities of refugee and human rights organisations acts as a check and enables the Home Office to be held to account.

We need an asylum system that is efficient and fair and which is trusted by its users, their advocates and by the public too. Policy change is required to get a system that meets these criteria. But rather than try and engage the public with micro-policy changes, we believe the task of faith and civil society organisation is to build a culture of welcome and greater public support for the principle of refugee protection at a time when public views are characterised by what we have termed 'contingent support'.

The citizens' panels felt that communities that welcome new residents are places where most of us would want to live, irrespective of our countries of birth. Almost everyone moves home at some point in their lives, with 4.2 million people moving between local authorities in the UK in the year to June 2017[67]. Schools are good at welcoming new children and their parents, as are places of worship. Working with refugees and local volunteers, City of Sanctuary groups organise pop-up suppers in some parts of the UK to welcome all newcomers, not just refugees. But we could do more to build a culture of welcome.

Helping those more vulnerable than ourselves is a value which most of us support. Such a responsibility to others underpinned the development of the NHS and the welfare state. Protecting refugees is part of a tradition we should all want to defend, irrespective of our political views and social background.

This task of building public support for refugee protection is easier when politicians and civic leaders publicly stand up for refugees. In 2015, the Prime Minister's decision to admit 20,000 Syrian refugees was a strong articulation of the principle of refugee protection. As we were writing this report, the Government decided to admit some of the Syrian White Helmet volunteers who had been evacuated by the Israeli army to Jordan[68]. This is another example of the Government upholding the UK's tradition of refugee protection and sends out a clear message of welcome.

Central government also has a responsibility to follow through on these decisions, making sure there is funding and support for local authorities, faith organisations and civil society so that the resettlement of refugees does not contribute to the pressures that can undermine public trust on immigration.

There is also a broader task, in challenging anti-Muslim prejudice which underpins some of the anxieties about refugees. This is no small task, and will require strong political leadership at a national and local level, action to challenge stereotypes and positive local and UK-wide narratives of inclusion. We believe that relatively few civil society organisations working with refugees have acknowledged the scale and impact that anti-Muslim prejudice has on public perceptions of refugees or taken steps to address this.

Faith and civil society organisations that work with refugees need to engage with public concerns and broaden the base of their support. Some organisations do this well and the involvement of the public in supporting Syrian refugees has enabled a more open dialogue about refugee protection. But our visits show that in many parts of the UK faith and civil society organisations only reach a very small section of the public – those who are already very supportive of refugees. In many places there is often a disconnect between the views of stakeholders and the public, with some organisations simply not aware of the nature of public concerns about refugees.

Integration also strengthens support for the principle of refugee protection. The ICM research conducted for the National Conversation showed that where respondents knew migrants and refugees as friends or colleague they were 11 percentage points more likely to agree that Britain should protect refugees. Yet few people have contact with refugees and instead rely on the media to inform their views.

Employment is a driver of integration, as it enables refugees to meet others and become self-sufficient. Yet many refugees struggle to find work. Recent analysis of the Annual Population Survey shows that people who migrated to the UK to claim asylum are 19 percentage points less likely to be in employment than UK-born people and have weekly earnings that are 76% lower[69].

Many faith and civil society organisations recognise the importance of integration in building support for refugees and in our visits we came across many initiatives that supported this process. Refugee Action volunteers provide free English language classes and the organisation is campaigning to make sure asylum-seekers and refugees can access English language classes[70]. The British Red Cross Open Arms project, running in the north west, brings refugees and local residents together through shared interests and activities, which include football and other sports, parent and baby groups, gardening, cookery, arts and crafts. More of these initiatives are needed across the UK. Moreover, public policy needs to prioritise helping refugees find work.

"I think breaking down barriers between people who have issues with refugees and refugees who have no idea how to integrate is good and I think talking is a good place to start. I think if someone struggles with English language, English language training should be made readily available. I think integration as much as possible. But I do think at the same time you do need robust security screening and I think there's no easy answer to that."

Citizens' panel participant, Cambridge.

12. Local differences

Alongside the common themes that emerged in the citizens' panels there were some striking local differences in the views, issues and concerns that were raised. There were also substantial local differences in the salience of immigration as an issue and the balance between the perceived positives and negatives voiced by the public.

Personal circumstances and UK-wide events influence people's attitudes to migration, but so do local issues. In many ways, the public sees immigration as a national issue but through a 'local lens' which reflects their everyday experiences. We argue that in order to achieve an immigration system that works for everyone, we need to address pressure points such as neighbourhood decline, as well as understand the place-based factors that enable some areas to adapt to the changes brought about by immigration better than others.

THE LOCALISATION OF CONTRIBUTION, CONTROL AND FAIRNESS

As already noted, contribution, control and fairness were common themes in all of the citizens' panels. As well as seeing them operate at a national level, participants often drew on local examples and experiences. In many places migrants were seen as making a key contribution to the local economy. In Gloucester, Lincoln and March, the citizens' panel recognised the local contribution of migrant agricultural workers. In Dungannon we were told that that without migrants the local meat packing factory would close and there would be a knock-on effect for the town's shops and restaurants. The local contribution of the Gurkha population was discussed in the Folkestone citizens' panel: the Royal Gurkha Rifles has a battalion based in the town and Nepalese Gurkhas are by far the largest overseas born population in the area. Many Gurkha families have remained in the area after they have left the armed forces.

> *"I think the Gurkhas are a bit of a treasure of Folkestone. I've worked with quite a lot of Nepalese people over the last few years and pretty much on the whole they work very hard and don't complain and don't cause any trouble, and sure there's the odd exception but they seem a lot harder working than a lot of the Folkestonians."*

Citizens' panel participant, Folkestone.

Control was sometimes seen through a local lens in relation to concerns about clandestine entry. These tended to be voiced in places where migrants had entered the UK as stowaways or hidden in freight and had then been found along the side of motorways. Concerns about clandestine immigration were most strongly voiced in Bexley, Folkestone, Ipswich, Milton Keynes and Northampton, all of which are either near sea ports or major trunk roads.

> *"I work in a warehouse and we have trains coming in with all the car parts in and immigrants on a regular basis. But they all play the game. They all jump out, with nothing, no ID, nothing. And it's all 'no speak English, no speak English'. And you see it every week. And the police take them, there's a place they go to, get housed, and wait to get deported if they get deported."*

Citizens' panel participant, Milton Keynes.

Fairness and unfairness were also localised in our discussions, particularly in relation to the perceived labour market impacts of migration. Some participants felt that EU free movement gave employers access to a large labour force that was willing to undertake poorly-paid and insecure work. This then depressed wages and undercut employment conditions in a way that was unfair to local communities. Concerns about the labour market impacts of immigration were particularly prevalent in places such as Basildon, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Chesterfield, Kidderminster and Northampton. Here these views could often be linked to a particular employer, as in the case of Sports Direct, which has its headquarters just outside Chesterfield. Concerns about the under-cutting of wages and conditions of employment were also voiced in locations where the food processing, hospitality and distribution and logistics sectors provided a significant number of local jobs. These

concerns also extended to areas where there were local cases of exploitation or modern slavery, for example in car washes.

> *"They aren't getting paid the minimum wage half of them, they're getting paid a pittance and then they'll work for a pittance, and then people that do want the jobs, even for the minimum wage, can't get it because employers are paying illegal wages."*

Citizens' panel participant, Berwick-upon-Tweed.

SALIENCE OF IMMIGRATION

We asked each citizens' panel if immigration was something they talked about with friends, family and work colleagues. It was clear from the discussions that immigration mattered to people in some areas more than in others. For almost all of the participants in Basildon, Bedford, Chesterfield, Northampton, March and Merthyr Tydfil, immigration was a topic that they considered frequently and discussed with their friends and acquaintances.

In other locations the majority of participants felt that immigration only became a salient issue when 'trigger events' pushed it up the news agenda: for example, during the EU referendum, after terrorist attacks or following publication of images of the drowned child refugee, Alan Kurdi. In many places, participants talked about the role of media and social media – primarily Facebook – in increasing the prominence of immigration as a topic of everyday discussion.

In some places, school place allocation was a local trigger event that can make immigration a topic of conversation. There were other local triggers, for example, the arrest of clandestine entrants in a local area.

> *"I think it depends what's going on. Like recently, you've found out whether your child has a place for secondary school in September, whether you get your chosen school… things like that sort of swell up like a volcano. I know a friend that hasn't got into her catchment school. I know it's not just the thing of other people coming into our country… But they don't build schools, they don't build medical centres. They don't have the facilities for people."*

Citizens' panel participant, Southampton.

There were also locations where immigration was rarely a prominent issue of concern for the majority of participants, for example in London, as well as locations as diverse as Dungannon, Durham, Harrogate, Nottingham, Sutton Coldfield and Uckfield. In Birmingham and London, as well as in Dungannon, high proportions of the population had been born overseas. We believe that in these places migration and diversity have become a normal part of everyday life.

A long history of migration into a particular area can also make migration seem everyday and normal, even if the overall proportions of migrant and minority groups are small. This, too, can make immigration a less salient issue. In Banbury, both the citizens' panel and the local stakeholders felt the town's long history of internal and international migration has meant the arrival of EU migrants seemed less unusual. Many of our port cities have long histories of migration, too. In Knowsley, just outside Liverpool, as in Southampton and Swansea, the citizen's panels and stakeholders felt that such a history often made migration a more familiar part of everyday life: as one member of the Swansea panel said, "*We are used to foreign faces.*"

Migration was also a less salient issue in some locations where the overseas-born population was small: in Durham, Harrogate and Lerwick, for example. Here the low proportion of migrants in these places meant that people felt immigration rarely had an impact on their everyday lives.

"It's not a big issue locally. In other parts of the country you see it more, but not in this part of the country. It's not a big issue, although newspapers and social media try and make a problem, for instance saying you can't get schools or housing."

Citizens' panel participant, Durham.

In the citizens' panel discussions, there were also age differences in the salience of immigration as an issue, with younger members of citizens' panels much more likely to see immigration as a normal part of their lives. This difference may be a consequence of younger people's greater social contact with migrants at school, university or work. In the nationally representative research by ICM, 33% of 18-24s and 38% of 25-24s had friends, neighbours or work colleagues who were migrants or refugees, compared with 15% of those aged between 65 and 74.

BENEFITS AND DISADVANTAGES

Each citizens' panel discussed the impacts of migration, on the UK and in their local area. Participants were asked '*on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 was "very negative", 10 was "very positive")*'. This led into a debate about the benefits and problems associated with immigration. Although each citizens' panel comprises a very small sample of the local population – just ten people – we felt that the average score of the panel (Table 12.1) usually captured the tone and mood of the migration debate in most of the places we visited.

As Table 12.1 shows, there are some marked differences between the average scores in different locations. Of the groups recruited to be broadly representative, the Basildon, Derry-Londonderry, Grimsby, March and Merthyr Tydfil citizens' panels all had low impact scores. In the discussions in these places, most people felt that the disadvantages of migration outweighed the gains. In contrast, the impact scores in Ballymena, Edinburgh, Exeter, Hammersmith, Paisley and Wolverhampton were higher. In the citizen's panels in these locations, most people felt that the positive impacts of migration outweighed the disadvantages.

In most cases, the stakeholders and citizens' panel discussion suggested specific reasons to account for such trends, and to explain why people in some areas view migration more or less positively than elsewhere. We give a more detailed description of each of the 60 places we visited in Table 12.1 and in the appendices.

In March, a Fenland town, there was large-scale and rapid migration from the EU after 2000, into an area that had previously been largely populated by white British people. The new arrivals mostly live in badly maintained accommodation in houses of multiple occupancy. The pace of change, population churn, low level anti-social behaviour and neighbourhood decline associated with poorly maintained private rental accommodation have caused community tensions and contributed to the high vote for Leave (71.4%) in the EU referendum.

The Trowbridge citizens' panel members had almost no meaningful social contact with migrants. Their views about migration had been largely influenced by what they saw in the media, including online. As we argue in Chapter Five, social contact with migrants gives people alternative perspectives on migration, so they can base their opinions on these interactions too, rather than on national and community narratives drawn from the media and peer group debate.

Economics and geography clearly matter. As we show in Chapter Four, it is often people living in towns which have experienced economic decline who have struggled to come to terms with immigration.

Kidderminster, a Worcestershire town of 56,000, has lost much of its traditional carpet industry that provided secure employment and formed part of the town's shared history and civic identity. We were told that "*The good times have gone,*" and a sense of loss, stemming from deindustrialisation, had fed resentment. Jobs in carpet manufacture have now been replaced by insecure work in distribution and food processing, both sectors which employ larger proportions of EU nationals. The changing nature of work had occurred at the same time as increased immigration to the area: the citizens' panel in Kidderminster felt that the easy availability of workers from the EU had led to the undercutting of wages and employment conditions for everyone.

We were struck, too, by the difference that transport connectivity can make to local migration debates. The National Conversation on Immigration visits show that it is often the places which are economically struggling where local views on migration are most sceptical. Good transport links boost productivity and underpin thriving local economies. As we set out in Chapter Five,

positive social contact with migrants and minority groups is a factor that reduces misconceptions and prejudices. Anxieties about 'outgroups' are reduced by contact, breaking down barriers of difference. Places which are geographically isolated or have poor transport links may become less outward looking, with their residents less exposed to people from different backgrounds[71]. This social effect was recognised by some of the citizens' panels. In Hull we were told *"Because we are in the far end of nowhere, and we have one road in, one road out, it [immigration] is a bit of a culture shock for a lot of people."*

Grimsby, Hull, Kidderminster, March and Merthyr Tydfil are all towns with weak transport links to other places. In contrast, Banbury is well-connected and the citizens' panel there felt that good transport links were a factor that had helped the town absorb migrants from the EU.

> *"It's a very industrial town, that's why Banbury is popular. It's got good transport links direct to London, up to Birmingham and straight up to Edinburgh. In the past, it had the canals, so it's always been an industrial place. I suppose it's always been a huge draw for immigrant workers for the factories. So again, that's why Banbury is multicultural and that's what happened with places that have great transport links isn't it? Straight on the M40 and you can go anywhere."*

Citizens' panel participant, Banbury.

Those who attended the Derry-Londonderry, Grimsby and Merthyr Tydfil panels mostly came from social grades C2 and D, or were unemployed. Participants in these panels talked of their experiences with the benefits system and of looking for work. In these places, poverty and insecure employment appear to have fuelled resentment of more successful newcomers. Some of the strongest-held beliefs that welfare benefits acted as a 'pull' to the UK were voiced in these citizens' panels.

> *"I'm not against immigration, obviously, but they come over and they get housed and there's people in this country what are homeless. Even soldiers and everything, and they're homeless. why can't they re-house them people before people coming. I understand if they are from a war-torn country, but if they're coming here just to get benefits, I don't agree with it."*

Citizens' panel participant, Grimsby.

In contrast, the Ballymena citizens' panel comprised many middle-class church- and chapel-goers. Although they had concerns about integration and religious extremism, this panel largely felt that the benefits of migration outweighed any negative impacts. Their views were often underpinned by their moral and religious beliefs, which determined how they should behave towards newcomers.

In Edinburgh and Paisley it appeared that Scotland's more positive media and political discourses had impacted on the nature of everyday political discussion in public and private spaces. An internationalist labour movement and the church still have a strong social influence in parts of Scotland. Churches have been at the forefront of Syrian refugee settlement as well as initiatives to promote integration in both places. Their moral leadership may have influenced local attitudes to migration, particularly in Paisley where the citizens' panel included a number of practicing Christians.

For the Hammersmith group, which included many young professionals, immigration was an everyday part of life in a city where 37.7% of the population was born overseas[72]. As well as bringing many economic benefits, they felt that London had been culturally enriched by immigration.

> *"I don't have a problem with immigration, we're all immigrants at some point if you go back far enough, so it's no big deal to me. Also, economically, I think it's a plus for the country, as we've got an ageing population in this country, we need more young people, otherwise things are going to come to a halt."*

Citizens' panel participant, Hammersmith.

Local narratives about immigration impact on people's views. These are the stories that people tell each other at work and while socialising. The Hammersmith citizens' panel told a story about a cosmopolitan city, the success of which was built on immigration. The citizens' panels in Edinburgh and Paisley described Scotland as a nation that welcomed newcomers. In Southampton, the citizens' panel gave an account of a city that had gradually accepted large-scale Polish migration and we were proudly told that *"We are Poland number two."* In the Wolverhampton citizens' panel, a mostly non-graduate group told a story of integration slowly happening across the generations. This city could now say with some pride that the predictions made by the then MP, Enoch Powell, in his 1968 'Rivers of Blood' speech, were wrong.

> *"I think there was an effort to bring people together – because of the legacy from the time of Enoch. There was a sense that this was not what we wanted Wolverhampton to be known for."*

Local authority stakeholder, Wolverhampton.

LOCAL CONCERNS

In all the citizens' panels, participants voiced a number of concerns about immigration. Although some themes were common to all citizens' panels, there were also major differences in the issues that were raised. While chance alone could account for these differences, the stakeholder meetings provided contextual information which has enabled us to check the validity of the issues raised by the citizens' panels. We have summarised these local differences in Table 12.1 and give more information in the local profiles in the appendices.

Broadly these local concerns fell into four overlapping groups:

- Numbers and over-population
- Cultural change and integration
- Neighbourhood decline in areas with poorly maintained private rental accommodation
- Pressures on housing and public services.

Of these, anxieties about neighbourhood decline and pressures on public services were most predominant. Concerns about overpopulation were widely held in London and the south east, England's most populous regions. This issue was also raised in rural areas, where it was associated with pressures on housing and loss of the natural environment.

> *"I do worry about housing, and the fact that all our green belt, especially where I come from right now, they're building everywhere they can, every little morsel of land. That really annoys me because some of us have paid a lot to live somewhere nice, to have the grass and to have the forest."*

Citizens' panel participant, Guildford.

Some participants expressed cultural concerns where they felt that the character of a particular neighbourhood had changed due to immigration. Often the citizens' panels linked such change to neighbourhood decline. Sometimes they felt that certain neighbourhoods now 'belonged' to a different ethnic group and they found this to be unsettling. Concerns were sometimes underpinned by anti-Muslim prejudice, with particular reference to religious dress. At other times this related to EU migration and focused on hearing different languages spoken in shops and on the street. As well as seeing people who were visibly different or spoke a different language, physical changes, such as new shops, unsettled a few participants. Those who expressed concerns about the arrival of those with different cultural norms were a minority and were generally older and had less social contact with migrants, a finding supported in the nationally representative ICM research and other survey[73].

> *"There are certain parts of Bolton, where if you are a white British person, or if you are moving into the area, you are kind of excluded from it. There is an area where it is mostly Polish people, and if you're not Polish you are kind of pushed out."*

Citizens' panel participant, Bolton.

NEIGHBOURHOOD DECLINE

Local concerns about neighbourhood decline and low-level anti-social behaviour were expressed widely, though articulated differently from place to place. Across the UK asylum-seekers and new migrants from the EU tend to be over-represented in cheaper, overcrowded and often badly-maintained private rental accommodation. Where such housing is concentrated in particular areas, it can lead to associations between migration and neighbourhood decline. Overflowing bins, street drinking and groups of men who 'hang around' can add to community tensions.

"You've got one house or a flat, but with ten times the rubbish outside and six times the number of cars."

Local government representative, March, Cambridgeshire.

Negative encounters have a strong impact, and these visual manifestations of migration can quickly turn into narratives about a failure of integration, or migrants not respecting the 'British way of life'. Often concerns about neighbourhood decline were focussed on particular streets or areas: the Midland Road in Bedford, the Norwich Road in Ipswich, Middlesbrough town centre and Page Hall in Sheffield, for example. These were often areas where independent shops had closed, with many retail premises boarded up.

"I think immigration's positive for work, particularly within the NHS and things, I think we've got a lot of good doctors, nurses, professionals, who we wouldn't have if we didn't have immigration. But maybe some of the problems have been in the town centre, it's quite bad for immigration. The neighbourhoods have got worse because certain people have moved into the community who have been brought in through immigration, but then you've got good and bad in every community – so it's not just immigration."

Citizens' panel participant, Middlesbrough.

The citizens' panels did not always ascribe blame for neighbourhood decline solely to migrants. In areas where neighbourhood decline has become a problem, participants talked about rogue landlords who exploit their tenants and profit from providing poor quality accommodation. In our ICM research, 84% of respondents wanted councils to take firm action against rogue landlords.

"The problem is the people in the rented accommodation and their greedy landlords as they just want to make money. There is rubbish, syringes and litter…. And it's the university quarter of all places. It's where students of all people come to get educated."

Citizens' panel participant, North Staffordshire.

We have also noticed that some areas with high concentrations of migrants in private rental accommodation have not experienced so much neighbourhood decline or the tensions associated with street drinking and 'loitering'. It was striking that in Dungannon there were almost no concerns about neighbourhood decline. It is a town of 16,000 people that has seen rapid recent migration from the EU, mostly the arrival of Poles and East Timorese who are Portuguese nationals. Most of the new migrants have come to work in the local meat packing factory. They have tended to come as family groups, with many deciding to settle in the area and buy property. A widespread acceptance of the economic contribution that migrants made, smaller proportions of single men among the new arrivals, less population churn and better integration were all factors that had helped Dungannon come to terms with population change without many tensions.

In Southampton and Hull, the citizens' panels believed that the arrival of migrants from the EU had led to grassroots regeneration in previously run-down areas.

"If you would remember, Shirley was a totally different area of the city. However today, because of the Polish community, so much business has opened and it grew the economy as well."

Citizens' panel participant, Southampton.

We also learned about how some local authorities had tried to manage neighbourhood decline in some places we visited. On our visit to March we travelled through Peterborough and later met with representatives of Peterborough City Council at the stakeholder meeting. We heard about Peterborough's selective landlord licensing scheme, which applies to properties in five different parts of the city. Here all landlords are required to meet a set of basic standards before they are allowed to rent property. Cambridgeshire Constabulary employs a police officer of Czech Roma ethnicity and his work involves mediating between the Czech and Slovak Roma in the area and the wider population. A number of long-established civil society organisations undertake community mediation, or are involved in promoting social integration. While Peterborough's population includes a high proportion of migrant workers from the EU, these initiatives appear to have played a role in dealing with issues that can escalate into community tensions[74].

In England, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is using the Controlling Migration Fund to address neighbourhood decline. Over a four year period, this fund is providing £25 million each year to local authorities to help them address the impacts of migration, although it cannot be used to subsidise revenue funding for mainstream public services. The first grants from the Controlling Migration Fund were made in June 2017, with 27 local authorities, including district councils, receiving funding. Of those who received this first round of grants, 13 were funded for work to tackle rogue landlords. A further round of funding in November 2018 extended this work to more areas[75]. Clearly, these applications to the Controlling Migration Fund show that the problem of rogue landlords and poor quality private rental accommodation blights communities across the UK.

PRESSURES ON HOUSING AND PUBLIC SERVICES

Some 52% of respondents in the ICM research for the National Conversation felt public services were under strain because of immigration. Concerns about pressures on housing, the NHS and education were also raised in many citizens' panels and in the open survey, even among those who had otherwise positive views about migration.

Members of citizens' panels also referenced cuts to public services and welfare provision when discussing pressures on public services. Security concerns were often voiced with reference to police cuts and some panel members spoke about immigration adding strains to an NHS 'already in crisis'. Concerns often reflected small, localised issues: for example where local GP booking services had been reduced so appointments could only be booked within short time frames, this was seen as an impact of immigration.

Often there were specific local factors which were driving concerns about infrastructure and public services.

The pressure that migration placed on housing was a dominant concern in London and the south east and in other cities, such as Edinburgh, where housing is in short supply and expensive. It was often raised in rural areas and in market towns in places where affordable or socially rented housing is lacking.

"Our resources at the moment, our sundries, the National Health Service, our housing. Everything is bursting at the seams in Shetland. On the positive side, they do a very good job and I have friends who are from Hungary, Russia, Lithuania. It's not a reflection, it's just we're are bursting at the seams here. The negative I would say in Shetland is the housing can't cope up here with the influx."

Citizens' panel participant, Lerwick.

The pressure that migration placed on schools and education was another common concern raised in the citizens' panels. In some of the citizens' panels, parents (and a few young people) felt that the arrival of children who could not speak English had a negative impact on the education of other children in the classroom. But like concerns about pressures on the NHS, there seemed fewer local triggers for such views.

"Talking from a young person's perspective, at school I do have a lot of Syrian and Polish people there, and I also share my lessons with them. So like it's almost like we are behind because our teachers have had to explain stuff to them over and over again because they don't actually understand what they are saying. We don't even understand what they're saying, either."

Citizens' panel participant, Gloucester.

However, concerns that immigration meant too many children were competing for too few school places were raised more strongly in specific locations, and almost always where there were real and documented shortages. Most of the citizens' panels did not blame migrants themselves, but were clear that responsibility lay with the Government. Department for Education statistics show that in England 116,169 additional school places will be needed in the academic year 2019-2020.The most up-to-date statistics show that local authorities had firm plans to deliver just 33,516 of these places[76]. More school places will be identified by next year, but it is inevitable that small numbers of children will be without a school in September 2019, or face a long journey early in the morning. This causes stress for those families affected, but also had the capacity to further damage public trust in the Government's ability to manage migration.

We found that concerns about overpopulation and pressures on public services are localised and often relate directly to people's experiences of their environment. However, they are sometimes at odds with the desires of policymakers in Scotland and the north east of England, as well as some rural counties in the south west. Throughout the UK, villages and market towns are losing young people who leave for university or work and never return. In places as far apart as Devon and Dumfries and Galloway, there is a need for people of working age to live in these places – to retain rural services, make communities sustainable and to provide a rural workforce.

Although the urban population of Scotland is increasing, the proportion of working-age people in the overall population is falling, a demographic trend also quite marked in parts of the north east. The Scottish Government has a target to increase its working population and has pushed to take control of immigration policy[77]. Similarly, the local authorities of the north east want to drive economic growth by population increase and see skilled migration as means to achieve this aim. Although these policies have received media coverage, there has been no 'public conversation' about this or attempts to engage the public. We asked some of the citizens' panels how they felt about this demographic policy, including all the groups we met in Scotland. But we found that Scotland's demographic needs simply did not resonate with the citizens' panels, with participants more concerned about population pressures and the lack of opportunity in rural areas, rather than population loss.

Evidence suggests that rural Scotland does need to attract a larger workforce. But to get public support for policy change, employers, councils and the Scottish Government need to acknowledge public concerns about pressures on housing and public services. Above all, there is a need for dialogue and an ongoing 'national conversation' about immigration and population in Scotland.

"I think if the wages were higher for some of those jobs then more locals might actually apply for them, but they're looking for more money than a migrant…. If you are trying to attract younger people, instead of offering them 16 hour contracts, could you not offer them full time contracts?"

Citizens' panel participant, Dumfries.

MANAGING THE LOCAL IMPACTS OF IMMIGRATION

Action to manage the local pressure of immigration was one of the key demands of the citizens' panels. Neighbourhood decline was also a concern of many participants. We believe that action to reverse this would also help build a stronger consensus around migration. In the course of our visits we heard of a number of initiatives to tackle rogue landlords and deal with issues such as street drinking. Some local authority stakeholders wanted to extend their work, but said that their budgets did not allow them to do so.

But we also heard about local authorities that were not taking action on rogue landlords and neighbourhood decline, even though the citizen's panels and civil society stakeholders thought it was

necessary. The impact that these issues have on public opinion needs to be acknowledged by local authorities and solutions need to be resourced by central government.

When asked what changes the Government would need to make so as to gain their trust, the citizens' panels also wanted action to make sure that migration did not place unsustainable pressures on the NHS and schools.

"We want to know the resources are in place. Can the Government prove there are enough doctors, enough housing? Can they prove everything is in place?"

Citizens' panel participant, Trowbridge.

The nationally representative ICM research also showed a desire for action to manage the pressure that population growth can place on services such as the NHS, with 57% of respondents feeling that 'better ways of dealing with the local impacts of migration on housing and public services' would increase their confidence in the Government's ability to manage migration. Such polices were popular with all sectors of society, but were particularly appealing to older people (64% agreeing with the statement), Conservative voters (64% agreeing) and those living in large cities (64% agreeing). Many of the stakeholders we met also felt that dealing with the pressures that population growth placed on housing and public services would help dispel some of the concerns people felt about migration, particularly in deprived areas.

"We come across a lot of people living in areas where the Eastern Europeans and asylum- seeker and refugee communities are living, and they say 'it's alright for you in your middle class areas but it's happening to us over and over again, we're the ones who are suffering and feeling the pressures on public services."

Local Authority representative, Bradford.

The National Conversation on Immigration visits were also a tour of two nations: of thriving cities but also of struggling towns. Places such as Berwick-upon-Tweed, Grimsby and Kidderminster, where traditional industries had been lost, have struggled most to adapt to change. In post-industrial areas, also areas most impacted by cuts to public services, concerns about immigration were most acute. Conversely, in places where more opportunities were available, people felt more positive and in control of their future. In places where participants felt a sense of loss – through globalisation and the decline of traditional industry and jobs, or through a lost sense of community and neighbourliness – this could often translate into resentment towards newcomers.

Reviewing what we found, we feel that change is needed in four areas, set out below.

1. Take steps to reverse neighbourhood decline

Our visits show that neighbourhood decline in areas with large proportions of private rental accommodation lies at the root of much concern about migration. Making sure that private rental housing is not overcrowded or neglected would help arrest this neighbourhood decline. But there are big differences in the ways that local authorities approach housing enforcement. Many more councils are bringing in selective landlord licensing to address poor standards in the private rental sector, with some of them, such as Bolsover and Redbridge, using funding from the Controlling Migration Fund to do this. But across the UK as a whole, enforcement levels are extremely low and it is a small number of local authorities who are fulfilling their obligations well[78]. Reductions to local authority budgets have led to many of them cutting back on this duty. But the problem is deeper than this and as is as much about a lack of political will to prioritise enforcement, both at a national level and locally.

Taking action against rogue landlords by itself is not enough, however, to reverse neighbourhood decline in areas with much private rental property. Residential mobility impacts on the ability of people to establish local attachments and feel a stake in the place where they live. Population churn is highest in the private rental sector and housing law sustains this. The six month *de jure* minimum for a shorthold tenancy has become the *de facto* maximum for many households, forcing them to move home frequently. Organisations representing landlords, as well as a number of think tanks, believe there is a case for longer tenancies, which might reduce some of the population churn that is seen in specific neighbourhoods in the UK's towns and cities[79].

Civic pride helps prevent neighbourhood decline. People who feel they have a vested interest in the place where they live are more likely to maintain their properties and put their litter in bins. Many local authorities recognise the importance civic pride, with some taking active steps to promote it. Our visits enabled us to see how the 2017 City of Culture award had boosted civic pride in Hull. We also learned about Bradford Council's *People Can* project which encourages neighbourliness, local action, formal volunteering and fundraising. This project has organised neighbourhood clean ups which have helped boost civic pride as well as bringing people of different backgrounds together. But a civic identity needs to be capable of embracing newcomers so they, too, have a stake in the place where they live.

Tenants and other local residents have civic responsibilities too, as do local businesses. There are many towns and small cities across the UK where the operation of one or a few large employers has brought significant numbers of low-skilled migrant workers to an area to take up work. Outside intensive horticulture, where there is some tradition of providing tied or on-farm accommodation, these large employers have usually given little consideration to where these new workers will live. The evidence we have seen in our 60 visits has led us to conclude that businesses need to take much more responsibility for supporting the housing and integration of their workers, both internal and international migrants.

2. Deal with the pressures on public services

The supply of housing and public services needs to keep pace with demand. We need a national and cross-party debate about long-term funding for the NHS and for local government. This debate is needed irrespective of the levels of immigration. There is much that local authorities can do, and they should fulfil their responsibilities; but they will need to be adequately resourced, and supported in order to do so.

There are pressures on school places in some areas. We feel that the allocation of capital funding could be more responsive to changing demand. As we describe above, the citizens' panels and some stakeholders also felt that children who spoke little English diverted teachers' attention away from other pupils. But there are big differences in the type and amount of support that migrant children get to help them learn English. Clearly, this is not in the interests of other children in the class, nor of the child who has just arrived. Recent research shows a severe attainment penalty for children who arrive in the UK at secondary school age, due to variations in the amount of language support[80]. We need better ways of funding English language support in schools and action to end the postcode lottery around provision of help.

3. Understand better how communities adapt to migration

The National Conversation on Immigration has enabled us to see how 60 different communities have responded to immigration. One of our most striking findings is that people who live in towns or cities of similar-sized populations and levels of migration have often responded differently to migration. In Dungannon, local people have come to terms with rapid population change, but in March rapid migration had caused some tensions. Aberystwyth and Berwick-upon-Tweed are both small towns serving rural hinterlands, but local narratives about immigration appear quite different. Public concerns about the labour market impacts of migration appear predominant in Chesterfield and not in Banbury.

The socioeconomic profile of different places plays a significant role in how residents view newcomers. Some towns and cities seem more capable of adapting to social change, while others struggle.

A number of researchers have looked at factors that help communities adapt to change. These factors include the characteristics of the local population and their social networks. But the anthropologist Sandra Wallman argues in the *Capability of Places* (2011) that we need to give much more consideration to place-based resilience to enable communities to maximise the benefits of migration, while minimising negative impacts. Her work suggests that factors such as the quality of local jobs, the type of local industry, the heterogeneity or homogeneity of housing stock and transport connectivity all impact of how communities come to terms with migration. Her work also stresses the importance of local narratives about migration and who is seen to 'belong'. It is by understanding the factors that enable communities to be resilient in the face of change that policy makers can put measures in place to enable the UK better to accommodate migration.

4. Listen to and take steps to respond to the needs of people who live outside the core cities

In Chapter Four we described the divides that have opened up between the Remain voting core cites and those who live in the rest of the UK, which largely voted Leave. To call these Leave-voting areas 'left behind' is an over-simplification that does not resonate with people who live in places as diverse as Banbury and Berwick. But as we argue in Chapter Four, we risk splitting into two nations, populated by two groups of people, each with their own set of attitudes, including their views on immigration. Such polarisation is not absolute, nor is it irreversible, but healing these divides requires action. In the citizens' panels we were told that policy only takes the needs of London and the City into account. Time and time again, we were told that the Government does not listen to ordinary people.

"I think there are far too many one-sided conversations between the Government, not just the current one but generally the way that politicians and the Government talks down to people and doesn't listen and hear and respond."

Citizens' panel participant, Exeter.

We were told by both stakeholder and citizens' panels that investment to encourage economic growth was mostly targeted at the UK's biggest cities. Although immigration and integration have been the focus of our meetings, we were also told about some of the broader economic challenges of the UK's smaller cities, towns and rural areas: dying high streets, the absence of training opportunities for young people, poor internet and transport connectivity.

It has been the choice of successive governments to concentrate infrastructural investment in core cities, with the hope that some of the wealth that is generated will make its way to nearby towns. This needs to change. Economic policy must build on the strengths of different areas and there must be a more equitable distribution of investment between towns and cities. Politicians need to show they are listening to people who live outside the core cities. They need to hear about the priorities of those who live in villages and smaller conurbations, and how together we can shape a future that works for us all.

Table 12.1: Summary of local issues raised in the citizens' panels.

Location	Impact score	Summary of citizens' panel discussion
Aberdeen	6.3	Participants felt Scotland was more welcoming than England. Their most significant concerns were pressures on school places and housing in parts of Aberdeen with large migrant populations.
Aberystwyth	6.3	This was a citizens' panel which included many Welsh speakers who saw the economic benefits of migration, but felt it could threaten the Welsh language and culture.
Ballymena	6.9	The panel felt that immigration had brought benefits to Northern Ireland. Pressures on public services were largely not mentioned. Security was their biggest concern, with worries about Brexit, the Irish border and the peace process.
Banbury	6.5	The group balanced the pressures and gains of migration. Overpopulation, pressures on housing and public services were a concern. But a long history of migration, a healthy local economy, good transport links and an inclusive civic pride have helped this town accommodate recent migration from the EU.
Basildon	4.4	The citizens' panel felt the negative impacts of migration outweighed the benefits. They had particular concerns about EU migration, which they had felt had undercut wages and working conditions. Many participants also believed that migration posed a threat to British culture.

Location	Impact score	Summary of citizens' panel discussion
Bedford	5.4	Participants had a diverse range of views. While they valued the contribution of migrants, they were also concerned about residential segregation and neighbourhood decline in Bedford. Immigration enforcement was also discussed, as Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre is nearby.
Berwick-upon-Tweed	5.6	The citizens' panel generally supported immigration where they saw migrants making a contribution. But they felt that migration had undercut wages and made it harder for young people to find work. Concerns about precarious employment and a lack of investment in the north east were raised throughout the discussion.
Bexley	5.4	A pragmatic group who balanced the pressures and gains of migration. Overpopulation, pressures on housing, the NHS and school places were major concerns. While sympathetic to refugees, conditions in Calais and asylum were salient issues because clandestine entrants were often found at the side of the major roads that run through Bexley.
Bolton	5.2	Integration and security were the biggest concerns but participants also felt the response to the Manchester bombing had brought communities together.
Bradford	5.4	In a district with high levels of poverty, concerns about the pull of benefits and migrants getting preferential access to welfare was a major theme. Integration is an issue but Bradford's civil identity appears inclusive of minority groups.
Cambridge	5.7	A mainly graduate and internationalist panel who felt migrants made a significant contribution to the local economy. Their biggest concerns were pressures on housing stock and the flight of refugees across Europe.
Carlisle	5.4	This citizens' panel comprised 16-24 year olds, mostly non-graduates. Some participants thought migration was a salient issue, others did not. Security and the labour market impacts of migration were the biggest concerns of this group.
Chesterfield	5.5	The panel had major concerns about the labour market impacts of migration, making numerous references to working conditions at nearby Sports Direct, a company that employs many migrant workers.
Derry-Londonderry	4.2	This group was sceptical about the benefits of migration and concerned that migrants had preferential access to benefits, as well as feeling that there was competition for housing and jobs.
Dumfries	5.8	A panel who mostly thought that immigration had brought more benefits than disadvantages. However, they wanted more control and greater vetting of migrants and their biggest concern was wage depression.
Dungannon	5.9	Although the town had seen very rapid EU migration, there was an acceptance that it led to economic benefits. Some voiced concerns about the impact on housing.
Durham	5.3	Immigration was not felt to be a big issue in the panel members' everyday lives, though control and contribution dominated the debate. There are town-gown tensions in Durham, but the panel did not see international students as migrants.
Edinburgh	6.9	The citizens' panel mostly felt that the benefits of migration outweighed disadvantages. They had some concerns about the lack of control over some types of migration flow and pressures on housing. Participants were very sympathetic to the needs of refugees and felt that Scotland was more welcoming than England.

Location	Impact score	Summary of citizens' panel discussion
Enfield	6.8	This panel felt that migrants had brought many benefits to the UK and talked about a London identity that embraced diversity. However, many participants had concerns about overpopulation and pressures on housing and public services, common to other parts of southern England.
Exeter	7.4	Immigration was not a hugely salient issue and the impact score did not fully represent the tone of the discussion. This group recognised the benefits of EU migration, but had concerns about refugees and wanted better vetting.
Folkestone	5.1	EU migration dominated an often heated discussion, with participants seeing economic benefits, but also wanting more controls. Given the proximity of Calais and the coverage of refugees in the local media, asylum was not the salient issue we expected, with participants' views little different from elsewhere in the UK.
Gloucester	5.1	Few members of this citizens' panel had meaningful social contact with migrants and their views were largely formed by what they read in the media, and what they saw in the city centre. Participants had particular concerns about residential segregation and neighbourhood decline
Grimsby	4.5	A mostly non-graduate panel where the negative impacts of migration on the labour market outweighed what they saw as benefits. Many of the panel members' concerns about migration related to wider issues in their lives and centred around loss: of status and civic pride, secure employment and optimism about the future.
Guildford	5.8	This was a group of balancers who were sympathetic to refugees and thought migration had brought benefits. Community relations were felt to be good in Guildford and almost everyone had everyday contact with migrants through work. Over-population and housing pressures were the most significant concerns of this citizens' panel.
Hammersmith	7.1	Migration and diversity were everyday experiences for this group of young professionals and longer-settled residents of a typical inner London local authority. Most were happy to keep free movement and felt migration had brought many economic and cultural benefits to London.
Harrogate	6.5	A group who largely had secure jobs and live in a prosperous area. Migration was not a hugely salient issue and almost everyone felt the benefits of migration outweighed the disadvantages. Their biggest concern was housing pressure: there is a lack of social and affordable housing in the area.
Hull	5.8	Almost everyone had social contact with migrants. Although residential segregation featured in the discussion, many participants felt that recent immigration had led to a reversal of neighbourhood decline in poorer parts of the city. At the same time, this group saw a number of challenges, feeling that EU migration put pressures on public services.
Ipswich (2 panels)	5.3	We held separate male and female panels and found no significant gender differences in the content of the conversations, rather in how men and women talk. Residential segregation, neighbourhood decline and clandestine migration were concerns of both groups.
Kidderminster	4.5	The impact score did not fully represent the discussion. The citizens' panel balanced the positive impacts of migration with concerns about integration, the depression of wages and undercutting of working conditions. The loss of traditional industries and the changing nature of work was a key theme of the discussion.

Location	Impact score	Summary of citizens' panel discussion
Knowsley	4.6	Panel members thought that migration had brought benefits, but were concerned about integration in Liverpool and pressures on the NHS. The impact score did not fully represent the discussion.
Leicester	5.7	Over half the panel had a family history of migration. Control and contribution were key themes. The panel felt community relations were good in Leicester, but that new arrivals had less desire to integrate than previous generations.
Lerwick	6.5	This was a pragmatic group of balancers who felt that immigration brought benefits, but were concerned about housing pressures. Scotland's need to increase its population did not resonate with this group.
Lincoln	5.1	This group felt international students and migrant workers had brought benefits to Lincoln, although they were concerned about the impacts of immigration further south in the Fens. Concerns about language barriers were more strongly voiced in Lincoln than elsewhere.
Macclesfield	6.0	The group thought that immigration brought economic benefits but had one over-riding concern: pressures on the NHS, an issue that was in the news. They were also concerned that Brexit would damage the local pharmaceutical industry and were willing to make concessions on immigration to protect it.
March	4.7	Most participants felt that the disadvantages of immigration outweighed the benefits in a town that had seen rapid population change. Integration, language barriers and the concentration of migrants in overcrowded and poorly maintained private rental accommodation were particular issues of concern.
Merthyr Tydfil	4.7	In this deprived area the group had concerns that migrants had come to the UK to claim benefits rather than to work. The communities of the Welsh Valleys are close knit and sometimes struggle to welcome outsiders.
Middlesbrough	5.5	Control was the dominant theme in a town that has a large population of asylum-seekers. Concerns about young men 'hanging around' were voiced, but attitudes to asylum-seekers and refugees were otherwise similar to elsewhere in the UK.
Milton Keynes	5.9	Undocumented migration and lack of enforcement was the biggest concern in this BME-majority panel. There was very little discussion about pressures on public services
Newport	6.6	This group was divided between 'balancers' and those who thought that immigration had been largely positive. For most people, immigration was not a particularly salient issue. The biggest concern of participants was integration in Newport and Cardiff.
Northampton	5.3	The discussion mostly focused on EU migration, with participants raising concerns about criminality, integration and the labour market impacts of immigration.
North Staffordshire	5.1	This citizens' panel had strong views about neighbourhood decline in parts of Stoke where many EU migrants live in private rental accommodation. Attitudes to migrants were largely not mediated by personal contact.
North Tyneside	5.9	This citizens' panel saw the economic benefits of migration but wanted British school leavers to be better equipped with skills. The view that some migrants were drawn to the UK by the benefits system was this group's biggest concern.

Location	Impact score	Summary of citizens' panel discussion
Nottingham	6.5	Youth (16-24) panel who felt that migration had culturally enriched the UK but had concerns about the labour market impacts of migration, particularly on young people's ability to find work. Participants felt strongly that migrants must be making a contribution to British society.
Paisley	7.9	A largely non-graduate panel who were sympathetic to refugees and thought that the benefits of migration outweighed the disadvantages. They acknowledged that not everyone in the local area shared their views, but felt attitudes to immigration were more positive in Scotland compared to elsewhere in the UK.
Penzance	7.0	This was a group with a diverse range of views. They saw the benefits that migration brought to the health and social care sector and to farming and tourism, bur raised concerns about the impact of migration on wages. Pressures on housing, in a county where affordable homes are in short supply and prices have been pushed up by second-home ownership, was another concern.
Preston	6.8	Over half the participants in this group were south Asian Muslims. Migration from outside of the EU was a more salient issue in Preston than EU migration, with some participants having first-hand experience of the immigration system. Integration was discussed in depth, with participants seeing this as a two-way street.
Redbridge	6.1	Most of this group had migrant and refugee forebears. Security, over-population and pressures on public services were major themes of the discussion. Participants were generally content with levels immigration, but felt numbers could be more evenly distributed across the UK to manage over-population and pressures on public services.
Sheffield (A)	7.0	This group were selected because they had positive views about immigration. A largely non-graduate group who were sympathetic to refugees and who felt that migrants brought skills. Fairness was a key theme of the discussion. However, conditions in Page Hall – a neighbourhood with a large Roma population – was a major concern of this group.
Sheffield (B)	3.7	This group was selected because they had negative views about immigration. This was a diverse group in respect to their social class, ethnicity, politics and their understanding of the norms of non-prejudiced behaviour. Men dominated the discussion and generally had stronger views. Participants felt that immigration was "*out of control*" and there was almost no trust in the Government to fix the system. Conditions in Page Hall were also a major feature of the discussion.
Shrewsbury	6.1	This was a pragmatic group of 'balancers,' most of whom knew migrants through their work. They had concerns about migrant criminality, but also felt migration brought benefits. They felt there were few integration problems in Shrewsbury, because the number of recent arrivals was small and new migrants were not clustered in particular parts of town.
Southampton	6.6	Overpopulation, building on the green belt and pressures on public services were the main concern of this citizens' panel, although the city seems to have accepted large-scale Polish migration and has recognised its benefits
Sutton	6.3	The group saw many positive aspects of migration, but in common with the other outer London citizens' panels had concerns about numbers, over-population, pressures on housing, schools and the NHS.

Location	Impact score	Summary of citizens' panel discussion
Sutton Coldfield	5.9	The group was positive about migration, as long as migrants were contributing. The panel had concerns about integration in Birmingham, but saw Sutton Coldfield as a well-integrated community where people generally got on well.
Swansea	5.7	The group felt migrants brought much-needed skills, but immigration from the EU was not a hugely salient issue. There are town-gown tensions in Swansea, but the panel did not see international students as migrants.
Trowbridge	5.0	Attitudes to migrants were largely not mediated by personal contact and there were major concerns in this group about lack of infrastructure to cope with migration.
Uckfield	6.1	The citizens' panel saw economic benefits from migration, but had concerns about pressures on housing and job displacement. More liberal members of the panel liked the extra cultural richness that migration had brought, but at the same time felt that migration and 'political correctness' threatened British cultural traditions.
Wolverhampton	7.1	A pro-migration and mostly non-graduate panel who had a strong story about integration slowly happening across the generations in Wolverhampton. The group wanted migration to be better controlled and felt politicians had mismanaged policy.
Wrexham	5.3	Most participants saw the pressures and gains of migration, but for some of this group, the disadvantages outweighed the benefits. This citizens' panel believed that migration placed major pressures on schools and the NHS and gave examples from their own lives.
Yeovil	4.0	In this over-45s panel, some participants felt that immigration had a direct and negative impact on their lives, making it more difficult for them to access housing and public services. But after the initial discussion the tone became more moderate. Although integration and language were concerns, most of the group had social contact with migrants.

*Average (mean) citizens' panel response to impact question ""*on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative"', 10 is 'very positive')"*.

See appendices for more detailed reports from each location. For the full reports on each location see www.nationalconversation.org.uk/reports.

13. Integration

Integration has been a major part of the citizens' panel discussions. Reviewing what we have learned from our 60 visits, we have been struck by the impact of integration on public perceptions of immigration. In places where integration is working well, there is often greater support for immigration. Where people have everyday social contact with migrants, they are able to base their opinions on these interactions, rather than on national and community narratives drawn from the media and peer group debate. This means that getting integration right is crucial to securing consensus around immigration.

HOW PEOPLE SEE INTEGRATION

Integration is a contested term and there is an extensive literature that attempts to define this condition or process[81]. But it is not only academics that disagree about the nature of integration; our citizens' panels also had many different opinions. There was no one single or dominant view, but rather participants saw integration as a mixture of:

- The adoption of British traditions, particularly about dress and celebrations – an assimilative view;
- Respect for 'British' laws and behaviours – a more universalist view;
- The absence of residential or social segregation;
- Acquisition of the English language;
- Good community relations and little or no hate crime;
- Neighbourliness;
- Two-way tolerance and respect for difference.

There was often disagreement within the citizens' panels about the nature of integration, although the discussion was almost always polite and constructive.

– *"I think it's a respect for their culture but you don't want one of those cultures dominating Great Britain because we are a United Kingdom, in cultural ways we don't want to be indoctrinated by them too much."*

– *"When in Rome, do as the Romans do."*

– *"I get what you're saying, England is England, but I also do think that if someone is Polish they have the right to be proud to be Polish and I'm not going to tell them to have a fish supper on Friday night. I don't think that because they are Polish and they're here that they necessarily have to be British. I wouldn't want to impose my culture on them just as I wouldn't want them to impose theirs on me. But I would like to learn about their culture, I think we just need to be more accepting and let it be."*

Dialogue between citizens' panel participants, Banbury.

This mixture of views about integration was supported by the responses to the ICM nationally representative research. Some 75% of people agreed that *"integration is showing respect for British traditions and values."* At the same time 84% of respondents agreed that *"people get along best when there is a two-way tolerance and respect for each other"*. 80% of respondents agreed that *"it takes effort from both UK citizens and new migrants to build integrated communities."*

Social contact changes views

In places where the local population had little social contact with migrants or minority populations, citizens' panels saw integration primarily in terms of the adoption of British social norms and traditions and the absence of residential segregation. Here our discussion about integration sometimes brought out the stereotyping of Muslims, a group who were sometimes seen as being *"too different to integrate."*

"For me, integration is the big problem. I don't understand how the British are going to control the Muslim influence in this country. They're not really integrating…. How are you going to make them integrate because you've already given them a chance to have their Sharia law here."

Citizens' panel participant, Northampton.

In these discussions, some participants also voiced the opinion that British culture was being undermined because people were forced – usually by schools and councils – to pander to 'political correctness' and the sensitivities of Muslims.

"You can't put the cross of St George on the town hall because the Muslim Council of Basildon had it taken down because it offended them. That's front page news in the Basildon region."

Citizens' panel participant, Basildon.

While our citizens' panels condemned hate crime, we are concerned that such conspiracy theories and crude stereotypes about Muslims have become commonplace in many parts of the UK. We have been told in many citizens' panels that schools are no longer allowed to put on nativity plays at Christmas or celebrate Easter because of the Muslim community.

Where people have some positive social contact with migrants, the discussion about integration tended to be more confident and thoughtful and there was an acknowledgement that integration is a two-way process. Attitudes towards Muslims tended to be less prejudiced and any stereotypes about particular faith or ethnic groups were usually challenged or qualified. Some of the more thoughtful discussions about integration took place in locations such as Bradford and Preston, ethnically diverse local authorities with large Muslim populations.

"I think integration comes down to respect, respect for yourself and for everybody else. Of their culture, of your culture, of who they are, of who you are. If you're respectful to everyone, there's never a problem. It's when there's a breakdown of respect on both parts then things don't work."

Citizens' panel participant, Preston.

In March in the Fens, the citizens' panel expressed some strong views about the impact that rapid migration from the EU had on their lives. But the discussion about integration was more reflective and thoughtful, as participants described how they had come to know migrants as fellow parents at their children's schools. They felt there were real tensions in the area, but this group also described migrants who were making an effort to 'join in'. There was a debate within the citizens' panel about people's obligations to mix and an acceptance that some of this 'self-segregation' was natural.

"Lithuanians have friends who are Lithuanians, by human nature you are drawn to your own."

Citizens' panel participant, March.

Northern Ireland

Participants who had lived overseas often placed less emphasis on social mixing and segregation when talking about integration. Among this group, too, there was a greater acceptance of self-segregation. This may partly account for the differences we noticed in the nature of the discussion about integration in Northern Ireland, where a significant proportion of our citizens' panel had lived in England or overseas.

"Your point about people coming here – as a young man I went to South Africa for four or five years and it was a great experience and we had an Irish group, and we still mixed and had South African friends. But it's human nature that you will stick with your own tribe, let's call it. You can only mix so much."

Citizens' panel participant, Ballymena.

Compared with citizens' panels that we have held in England, the Ballymena, Derry-Londonderry and Dungannon panels expressed fewer concerns about the integration of migrants and a greater level of acceptance of social segregation. That many parts of Northern Ireland are segregated by religion and political tradition may also have influenced such views, with all three panels expressing a view that it is normal to *"want to mix with your own kind"*.

Migrant views on integration

Many of the citizens' panels included people who had come to the UK as migrants. They too, brought their own perspectives on integration, which usually contributed to a more thoughtful discussion. In Sutton, for example, a member of the citizens' panel was a migrant from Slovakia. The group raised the issue of segregation and discussed the types of situation where someone could reasonably be expected to speak English before listening to the views of the Slovakian participant.

– *"Just because you're hanging out with people who come from the same country, doesn't mean you're not integrated in society."*
– *"I know."*
– *"I have friends who are Slovakian, they're a couple, their kid is Slovakian, they live here, they like to keep only their Slovakian friends. I don't do that, I kind of dislike it myself, but they like to do it – who cares, they're not harming anybody!"*
– *"A sense of identity as well isn't it?"*
– *"There's another side to it, like I speak to my son in Slovakian, and I've been told several times you're in England, speak English. I can speak what I want. If I speak to an English person, I will speak English. If I need to speak to my son in a group where other people should understand what I'm saying, I'll speak English. But why does someone have a problem if I'm at home, or in the park, speak to my son in another language, which I want him to learn?"*

Dialogue in the citizens' panel, Sutton.

Although the migrant and minority ethnic members of the citizens' panels brought different perspectives to the discussion on integration, there was a consensus that fluency in English and two-way respect were important elements of integration. In some of the fringe events run by other organisations which we have described in Chapter Three, migrants and refugees gave their own views about integration, with the discussion often similar in content to the citizens' panels. In Coventry, Detention Action and the Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre ran their own panel with migrants and refugees. The group saw speaking English, participation in community life and learning about the culture and traditions of others as important aspects of integration.

"To integrate is learning the language and learning about other cultures. When you try your best and work hard, then you can congeal."

Migrant participant in Coventry fringe group.

The nationally representative research conducted by ICM also showed that migrants had similar views about integration to the overall population, as we show in Table 13.1.

Table 13.1 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Born in the UK – net agree	Born outside the UK – net agree
People get along best when there is two-way tolerance and respect for each other	84%	83%
It takes effort from both UK citizens and new migrants to build integrated communities	81%	82%
Discrimination and hate crime divide communities	83%	82%
When communities live apart from each other, this causes problems	77%	73%
Integration is showing respect for British traditions and values	75%	74%

Source: ICM research for National Conversation, N=3,667.

Public versus expert views

Overall, the citizens' panels saw integration largely in social and cultural terms. We also discussed integration with local stakeholders such as councils and civil society organisations who saw integration as something that had both economic and social components. In many ways there was a gap between the 'expert' understanding of integration and that of the citizens' panels, although both groups tended to see integration as something that applied to migrant and minority ethnic populations rather than being an 'everybody' issue. This raises some communication challenges for councils and civil society organisations – about communicating a story about integration that reaches and resonates with a broad section of society, but also emphasises the responsibilities of both migrants and receiving communities.

WHERE INTEGRATION IS WORKING

In many cases, the citizens' panels felt integration worked well in their immediate local area. They felt that people generally got on well with each other in their neighbourhoods. About two-thirds of our participants had migrants among their friends, neighbours or work colleagues. Schools, in particular, were seen as an integration success story as children were seen as more accepting of cultural differences. Many parents in the citizens' panels described how their children were taught about the different ethnic and faith groups who lived in the UK, in religious education and history lessons. Most people felt this was important and the majority of parents wanted their children to learn about different faith groups and to mix with others from different backgrounds.

> *"Children are very accepting of different cultures. I think adults take a little more persuading, whereas children don't have that agenda. They don't feel that they have to prove themselves to each other, they just accept and go forward."*

Citizens' panel participant, Ipswich.

About half of the participants had work colleagues they saw as migrants and talked about integration happening organically in their workplaces. They also saw integration as something that takes place through community events in public spaces, with participants talking about street parties, the Leicester Mela and the Great Get Together.

> *"The way Milton Keynes is set up, you can know everyone in one area. It's fantastic to live in. You get the bouncy castle out, the Asian families bring their food, you bring yours. You speak to people from all over the world."*

Citizens' panel participant, Milton Keynes.

In Bradford, Bolton and Preston, some of those who attended the citizens' panels had taken part in activities that had been organised with the specific aim of encouraging integration. These northern local authorities all have large Pakistani Muslim communities, many of whom reside in particular areas. Such residential segregation has been recognised as a barrier to integration and in Bradford, Bolton and Preston schools and councils, as well as faith and civil society organisations, have organised projects to bridge these divides and improve integration. A number of participants described activities in which they or member of their families had been involved.

> *"I've heard of kids from certain schools being taken to other schools where the kids are all white and English, British, so they can just meet people from other cultures…. There's little things going on in Preston, cultural fairs and things like that, where you get together and eat food and things, discuss things."*

Citizens' panel participant, Preston.

There was agreement that these initiatives were important, although a few people believed that if schools and workplaces were ethnically mixed, such projects would not be needed.

> *"I think to tackle this problem* [integration] *, probably the easiest way would be with kids, because then that's a long-term solution, isn't it? Like you say, you've got a class of white kids, going to meet a class of Muslim kids, that to me is insane. These school classes should have a healthy mix, they shouldn't have to go on a school trip to meet these people."*

Citizens' panel participant, Preston.

WHERE INTEGRATION IS NOT WORKING

While most people felt their neighbourhoods were well-integrated communities, there was a widespread perception that integration was not working in all parts of the UK.

– *"I think Ceredigion is a patchwork of small towns and villages and if you don't integrate or get on with people, where are you going to go? It's going to be very difficult to try to set yourself up and make a living in a community that you sort of reject or don't feel part of."*
– *"I think in some ways we are protected from the national, I don't think it would be the same for us as Birmingham, London, big cities I think it is completely different. That's where and I'm not saying it is EU or non-EU, that is where a lot of immigrants refuse to integrate and I think that is where there is a lot of the tensions. We're quite molly-coddled here, but I think the problem is in the cities."*

Dialogue between citizens' panel participants, Aberystwyth.

The view that integration worked locally, but not 'up the road' and not in places such as Birmingham and London, was a common narrative of many citizens' panels. This gap between more negative perceptions of integration, and more cordial experiences in people's own lives reflects other research[82]. This ambivalence may account for the somewhat divided responses we received to a question on integration in the nationally representative survey. When asked if they agreed with the statement "migrants do not integrate into their local communities", nearly a third of respondents (30%) remained neutral (Table 13.2). Just 20% of respondents had strong views on this question.

Table 13.2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement 'migrants do not integrate into their local communities'?

Strongly Agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
15%	29%	30%	16%	5%	3%

Source: ICM research for National Conversation, N= 3,667

In many locations, substantial parts of the citizens' panel discussion focussed on locations where integration was not perceived to be working, either near to where they live, or in other parts of the UK. In these places integration problems were variously described in terms of:

- language barriers;
- tensions between communities and hate crime;
- residential and social segregation: *"they keep to themselves"*;
- cultural dissonance, that there were neighbourhoods where British values and norms of behaviour no longer applied;
- criminal behaviour;
- neighbourhood decline, often linked to low level anti-social behaviour, street drinking and 'hanging around', issues which we have discussed in Chapter Twelve.

Language

Almost all citizens' panels cited language barriers as examples of integration not working, describing instances of being unable to communicate with newly-arrived migrants – in the street, in shops or at work. These were real examples of language barriers although, in a few cases, we were also told by participants that they felt anxious or unsettled hearing foreign languages spoken in their town or city.

In Berwick-upon-Tweed a participant who had worked on a fish smokery described segregated production lines and language barriers inside the factory.

> *"When I worked in Farne Salmon, it was full of Polish and all the places, there was hardly any English ones in it. I didn't like it because, they just look at you, and if you asked them a question they can't really speak back to you…And you just feel – well, try and speak the language the same as us. I know I can't speak Polish or whatever."*

Citizens' panel participant, Berwick-upon-Tweed.

Some participants described how language barriers worsened patterns of labour market segregation, as migrants who could not speak English well or at all were limited in the jobs that they could take.

> *"I used to work at a recruitment agency in their accounts department and 90% of the workforce there were foreign and the majority of the work we offered was food factories. I know from this experience that foreign people are very qualified but the language barrier restricts them from the jobs they could go for, they tend to settle for the lower jobs."*

Citizens' panel participant, Lincoln.

We were told about production lines in factories that were segregated by linguistic group – where Polish speakers worked alongside other Polish speakers, for example – and of construction sites where just one or two workers spoke English. In Berwick-upon-Tweed and March, participants described leaving a job because their work colleagues did not speak English.

While schools were often seen as places where integration was working, in many citizens' panels participants felt that English-speaking children were held back because other pupils could not speak English.

"My sister works in a school and the minority of children are English and they are pushed to one side, and the Polish, not always just the Polish, they can't speak a word of English. They can't deal with them so they're doing sign language to these children to try and get them to understand. And they get no help, they used to get help from the Government to integrate them, they don't now. So it's not their fault, it's the Government who don't help them."

Citizens' panel participant, Trowbridge.

Migrants who took part in the citizens' panels agreed that a lack of fluency in English was probably the most significant barrier to integration in the UK.

"My mother has been living in this country for nine years, but she speaks only a little English and I do not accept that – we argue a lot about this. I don't find it acceptable. How come you can live in this county for such a long time and not learn this language? And yet there's plenty of people, because they stay in jobs, they stay comfortable without English."

Citizens' panel participant, Southampton.

Hate crime

In a few places we heard accounts of hate crime, from citizens' panels and stakeholders alike, with both groups seeing this as a barrier to integration. Both the citizens' panels and stakeholders talked about "*pockets of hostility*". A few of those who took part in the citizens' panels reported experiencing hostility or racism, usually verbal abuse. While those holding actively hostile views, which on occasion can turn into violence, are a small and marginal section of society, they can have a major impact on those who live around them. It is also difficult to build integrated communities if people feel unsafe and mistrustful of those from different social groups.

"If you feel unsafe, you're going to go with people you know, and people with a culture you know. It exacerbates the problem [of integration] when you've got Tommy Robinson running around, up and down Bury Park. It doesn't help".

Citizens' panel participant, Bedford.

Residential segregation

Integration concerns were often focused on particular neighbourhoods or streets. In Lincoln, the citizens' panel described an area of this cathedral city where they felt that there were many integration challenges. Many other citizens' panels named streets or parts of a town or city where they felt that integration was not working.

"I think the government should work harder on integration, because you start to see the polarisation of communities. If you go to the South, the St Andrews street area, you see a lot of Eastern European people and there is a huge gun problem down there. There has to be a bigger effort to integrate people, that has implications for language, I spend a lot of time in Holland but I don't speak any Dutch, but I know it would really help me in that community if I could speak the language."

Citizens' panel participant, Lincoln.

As we have discussed above, social and residential segregation are common concerns associated with integration. Although specific national or cultural groups were rarely named, it was usually clear from the context that participants were referring to eastern European migrants or Muslims as groups who were unwilling to mix. As we have described above, in some places, such opinions were challenged, and in other places they were not.

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT MUSLIM INTEGRATION

In many of the citizen's panels, integration problems were often linked to specific locations in the UK, with participants naming places such as Birmingham, Rotherham, Bradford, Luton and Tower Hamlets. These were always places with large Muslim communities. It was only in a small minority of citizens' panels that this association did not take place: in Bolton, Bradford, Enfield, Leicester, Preston and Wolverhampton. These were all places where members of the citizens' panels had everyday social contact with Muslims.

In our discussions Muslims were sometimes specifically named as the group that was seen as not integrating. But usually they were not; rather, Muslims were referred to in generic terms, being described as 'communities' or 'them'.

> *"Are you talking locally or nationally? If it's nationally, what I see is ghettoisation, where communities are not* [integrated] *and I think it creates a lot of mistrust, a lot of fear. I don't think Cornwall has the same problems as Birmingham, no."*

Citizens' panel participant, Penzance.

A significant proportion of those who took part in the citizens' panels held the view that Muslims were too culturally different to integrate. This stereotype was sometimes challenged in the discussion, but often it was not.

> *"I do feel that there is a lot of religion coming into this country and I do feel that we have to respect other people's religions when we go abroad. But they don't have to, so they don't respect Catholicism, Church of Scotland or the Church of England."*

Citizens' panel participant, Edinburgh.

Such views usually, though not always, related to *culture* rather than perceptions that large numbers of Muslims supported violent extremist groups such as al-Qaeda or ISIS. Over the 15 months that we ran the National Conversation on Immigration there were terrorists attacks in London and Manchester. Generally, the conversation about Muslim integration in the immediate aftermath of these atrocities was thoughtful and open. There was a clear sense in the citizens' panels that it was only a very tiny minority of Muslims who supported violent extremist ideologies.

Instead, it was perceptions of cultural difference in relation to language, types of dress, religiosity, halal food, sexuality and gender roles that caused anxieties. Such stereotyping and cultural concerns were voiced by people who had more sceptical views about immigration, but also by those who thought migration had a largely beneficial impact. Here, participants often saw Muslims as undermining liberal values such as gender equality. For example, in Sheffield we were told that migration was *"not very good in regards to equality and sex and gender, and the roles that women and guys play."*

The size and visibility of Muslim communities in some towns and cities, coupled with a view that integration worked better in the past, and underlying prejudice, promoted a view that British culture was now under threat and some areas now 'belonged' to Muslims.

> *"You go to Subway in Sutton Coldfield, that's not going to be halal only. If you go to somewhere like Erdington or Birmingham Star City*[83]*, every single restaurant in Star City is halal, because the majority of the population there are Asian. But if you have lived there all your life and you don't want to go to a halal restaurant, want to go to a normal restaurant, they're almost pushing me away... I don't want halal produce, I want normal produce, but there are not two options."*

Citizens' panel participant, Sutton Coldfield.

The association between integration problems and places with large Muslim communities was even more marked in the open survey. Of the 9,253 responses to this survey, 18% mentioned Muslims or Islam in the open questions, almost always in negative terms. Rotherham received 67 mentions in the

survey, followed by Bradford (47) Birmingham (26) Luton (16) Rochdale (14) and Tower Hamlets (9). As we have already described in Chapters Four and Eight, some of these responses were posted by those who appeared to have extreme right-wing sympathies and to reject all forms of immigration. Similar to the citizens' panels, a large number of comments that described Muslims as a problem community came from people whose responses showed they had otherwise positive views about immigration.

"Overall, immigration has been good for the UK. It has made British people more aware of other cultures and been economically beneficial. Immigrants have been integrated into British society while adding positive cultural traits of their own. However, there remain significant problems, particularly with Muslim immigrants who come from completely different cultures and are unwilling to adapt. Multiculturalism has encouraged these immigrants to remain separate instead of integrating, which leads to division and segregation."

Comment given in the open survey.

These views about Muslims raise a number of important issues for those concerned with integration. They show the value of social contact and dialogue in combating prejudice. Where people had everyday social contact with Muslims, as they did in places such as Bradford and Preston, the citizens' panels did not see Muslims as a homogeneous group and generally voiced more thoughtful views on integration. Different opinions were aired, but the discussion was polite and constructive, with dialogue helping build consensus.

As much as the terrorist attacks, the child sexual exploitation scandals in places such as Rotherham and Telford, and the failure by councils to take action against the perpetrators, appeared to have a major impact on how the citizens' panels viewed Muslims in the UK. This issue was raised in a number of citizens' panels by people with a wide range of views on immigration.

"Since all the scandals have come out, the sex scandals with the young girls, the whole country's ideas about Asian communities, especially, has totally changed. Before you would get your corner shops and there would be a token family and it would get more and more but they were accepted. But because of the scandals that have happened over the last two or three years – and there is another one about to surface in Wakefield as well – in Rochdale and Rotherham, people's ideas have changed about people. From what was beginning to be successful integration, there is now a big barrier, a big wall."

Citizens' panel participant, Sheffield Group B.

Where the events in Rotherham were discussed in the citizens' panels, participants tended to hold the view that this behaviour was very prevalent within Muslim communities rather than the actions of a small, criminal minority. The failure by Rotherham Council to take action against the perpetrators appears to have fuelled a narrative that 'political correctness' has made authorities unwilling to take action against those who break the law and exploit children and vulnerable women.

Government integration policy has tended to see integration as something that takes place at a local level. However, what takes place in Birmingham and Bradford affects how the residents of Barnsley or Basildon seen integration. Failure to tackle integration in one or two large towns and cities can affect public opinion right across the UK.

Challenging perceptions of 'failed integration' and of Islam as being incompatible with British culture will also require political leadership, which acknowledges that integration has been an uneven success, addresses problems where they emerge, but recognises too the everyday successes of integration and challenges stereotypes and prejudice.

HOW INTEGRATION UNDERPINS PUBLIC CONSENT FOR IMMIGRATION

Throughout, views about successes or failures of integration underpinned how the citizens' panels viewed immigration. In places where migrants were felt to be less well-integrated into their local communities, there were more negative views about the impacts of immigration. Where integration was seen to be working well, positive views about the impact of immigration were often more predominant.

Those who attended the citizens' panel in Newcastle-under-Lyme saw new migrants living separated lives in a spatially demarcated part of nearby Stoke-on-Trent. The panel felt that new migrants did not mix with the resident population and many of them did not speak much English. They appeared to be a transient group, with very little stake in the life of the Potteries towns. As such, the settled population felt these new arrivals to be interlopers in the area and were often sceptical about the benefits of immigration.

"In an area like this, you get ghettoized areas, when one immigrant group moves into an area, others follow, and it kind of clashes with the culture, when you have an area where its mostly British people."

Citizens' panel participant, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire.

In contrast, Polish migrants in Southampton were becoming integrated into the life of the city. Those who attended the citizens' panel had a lot of social contact with an often economically successful Polish community as friends, fellow parents, neighbours and work colleagues. This citizens' panel did have concerns about migration – largely around population pressures – but participants balanced these with descriptions of the positive impacts that migration had brought to Southampton.

A PUBLIC APPETITE FOR CHANGE

The dominant narratives about integration were stories about successes and failures. The citizens' panels described integration working well in some places but not in others. There was consensus about the importance of integration among those who had sceptical and positive views about immigration. This was accompanied by a real appetite for change and there was no shortage of views about how integration could be done better.

There was some disagreement about who was responsible for making integration work. A minority of people believed that these duties lay largely or exclusively with migrants, who should be obliged to learn English and observe British values and traditions. But in the discussion a consensus often emerged of integration being the responsibility of migrants, local communities and the Government. Migrants had the responsibility to learn English, respect shared values, mix and be active members of their local community. At the same time UK residents must welcome newcomers and there must be two-way tolerance and respect. The Government and businesses had responsibilities, too.

"Integration can work but it's got to be worked on, on both sides."

Citizens' panel participant, Middlesbrough.

Table 13.3 What do you think migrants should do in order to integrate and become successful members of our society?

	Strongly Agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Learn English	65%	23%	8%	1%	*	2%
Observe our shared values (e.g. democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance)	52%	33%	10%	2%	1%	3%
Contribute to the economy and pay taxes	61%	27%	8%	2%	*	2%
Be active members of the community (e.g. by volunteering)	24%	39%	28%	4%	1%	4%
Take up UK citizenship	21%	32%	32%	6%	4%	5%
Attend a course to find out about British customs and everyday life	33%	37%	19%	5%	2%	4%
Mix and build relationships with others in the community where they live.	37%	45%	13%	1%	1%	3%

Source: ICM research for National Conversation, N= 3,667

Speaking English was seen as fundamental to integration. In the ICM research, 88% of respondents felt migrants needed to learn English to integrate and become successful members of society. In some places the citizens' panels believed that more English classes were needed. This view was supported in the ICM research where 65% of respondents agreed that the Government should provide English lessons for those that need them.

In some citizens' panels, participants felt that employment facilitated integration. Participants felt that businesses should be doing more to help integration, for example by enforcing a requirement to speak English at work. This view was supported in the ICM research where 74% of respondents agreed *"businesses employing lots of migrant workers should be required to take more responsibility for integration, such as making sure there are English language classes and enough housing."*

Many citizens' panels wanted more initiatives that brought children of different backgrounds together, sometimes describing the importance of sport and the arts in bridging divides among young people. Many people felt that integration took place slowly across generations, but if schools were integrated, children would then grow up to be part of a more integrated society. Some 66% of respondents in the ICM research agreed that *"schools should make sure that pupils get the opportunity to meet children from different backgrounds."*

"I think it should be done from the bottom up, at the end of day, it's very difficult to break the bigotry that the immigrants have got against ourselves as much as we have against them. You see with what happened in Ireland with the two polarised communities there and it got better when the children started to mix and I think more should be done in schools. I was a secretary of a swimming club and seeing the children mix together in the swimming clubs and in football clubs, and in cricket clubs, and those children become teenagers and then adults so that's where the integration comes. …The English language is the first [thing] – once you've done that, then you can start with the children."

Citizens' panel participant, Lincoln.

Shared public space was felt to encourage integration. The citizens' panels often described how sport and leisure activities and one-off festivals brought communities together. Participants sometimes

made reference to the loss of community centres and other shared spaces, as a result of public funding cuts, as a challenge. Others made practical suggestions for initiatives that would help bridge social divides.

"They actually bring them together to cafes and introduce them to each other, so they can like each other rather than being separated. It's a very good project in my opinion, because I think both sides are ignorant of other cultures so they both need to be educated. They do that through coffee and letting them get to know each other."

Citizens' panel participant, Yeovil.

A wide range of suggestions were made in what was generally a lively part of the citizens' panel discussion. This suggests a real appetite for change among the public, and a consensus that getting integration right is a priority.

"There should be little task forces on integration in each borough, each area, to make sure things are going okay."

Citizens' panel participant, Ipswich.

TAKING INTEGRATION FORWARD

Integration was an issue that was raised in the stakeholder meetings, but in most cases was not such a prominent issue as EU migration or refugee protection. Most stakeholder concerns about integration focused on asylum-seekers and refugees, with civil society organisations arguing for changes to regulations to allow asylum-seekers to work or study English at a concessionary rate. A lack of availability of English language classes was another concern expressed in the stakeholder meetings.

During the course of the National Conversation on Immigration we learned of many initiatives that had been put in place to promote integration. Many focussed on refugees and we have described some of them in Chapter Eleven. But we also learned of other initiatives, for example informal conversation clubs that ran in the early evening and targeted migrant workers. Reviewing what we learned from our visits, we felt that there were many fewer integration initiatives targeted at migrant workers from the EU than there were for refugees, despite refugees being much smaller population. Although there are active campaigns on work and English for asylum-seekers, there is not a strong and united civil society lobby for integration.

There were representatives from local authorities in the majority of the stakeholder meetings – both officers and elected members. Some of the local authority representatives had a clear view about the integration challenges in their local area and what needed to change. In these cases it was obvious that there had been some long-term strategic thinking within the local authority, and interventions put in place to promote integration. Bradford, Edinburgh, Enfield, Fenland, Liverpool and Southampton are just some of the places where integration had been prioritised by the local authority and where there were clear strategies to achieve change. In all of these places, integration was seen as an 'everybody' issue involving all sectors of the community, not just migrants and refugees.

But in other locations, integration was not seen as a priority, or there was no evidence of a strategy in place. Officers and elected members, even those whose remit included integration, had little vision of what they wanted to change. In some cases, integration was largely seen as something that applied to specific groups such as Muslims, Gypsies and Travelers, or refugees. In a few cases, council officers disagreed with central government's approach to integration, feeling that it put an unfair spotlight on Muslim communities, and fed perceptions that Muslims are 'too different to fit in'. But frequently, there was a disjuncture between the views of council stakeholders and the local population, with the former sometimes unaware of the nature of public concerns about integration.

The Integrated Communities Green Paper[84], covering England, offers the opportunity to address these issues and put integration on the agenda again, after years of policy neglect. English local authorities will be obliged to have an integration objective as part of their public sector equality duty[85]. This may encourage them to develop strategies and work with others to develop initiatives that promote integration. Integration has also risen up the political agenda in Scotland and Wales.

However, there are many challenges to be overcome before the ambitions set out in the Integrated Communities Green Paper and the New Scots refugee integration strategy translate into action on the ground.

Much action is needed on integration, from many different sectors. Local authorities have a key role to play in coordinating initiatives to promote integration, but they need the financial resources and the vision to do this. Business needs to take a much more active role in promoting integration too. We need to be better at making integration an 'everybody' agenda, making sure that policy seeks to bridge generational and income divides and does not solely focus on groups such as Muslims or refugees. We need to ensure that everyone who needs to can learn and improve their English. Prejudice and hate crime divide communities and we need more effective action to address them. Above all, if we are to get public consent for the migration that the economy needs, there needs to be sustained political will and leadership from the very top of politics to take integration forward in the UK.

Part Three:

An immigration system that works for everyone

Our Recommendations

14. Aims and foundations

Immigration is a divisive issue in the UK and was a factor in the decisions that many people made in the 2016 EU referendum. The system we have in place at present is inadequate and does not command public trust and support. At the same time, employers have expressed frustrations about the difficulty in recruiting staff from overseas. Organisations working with refugees remain concerned about backlogs and the quality of initial asylum decisions.

Leaving the EU offers a window of opportunity to reform immigration policy, and to put in place a system that protects refugees, works for employers and commands broad public support. The evidence we have gathered from the National Conversation on Immigration suggests that this task is possible, given sufficient leadership and political will.

There is public appetite for change and compromise but, to unlock this, politicians will need to involve the public in the debate about future policy options. The National Conversation on Immigration has shown that most of the public are 'balancers', who see both the pressures and gains of immigration. Typically, participants in the National Conversation describe the benefits of migration, the skills that migrants bring to the UK and the jobs that they fill. At the same time, many participants voice concerns and questions about migration, which include anxieties about the Government's ability to manage migration, as well specific local issues such as pressures on public services and social segregation. Politicians will need to address these concerns if they are to secure public consent for the immigration that the economy needs.

As such a divisive issue, what the public thinks about immigration clearly matters, but immigration policy should not be led by public opinion as a lowest common denominator. Our citizens' panels across the country have consistently called for strong leadership on immigration.

Winning public trust will require change both nationally and locally. We will need to address the public's desire to see immigration competently managed and better controlled, but will also need to address local impacts. There is no single or immediate solution that will restore the immigration system to good health, rather a series of steps and policy changes that will require time to take effect and build consensus.

Changes are needed to immigration policy, but this alone will not build public trust in the immigration system. There is a need to review other policy areas, particularly in relation to employment and training, integration, regional development and housing. There is a clear need for debate about sustainable funding for public services such as schools and the NHS. On such a divisive issue, listening to what the public thinks about immigration is clearly important if we are to rebuild trust. This does not, however, mean that public opinion is a veto point on immigration policy: our citizens' panels across the country have consistently called for strong leadership on immigration.

Above all, the National Conversation on Immigration shows there is a clear need to do politics differently and to institutionalise consultation and dialogue within the political process.

THE BREXIT CHALLENGE

Migration from the EU was the most salient issue raised by those who took part in the National Conversation on Immigration citizens' panels. The majority of participants wanted to make changes to the rules covering this type of migration. But the citizens' panels often disagreed about what these changes might look like. Future policy options covering EU migration was the area where there was most division between Leave and Remain voters. Clearly, developing a future immigration system that commands majority public support will be difficult.

The Government will also need to address public concerns about the local impacts of immigration. We believe that migration is a national issue seen through a local lens. If the Government is to secure the public consent it needs for immigration, it will also need to deal with rogue landlords and pressures on public services. Such changes assume even greater importance if leaving the EU entails a long transition period, where few or no changes are made to the current freedom of movement regulations.

In the coming months, ministers and officials in Westminster will be developing immigration proposals that are to be tabled in the Brexit negotiations in Brussels. If the Government is to avoid leaving the EU without a final deal, the immigration proposals the UK tables need to be capable of securing agreement from the EU27.

We believe that a future immigration system that works for everyone in the UK must meet seven tests. It will need to be:

- Workable for the economy and employers;
- Simple and deliverable as policy;
- Fair to migrants;
- Fair to local communities and should not lead to negative impacts;
- Capable of securing public consent across social and political divides;
- Capable of securing political support in the UK; and
- In the case of EU migration, changes to policy need to be capable of securing support from the EU27.

15. Building public trust in the immigration system

We found widespread mistrust in the Government's ability to manage immigration competently and fairly. In some cases this mistrust was linked to high profile policy failures, for example where foreign national prisoners had not been removed from the UK, or the Windrush scandal. Immigration legislation is complex and hard to understand and there was a widespread perception that regulations were not always enforced. The Government's failure to meet to meet the net migration target has also damaged public trust.

Many of those who took part in the citizens' panels believed that some migration flows were 'uncontrolled', though knowledge of immigration policy is selective and patchy. In turn, this impacted on participants' attitudes to migration and lessened their consent for labour migration and refugee protection.

But mistrust on immigration sat within a wider context of political mistrust and the perception that the Government and politicians only acted in the interests of the City of London and the elite – both in relation to immigration and wider economic issues.

Many who attended the citizens' panels felt that they were misled by politicians, with facts kept hidden or distorted in the media. Participants felt that their views were not being heard and they wanted a more open and honest debate.

AIM OF POLICY

Noting the above, policy should have an overarching aim of increasing public trust and consent in the ability of the Government to manage immigration.

CHALLENGES

Addressing the public's desire to see immigration as a policy area that is competently managed is key to building public trust in the immigration system. This needs to take place alongside a culture of greater transparency and openness and on-going public engagement. This is a long-term process.

A key challenge is how to institutionalise public engagement so that this process commands public trust. Politicians need to show that such public engagement is a genuine two-way dialogue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Institutionalise public consultation through an official National Conversation on Immigration and Integration which feeds into a three-year plan and an Annual Migration Day in Parliament.**

   We suggest there is a need for sustained and ongoing commitment to public engagement across all nations and regions of the UK, in the form of an official National Conversation on Immigration. We recommend that this is coordinated by the Migration Advisory Committee, in partnership with local authorities, combined authorities and the devolved administrations. This should become the focal point for a three-year immigration plan and the House of Commons Migration Day report (see below).

   Drawing from what we have learned over the last 18 months, and the experiences of the Canadian Government, an official National Conversation on Immigration would be likely to include:

   - Discussion groups held in every local authority in the UK. These groups should be recruited to be representative of those who live in the local area.
   - A nationally representative survey that captures public views on immigration and their responses to potential policy changes.
   - An open survey that covers the same areas as the nationally representative survey.
   - Open public meetings.

- Written submissions from members of the public as well as business and other stakeholders.
- Committee-type hearings where experts are invited to give their views on particular issues.

Findings from the Government's own National Conversation on Immigration should feed into a three-year migration plan and Annual Migration Day report. The findings should also be made available to the public in an accessible summary form.

For such a National Conversation on Immigration to command public confidence, it needs to be seen as a genuine two-way dialogue. Those who take part in it should receive a response from the Government, as happens now with those who sign parliamentary petitions that pass a threshold of 10,000 signatures.

2. The Government should publish a three-year plan for migration to replace the net migration target, with this plan reviewed every year in Parliament on an Annual Migration Day.

The UK Government has never had an overarching plan for migration, setting out what it aims to achieve and how it will go about it. This has made it difficult for the public to understand Government policy, and contributed to the feeling that people are being misled or duped.

We recommend that the Government produces a three-year migration strategy, led by the Cabinet Office with input from the Home Office and Migration Advisory Committee, the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, as well as other government departments and the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Business and civil society stakeholders should also be consulted and involved in the development of this strategy, as well as other interest groups such as local authorities and universities. We also recommend that public views feed into the development of this strategy, through an official National Conversation on Immigration (see above).

The three-year plan should have, as an overarching aim, an immigration system that meets the economic needs of the UK, treats migrants and receiving communities fairly, and secures public trust and support. The plan should have public engagement and consensus building as specific objectives.

We recommend that the three-year migration plan replace the Government's net migration target. It may be that Government decides to include numeric targets in its three-year plan but, if this is the case, these should be based on robust evidence and should treat different types of immigration differently.

The three-year plan should be reviewed each year in an Annual Migration Day in Parliament. We recommend that the Home Secretary should present an Annual Migration Day report to the House of Commons. It would make recommendations for future policy over the year ahead, informed by advice from the Migration Advisory Committee, as well as a national and local programme of public engagement. Performance against targets and the Home Office's migration transparency data should be covered in the Annual Migration Day report.

3. The Government should review the threshold for immigration policy change that requires legislation.

The Government will legislate in response to problems or legal judgments. The legislative process is also used to give democratic legitimacy to the decisions of the Government. However, many immigration policy changes, for example those brought in through changes to the Immigration Rules, are not subject to a Parliamentary vote. Immigration Rules are statutory instruments that decide in practice whether and how a person can enter or remain in the UK. The Immigration Act 1971 gave the Home Secretary powers to make and change Immigration Rules without needing to amend legislation. Changes to these rules are simply presented to Parliament, which may or may not decide to debate them. Parliament cannot amend the rules, only accept or reject them. In reality, most changes are accepted with little or no parliamentary debate.

Similar legislative arrangements do not generally apply to other areas of government. As a consequence changes to education, health, transport and housing policy face much greater scrutiny, within and outside Parliament. Setting a lower threshold on the type of change that requires primary legislation and a parliamentary vote would help put in place greater transparency on immigration policy and prevent problems from arising.

4. **Task the Migration Advisory Committee to set up an independent and simple-to-understand, public-facing website that explains immigration policy and sets out key statistics.**

Those who took part in the citizens' panels often had little trust in the Government's immigration statistics, and found that much of the information that was available online – for example, the Office for National Statistics website – was hard to understand and interpret. At the same time, there was an appetite for an independent source of information about immigration. We recommend that the Migration Advisory Committee is tasked to develop a website that explains policy in simple terms and sets out key statistics.

5. **Require that lay members sit on Asylum and Immigration Tribunals**

In England and Wales over 175,000 citizens undertake jury service each year. As well as being integral to the justice system, taking part in a jury has been shown to build public confidence in the courts system. The tribunal system, however, takes place with little public involvement.

Asylum and immigration tribunals hear appeals against visa or immigration decisions. They are chaired by a tribunal judge who may sit with specialist non-legal members. In the financial year 2017-2018 some 71,289 cases were resolved, withdrawn or stuck off by First Tier or Second Tier Asylum and Immigration tribunals[86]. The majority of cases related to asylum, EU free movement or human rights.

There would be cost implications and lay members of Asylum and Immigration Tribunals would need guidance, just as jurors receive guidance in the courts system. However, requiring lay members to sit on tribunals would increase public contact with the immigration system and help build confidence, among a greater number of people, that immigration control was enforced.

16. Improving the performance of the Home Office

Across the country, we have heard concerns about the Home Office's ability to manage immigration fairly and effectively. High profile policy failures such as the treatment of the Windrush group and failures to remove foreign national offenders have damaged public trust in the Home Office's capabilities, and fed perceptions that immigration is 'out of control'.

The stakeholders we met also highlighted policy failures, such as asylum-seekers being wrongly denied support, or the high proportion of initial asylum decisions that were overturned on appeal. We were also told about EU nationals whose permanent residency or whose application for citizenship had been rejected in error or over a minor technicality. Long waits for decisions and the high costs of settlement and citizenship applications were also issues raised by business and civil society stakeholders. These factors also damage trust in the immigration system.

Clearly, improving the performance of the Home Office is key to building greater trust in the immigration system, among the public and among its users.

AIMS OF POLICY

To put in place an effective, fair and humane immigration system that is trusted by those who use it and by the public.

CHALLENGES

Immigration policy needs to combine robust controls with fairness to those who use the system. Achieving balance between these two policy aims can sometimes be difficult, particularly in the case of asylum-seekers who may sometimes struggle to gather sufficient evidence of their persecution to satisfy the requirements of the asylum system.

High quality asylum determination and effective immigration enforcement costs money to deliver. In the last six years, successive spending reviews have imposed budget cuts on the Home Office. Within Government, it has proved difficult to argue for additional spending on immigration when other areas of public expenditure – the police, armed forces, NHS and schools – have greater public support. There is a clear need for a more open and honest debate about the trade-offs between higher public spending and fair and effective immigration enforcement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Noting the aims set out above, we propose the following recommendations:

1. Make sure that the Home Office has the resources to deliver on its aims.

In the UK, we spent £40 per head on border control in the 2017-2020 financial year[87]. Clearly, leaving the EU will present the Home Office with many challenges and the post-Brexit settlement may result in greater numbers of people being subject to immigration control. The pace of globalisation and the year-on-year growth of international tourism are unlikely to slow and we will probably see a continued upward growth in visitors to the UK. Continued conflict in the Middle East also means that asylum applications are unlikely to decrease. These three issues will put greater pressure on Home Office resources. However, there has been a year-on-year cut in revenue spending on visas, border control and enforcement since 2011. There was a commitment to reducing staff numbers by 22% in the period 2010-2015. In the two-year period 2014-15 to 2016-17, the Home office lost a further 1,407 full-time equivalent staff working on immigration[88].

Moreover, in 2015 and before the EU referendum the Government committed to making the borders and immigration function in the Home Office fully self-funded by 2019- 2020, using income from fines, visas and other fees to offset expenditure.

We believe that the objective of making border control self-funding is now unrealistic, given that extra resources will need to be allocated to deal with new pressures. We recommend that plans to make borders and immigration self-funding are reconsidered, and that the Migration Advisory

Committee is tasked with calculating how much revenue and capital funding is needed for the Home Office to fulfil its immigration control function efficiently and fairly. This should include an estimate of the additional administrative and resource needs that leaving the EU will entail.

Politicians also need to promote a more open and honest debate, and acknowledge that the level of border controls that the public wants will entail a larger Home Office budget. We recommend that debate on this trade-off be included in public engagement as part of an official National Conversation on Immigration.

2. Support high quality decision-making through investment in Home Office staff.

Excluding those with back office functions, in 2016-2017 over 19,500 full-time equivalent staff were employed by the Home Office in the Border Force, immigration enforcement, internationally and in policy making and for UK Visas and Immigration. The strengths and weaknesses of the Home Office lie both in its leadership and in staff who undertake the day-to-day work of this high-stress department.

We recommend that the Home Secretary commits to a programme of investment in ongoing staff training and pastoral support. The use of agency and temporary staff to fill gaps should be discouraged. High calibre employees should be incentivised to see the operational division of the Home Office as an attractive career.

3. Enable high quality and speedy asylum decision-making through investment in staff and the merging of the Home Office budget for asylum determination with the Ministry of Justice budget for asylum appeals.

See Chapter 19, *Protecting Refugees.*

4. Reduce the administrative burden placed on individual users of the immigration system, as well as business and university sponsors.

Immigration control must be robust and must not compromise on security and integrity. At the same time, the delivery of immigration control should avoid unnecessary and expensive bureaucracy. Users and their sponsors should easily be able to understand and navigate the system, in most cases without needing legal advice. The Government recognises this and in late 2017 the Home Secretary committed to simplifying immigration law[89]. The design of the new residence permit and settled status system for EU nationals shows the Government has honoured this commitment, at least in relation to EU nationals. We welcome the decision to develop a digital visa and immigration service in the UK where people can submit biometric information including photos, fingerprints, and signatures in 60 locations, most of which will be based in public libraries. But we have yet to see any further tangible outcomes for other migrants including asylum-seekers and refugees, family migrants, work visa applicants and international students.

Reducing unnecessary bureaucracy enables the Home Office to focus its resources where they are needed most, for example on the removal of foreign national prisoners. We believe that there is still much scope for simplification, while still maintaining robust controls. For example, requiring EU nationals to hold Permanent Residence for 12 months before they can apply for British Citizenship, a policy first introduced in November 2015, places extra costs on both the individual and the Home Office. Before this date, an EU national could apply for citizenship after five years' lawful residency and meeting the English language and good character requirements and passing citizenship tests. This is one example where simplification would be of benefit to all. Applicants for settlement and citizenship should not be required to supply data that the state already holds, such as records held by HMRC and the Department for Work and Pensions. We recommend that the Home Office looks at further ways of simplifying the immigration system for its users and for sponsors.

5. Make sure that immigration policy is flexible enough to take into account the best interests of children in decision-making.

It is right that those applying for immediate family members to join them in the UK should be able to support them. For many years family migrants have had no recourse to public funds until they are granted settlement[90]. This means that they cannot access mainstream benefits and housing assistance. Since 2010 adult family migrants have had to pass pre-entry English tests to gain a visa, a policy change that aims to promote their integration in the UK. Rules governing family migration were changed again in 2012, requiring a minimum income for the UK sponsor (currently £18,600 if the sponsor intends to bring an adult partner), setting the pre-entry English test at a higher level and requiring five years of residency before settlement is granted.

In some of the National Conversation on Immigration visits, stakeholders told us of families who were separated because the UK sponsor could not meet the minimum income threshold. The cost of visa extensions also placed a severe burden on some families. In February 2017, the Supreme Court handed down its judgment on two family migration cases[91] which challenged the Minimum Income Requirement and its application. It upheld the minimum income threshold, but ruled that where this was not met, visa decisions should take into account alternative sources of income and be made in the best interests of any children involved. This judgement is welcome, but we feel there are other areas of immigration law where children's best interests need to be taken into account. The National Conversation on Immigration showed that there is public support for a humane immigration system which judges merit on a case-by-case basis.

In most British cities there are hundreds of children and young people who are British citizens or legal residents, but who cannot access the papers to prove it. Young people born in the UK to foreign national parents can register as British citizens through regulations such as the 10 year rule, or statelessness provisions. There are routes to residency under Immigration Rule 276 for young people who can show they have lived in the UK for more than 20 years.

But the process of registering as a British citizen is complex and lengthy. Children will need to pay for a legal adviser as the procedure is too difficult to undertake alone. Registering as a British Citizen currently costs £1,012 for a child, which is often beyond the means of the families concerned. These costs present a barrier to integration for children and young people who are British in all but their paperwork. We recommend that the Home Office reduces the cost of citizenship for this group of young people to a level that covers its administrative costs.

6. **Pilot immigration enforcement and evaluate its effectiveness in reducing illegal immigration before wider application. The Government should not proceed with policy that is ineffective in achieving its aim or discriminates against UK citizens.**

In additional to Home Office enforcement, the last 25 years have seen employers, education institutions, health service staff and landlords increasingly co-opted into the immigration system. Employers and landlords can face fines or in some cases receive a custodial sentence if they are found to be providing a service to someone without permission to remain in the UK. Such policies aim to deter irregular migration and encourage the voluntary departure of those already in the UK, forming what is now termed the 'hostile' or 'compliant' environment.

The Immigration Act 2014 and the Immigration Act 2016 expanded the range of these measures and increased the sanctions that can be imposed on those who do not fulfil these obligations. During the National Conversation on Immigration we heard of people who were lawfully in the UK who had been refused work or rental property as employers and landlords sought to minimise their risk of sanctions. We believe there is strong evidence[92] that shows that UK nationals from minority ethnic groups and migrants who are legally in the UK face discrimination when trying to rent property.

We also believe that the requirements placed on landlords are ineffective in reducing illegal immigration. Evidence from the stakeholders we met suggested properties were sometimes informally sub-let to those without permission to remain in the UK. David Bolt, the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration concluded that *"the Right to Rent scheme [landlord checks] is yet to demonstrate its worth as a tool to encourage immigration compliance – the number of voluntary returns has fallen. Internally, the Home Office has failed to coordinate, maximise or even measure effectively its use. Meanwhile, externally it is doing little to address stakeholders' concerns."[93]*

Immigration control must be enforced to maintain public confidence in the system. But we recommend that immigration enforcement measures are first piloted and evaluated to determine their effectiveness. This should take place before any wider roll-out, to make sure that Home Office resources are deployed most effectively. The Government should not proceed with policy that is ineffective in achieving its aims or which unfairly discriminates.

7. **Build a culture of openness within the Home Office, with a commitment to better stakeholder engagement in all divisions.**

In recent years, the Home Office has been an unusually closed department, with little communication between ministers and officials and outside bodies such as business, education and civil society stakeholders. In some cases this has reduced accountability and limited opportunities for constructive policy change. This is now starting to change, with much stronger stakeholder engagement over EU nationals and the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. We recommend that the Home Secretary review stakeholder engagement across all immigration functions, with the aim of promoting more open policy debate.

8. Parliamentarians, civil society, business groups and universities should make better use of migration transparency data to hold the Home Office to account.

There are a number of mechanisms that enable the Home Secretary to be held to account. These include parliamentarians and parliamentary committees, the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration and the National Audit Office. The media, business and civil society can also add to these layers of accountability.

Since 2014 the Home Office has published quarterly migration transparency data, which has made public a number of key performance indicators such as the time taken to process an asylum application or the numbers of foreign national offenders who are deported. However, this data is rarely used to hold the Home Office to account for poor performance or to advocate for changes that would improve the immigration system. We recommend that parliamentarians, civil society, business groups and universities make better use of this data.

17. Reforming migration for work

Labour migration from the EU was the most important theme of most of our National Conversation panels across the UK. Participants had much more to say about migration from Europe than non-EU migration and we heard mixed views about the pressures and gains.

At the time of writing, little information has emerged about the outline of a post-Brexit immigration system, although Prime Minister Theresa May has made clear that freedom of movement rules in their current form will not apply after the transition period ends, most probably now after 2021. Whatever decisions are made, they need to be both capable of securing public consent in the UK and negotiable with the European Union. Our citizens' panels illustrated why the post-Brexit immigration system is probably the most challenging immigration issue for the Government.

Whatever immigration policies are put in place will have to secure the support of the EU, unless the UK leaves without a final deal. This may rule out some policy options. Despite this constraint, Brexit still offers an opportunity to put in place an immigration system that works for employers but also has greater public confidence and support.

This chapter sets out public views on EU and non-EU migration for work and examines the policy changes that might be capable of securing public support while also meeting our other tests.

The recommendations we set out in this report presuppose that the United Kingdom will gave complete control of its immigration policy after we leave the European Union. Whilst we are aware that this might not be the case, and any final deal might actually set conditions on the UK's ability to devise a new immigration policy, or indeed free movement of people from EU countries as currently set out might remain in place, we are confident that the majority of the recommendations will still be applicable and help generate greater trust and reassurance in the immigration system.

AIMS OF POLICY

To put in place post-Brexit immigration policy that meets seven tests, namely that it is:
- Workable for the economy and employers;
- Simple and deliverable as policy;
- Fair to migrants;
- Fair to local communities and should not lead to negative impacts;
- Capable of securing public consent across social and political divides;
- Capable of securing political support in the UK; and
- Negotiable with the EU27.

CHALLENGES

Whatever happens in the Brexit negotiations, geography and the shared economic and cultural ties between the UK and Europe mean that the migration of people between the UK and the EU27 will remain important. We agree with many recent assessments that suggest leaving the EU without a final trade deal is likely to have adverse economic and social impacts on the UK[94]. These would often be mostly strongly felt in those parts of the UK with the most fragile local economies. The long-term economic consequences of a so-called 'hard Brexit' are unclear, but avoiding leaving the EU without a final deal must be a priority for the Government. Developing immigration policy that is capable of securing the support of the EU27 is essential, but may be challenging.

The National Conversation on Immigration shows that there is little support for temporary migration regimes covering EU nationals, either from employers or from the public.

Although there is public support for an overarching labour migration system covering EU and non-EU nationals, we believe that an expanded points-based system would be overly bureaucratic for employers and migrants. It is also an approach that would be resisted by the EU27.

We consider that reforms within free movement, such as free movement with a job offer, risks having insufficient public support, particularly among Leave voters, to make it politically viable in the UK.

Reviewing the evidence from the National Conversation on Immigration, we believe that there are two long-term policy options that best meet these seven tests. They are:

1. Mandatory registration with a bar on recruiting EU nationals into jobs that pay less than the hourly National Living Wage.

2. A preferential work-permit system for EU nationals, covering some or all low-skilled work.

Our experience in the citizens' panels shows significant numbers of the public, some of them with concerns about immigration, will struggle to understand the UK's chosen approach. Public engagement is essential. Once the Brexit negotiations have concluded, we believe the Government should communicate its policy to members of the public through a properly resourced information campaign on all the publicly salient aspects of Brexit. This should take place alongside the ongoing public engagement on immigration and integration that we recommend in this report.

Changes to immigration policy alone will also not be enough to secure public consent for immigration. We believe that the Government must also prioritise addressing some of the local impacts of rapid migration, particularly those that relate to integration and neighbourhood decline.

POLICY FOR EU LABOUR MIGRATION: TWO OPTIONS

1. A bar on recruiting EU nationals into jobs that pay less than the hourly National Living Wage.

The National Living Wage is currently set at £7.83 per hour, with the Government committed to increasing this to £9 by 2020[95]. However it only applies to those aged 25 and over. The National Minimum Wage is £3.70 per hour for apprentices, £4.20 for those under 18 years, £5.90 for 18-20 year-olds and £7.38 per hour for those aged between 21 and 24.

We propose that employers, including employment agencies, should be barred from recruiting EU nationals into jobs that pay less than the hourly National Living Wage. We believe that this proposal is negotiable with the EU27 and may be supported by countries such as France, where President Macron has recently secured reform to EU regulations on posted workers within the EU who remain employed and covered by the wage regulations of their home country[96].

We believe that this policy would encourage employers to recruit from the domestic labour market to a greater extent than at present. Some industrial sectors would have to be more flexible, and be willing to offer part-time work for students and parents with care duties. There would also be a greater incentive to support new recruits to make sure they stay in their jobs. Moreover, this policy would help reduce unemployment among 16-25 year-olds, which currently stands at 12%, nearly three times the overall unemployment rate of 4.4%[97].

As such it is an opportunity to address some of the real and documented labour market impacts of migration on jobs and wages. Analysing the impact of immigration on the labour market is conceptually and methodology challenging, but a number of studies have linked rapid migration to wage depression among the least well paid. Looking at the period 2000 to 2007 Reed and Latorre (2009) suggest that a one percentage point increase in the proportion of migrants in the working age population reduces wages by 0.3%, but this effect is greatest among the least well paid[98]. Similar effects have been shown in other research[99]. Where employers cannot meet their needs from the domestic workforce, they would have to increase their hourly wages to the National Living Wage or above it. This would allow them to recruit EU nationals, but it would also make a job more attractive to UK residents.

Such a system would need to be enforced, and currently there are too many workers who are underpaid in the UK, despite the protection of National Minimum and Living Wage.

2. A preferential work-permit system for EU nationals, covering some or all low-skilled work.

Under this proposal EU nationals would register with the Home Office and then receive a work permit, which would be needed before starting work. Only EU nationals would be allowed to apply for these work permits which would be needed in order to apply for jobs below a certain skills threshold. EU nationals undertaking high skilled work would not be required to apply for work permits and would retain their existing rights to free movement. Employers would be responsible for designating the skill level of the positions they wish to recruit. The existing National Qualification Framework codes and the Standard Occupational Classification codes, already used in UK immigration policy, could be used to determine which jobs need work permits[100].

Such an approach could act as an overarching emergency brake, with the number of new work permits made available each year set at a pre-agreed level. Such an approach may be permissible within current EU law, and thus be acceptable to the EU in the Brexit negotiations. Liechtenstein, as a member of the European Economic Area and subject to free movement rules, has managed to negotiate with the EU an absolute cap on residence permits. Switzerland is also subject to free movement rules, but capped long-term residence permits for EU8 nationals at 2,180 in 2012, then imposed a cap of 53,700 on permits for EU15 nationals one year later. This suggests that the EU may be open to discussing such a work permit system.

Alternatively, the Government could make fixed numbers of work permits available to each industrial sector, although this would be a more complex and costly system to operate, with less flexibility. There is also the capacity to exempt EU nationals who take up low-skilled jobs in some sectors from requiring a work permit, for example, those working in social care, the NHS or in agriculture. Sector-based permits, however, may face greater opposition from the EU.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Noting the above challenges, we propose the following recommendations:

1. The Government should involve the public in decisions about future EU migration policy through its own National Conversation on Immigration, through the publication of its immigration white paper and a public information campaign after the Brexit negotiations are concluded.

Migration from the EU is a highly salient issue and there is a clear public appetite for debate and discussion on future policy options. We believe that the Government could be doing more to consult and build public consensus about future immigration rules. We recommend that the Government should set out its thinking by publishing its much delayed immigration white paper at the soonest opportunity, and actively engage the public in a debate about policy options through its own National Conversation on Immigration.

Our experience in the citizens' panels shows that a significant proportion of the public, some of them with concerns about immigration, will struggle to understand the UK's chosen approach. Once the Brexit negotiations have concluded, we believe the Government should communicate its policy to members of the public through a properly resourced information campaign on all the publicly salient aspects of Brexit.

2. Introduce a mandatory Home Office registration system and Canadian-style criminal checks covering future migration from the EU.

EU nationals would need to show prospective employers that they had registered with the Home Office before being allowed to work. EU nationals with unspent convictions would be barred from registration. A number of other EU member states already require migrants from the EU to register with public authorities, as did the UK for many nationals from EU8 states (between 2004 and 2011), Bulgaria and Romania (between 2007 and 2014) and Croatia (from 2013 until June 2018).

Australia, Canada and the United States all prevent people who have been convicted of serious crimes from being granted visas. In Canada, an adult who wishes to extend their visa, who has lived in Canada for more than six months, is subject to criminal vetting. There is high public confidence in this system in Canada. EU states can exclude migrants from other EU countries whose presence is judged to be not conducive to the public good. The scope to deport EU nationals is restricted by EU law[101], but the UK and many other EU member states have automatic deportation processes for criminals who receive a custodial sentence that exceeds a certain threshold. (In the UK this is 12 months)[102]. In 2017 some 3,881 foreign national offenders who were EU nationals were deported from the UK to their home countries.

A mandatory registration and criminal vetting scheme would have to be acceptable to the EU in the Brexit negotiations. It would also need to be deliverable as policy, with immigration officers in the UK requiring access to the Schengen police database, which it risks losing after Brexit unless the UK secures a deal for continued access. A situation where foreign criminals are allowed entry to the UK after ministers over-promise on criminal vetting would severely dent public confidence in the ability of the Government to manage immigration.

3. **Maintain free movement for EU nationals undertaking highly-skilled work, but introduce immigration controls on low-skilled migration from the EU.**

These controls should take the form of a bar on recruiting EU nationals into jobs that pay less than the hourly National Living Wage and a preferential work-permit system for EU nationals, covering some or all low-skilled work, as set out above.

We believe that both these policies are negotiable with the EU. Switzerland is subject to free movement rules, but has managed to secure emergency caps on long-term resident permits, while still maintaining access to the single market. If these two policies do not prove to be negotiable, the UK government faces a stark choice between sovereignty over immigration control and single market access.

4. **Make sure that all migrant workers, from outside and within the EU, have clear and affordable routes to settlement and to British citizenship which should act as a lever to encourage integration in the UK.**

As the National Conversation on Immigration showed, the public do not support temporary migration or 'guest worker' regimes and prefer it when migrants settle, learn English, become British citizens and take part in community life. Whatever future system the UK Government puts in place for EU nationals, there must be clear routes to settlement and citizenship for all those who come to live and work in the UK.

The process of gaining British citizenship encourages integration. Applicants for naturalisation have to show English language competency. Once gained, British citizenship provides the security that lets people put down deep roots in their new home. However, British citizenship is also fast becoming out-of-reach to all but the most well-paid. For an EU national family of two adults and two children the cost of acquiring British citizenship is nearly £6,000[103]. For a similar family from outside the EU who entered with Tier 2 visas the cost of citizenship is now nearly £15,000[104]. The citizenship fee alone for an adult is £1,330, while the administration costs incurred by the Home Office when processing a citizenship application are estimated to be £272[105].

We recommend a review of the objectives of citizenship policy in Britain. This should include assessing the impacts of citizenship for social and economic integration, reviewing current policies on eligibility, processes and costs, the requirements of the *Life in the UK* citizenship tests, and how the process could encourage civic and political participation, for example by embedding voter registration in the citizenship process.

5. **Make sure that HMRC and the Gangmaster and Labour Abuse Authority have sufficient resources to enforce the National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage.**

The Low Pay Commission estimated that among workers aged 25 and over, 278,000 people were underpaid in the 12 months after the National Living Wage was introduced in April 2015, although under-payment is highly seasonal[106]. Agency workers and migrants who do not speak English are two groups who are particularly at risk of under-payment. As well as personal harm, large-scale underpayment risks fuelling concerns that migration leads to the undercutting of the wages and employment conditions of the domestic workforce.

HMRC is the lead government body which is responsible for enforcement of the National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage. The number of workers for whom HMRC took action was a record 200,000 in 2017-18[107] and it continues to be a small core of recalcitrant employers who are unconcerned by the consequences of their non-compliance. HMRC must be adequately resourced to undertake this role, and the Government should act on the recommendations of the Low Pay Commission so as to improve the levels of compliance with the National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage. The police and Gangmaster and Labour Abuse Authority must also be resourced to fulfil their role, which includes responsibilities to prevent modern slavery and labour exploitation.

6. **Require organisations that employ more than 250 workers in a particular local authority to account to that local authority for any increase in employees, either in a new organisation or over a threshold of 20% of the existing workforce, with regard to minimising housing market impacts of internal and international migration and encouraging integration.**

Businesses, including employment agencies, must take more responsibility for ameliorating some of the negative local impacts on local housing markets that rapid internal and international

migration can bring to an area. This proposal must also apply to staff who have contracts with employment agencies.

Local authorities should then be able to use these as evidence to bid for funding from central government to mitigate the impact of any significant population change on public services and local infrastructure.

7. Sector skills councils should be required to work with the Government, the further education sector, employers and professional bodies to reduce the UK's dependence on migrant workers.

Currently, some industrial sectors would struggle if they did not have access to a labour force from the EU. There are also acute skills shortages affecting some sectors, including the NHS. While migration for work brings many benefits, it is important that the UK does not become overly dependent on a migrant labour force.

We recommend that for jobs on the Migration Advisory Committee's Shortage Occupation List, or where there are high levels of recruitment from abroad, sector skills councils and other relevant professional bodies should be required to work with the Government, employers and the further education and training sector to develop a long term plan to reduce the UK's dependence on migrant workers. This plan should look at ways to provide more up-skilling and retraining, as well as increasing full- and part-time employment among the under 25s and over 60s. Sectors that should be prioritised for such a review should include health and social care, construction, manufacturing, hospitality and IT.

8. Prioritise tackling unemployment, under-employment and precarious work among young people.

The National Conversation on Immigration showed that some of the strongest concerns about the labour market impacts of migration came from young people, a group who also tended to feel that migration had enriched British culture. Some of the young people we met described their experiences of struggling to find work, being in precarious work, or being underemployed. As already noted, unemployment among 16-25 year-olds stands at 12%, although it rises among those who live in deprived areas and with the least qualifications. If we are to maintain consent for migration in the next generation, tacking youth unemployment is a priority.

In England, the apprenticeship levy is improving investment in skills, but only among those who already work for a large employer. Currently, 48% of the UK labour force works for an employer who employs less than 50 staff and hence is not covered by this levy. As already noted, some young people struggle to find work. Although outside the scope of the National Conversation on Immigration, a review of vocational education seems long overdue. Further education and skills training must also be adequately resourced.

18. International student migration and higher education policy

The citizens' panels largely had positive views about student migration, believing that it brought tangible economic and social benefits to universities and local communities. These views were supported by the nationally representative survey, with the majority of respondents happy for student migration to be increased or remain at the same level. Most people do not see international students as migrants and have few concerns about abuse of student visa regimes. Policy that directly or indirectly discourages the recruitment of international students is not supported by the public.

Yet support for student migration is not unconditional. In some places participants felt that international students were given priority over young people from local communities. There were obvious town-gown tensions in some towns and cities with large student populations. Moreover, improving skills and education beyond the university sector is a public priority. If these issues are not addressed, they have the potential to damage public support for universities, including support for recruiting international students.

AIMS OF POLICY

With these findings in mind, immigration and education policy should aim to reflect public views of the success of UK higher education in politics and policy. Specifically, policy should aim to:

- Make sure that the UK continues to be seen as an attractive and welcoming destination for international students.
- Increase international student migration in a sustainable manner over the next 10 years.
- Use international student migration and universities to boost regional and local growth in under-performing areas in the UK and to realise the local social benefits of universities.
- Renew the links that universities have with their local communities, in order to strengthen public support for the higher education sector and for recruitment of international students.

CHALLENGES

There is broad public support for international students, so it should be politically possible to have a cross-party consensus on the benefits of international student migration. This consensus can span Leave and Remain divides, if universities are seen to benefit local communities. However, the higher education sector does not have unconditional political and public support. Town-gown tensions, the position of academics on Brexit and the negative publicity about Vice-Chancellors' pay has alienated the public and politicians alike. If universities are to continue to enjoy public support, and the consent they need for expansion, they need to consider their role in their local communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Noting the four aims set out above, we propose the following recommendations, which are addressed to the Government and to the higher education sector.

1. **The Government should publish a three-year plan for migration, which should include measures to increase international student migration.**

   We describe the need for a three-year migration plan in Chapter 15. This plan should make the case for increasing international student migration in a sustainable manner.

   Increasing international student migration slowly would have positive impacts on universities, but also on the communities that they serve. If the Government aimed to increase international student enrolment by 13% over a five year period, bringing the number of international students up to 500,000, input-output modelling suggests that this would support 19,000 extra jobs and add £1.82 billion additional Gross Value Added (GVA) to UK GDP[108][109]. Although some of

these benefits accrue nationally, increased international student migration also benefits local communities by generating employment and driving local economic growth.

The National Conversation of Immigration shows that there is public support for student migration, with most people seeing the tangible local benefits that international students bring. This proposal is, therefore, capable of securing public consent.

2. The Government should provide immediate clarity on the status of EU students after the Brexit transition period.

We believe that the present, uncertain situation is damaging student recruitment from the EU. As we describe in Chapter Ten there is also widespread concern that any move to increase the fees of EU students will have a negative financial impact on almost all universities in the UK. Given support for student migration, the Government should clarify the fee and student loan status of EU students at the earliest opportunity. The decision that it takes should avoid putting financial stress on the newer teaching universities that often do much to service local communities.

3. The Home Office and universities should review the operation of the Tier 4 student visa system with the aim of simplification both for students and for universities.

There is little evidence to suggest significant abuse of student visas, with processes more rigorous now than ten years ago. The National Conversation on Immigration also shows that abuse of student visas is not a widely-held issue of public concern. However, aspects of how this system operates are overly bureaucratic and send out a message that the UK is ambivalent about international students. For example, universities are required to keep student addresses and monitor their attendance, reporting any disappearances to the Home Office. At the same time international students from outside the EU are required to register with the police. Such bureaucracy is time consuming and expensive and results in little benefit for those undertaking immigration enforcement. We recommend that universities, the Department for Education, the devolved administrations and the Home Office undertake a review of the Tier 4 system, with the aim of simplification and promoting a positive student experience.

4. The Government should establish a new post-study work visa for graduates of STEM subjects.

Although there are small and specific visa allocations for graduates, the UK no longer offers post-study visas. Between 2008 and 2012, the UK offered a Tier 1 post-study work visa, which replaced a number of previous routes to remain in the UK after international students had competed their courses. The UK's position on post-study visas contrasts with many other OECD countries. There is substantial evidence to suggest that post-study work visas are one of the factors that potential students take into account when choosing their destination country[110]. Canada, the US and Australia all offer post-study visas and we believe that the UK's stance puts it at a competitive disadvantage when it come to attracting students.

Reinstating a post-study work visa would help the UK attract international students. Post-study visas would also enable universities to retain talented graduates for post-graduate research. There would also be benefits for business and public sector employers such as the NHS, who would have a larger talent pool of graduates. Given these benefits we recommend that the Government introduce a three-year, post-study visa for graduates of STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) subjects. We suggest that this visa is open to those with post-graduate degrees, as well as those who gained first class and 2:1 degrees after undergraduate courses.

We also recommend that the Government, with advice from the Migration Advisory Committee, puts in place quotas for post-study work visas for each region or nation of the UK. Those who held such visas would be obliged to work in a particular region, ensuring that the benefits of skilled migration are distributed across the UK.

5. The Government should establish a new wave of university and community college building to spread the benefits that higher education brings more widely across the UK.

Universities bring economic and social benefits to the communities in which they are located. They encourage skilled jobs and the on- and off-campus spending of students boosts local economies. Universities have been integral to the regeneration of some towns and cities and many universities make an invaluable social contribution, through activities such as student volunteering. Evidence from the National Conversation on Immigration shows that in many

places, universities contribute to an outward-looking civic identity and are often a symbol of great civic pride.

Yet the benefits that universities bring are not evenly spread across the UK. In the last ten years, it has been the elite, research-led institutions and larger teaching universities that have expanded at the greatest rate. We now have some titan institutions, with 11 of them[111] educating more than 30,000 students. Although there are academic benefits associated with larger universities, many of the rankings of student experience do not always favour size.

The UK's largest universities are almost always located in the country's biggest cities, with those with more than 30,000 students located in Birmingham, Cardiff, Coventry, Edinburgh, Leeds, London, Manchester, Nottingham and Sheffield. There are strong arguments for spreading the local and regional benefits of universities more widely across the UK. We recommend that the Government establish a new wave of university building, similar to the expansion that took place after the 1963 Robbins Report into higher education[112]. We also suggest the Government invest in community college institutions, which can develop the skills and training of the local population while drawing investment from outside.

These institutions should focus on local needs and account for the diverse nature of the places in which they are established. We recommend that these new institutions specialise in regional economic and cultural strengths and have strong business and community links. They should also be part of a strengthened life-long learning system with clear routes from apprenticeships, through further education and into higher level studies. But these new universities must be new and not repurposed further education colleges. At the same time, more investment is needed in the satellite campuses of established universities: for example, the Queen's Campus in Stockton-on-Tees has 2,000 students and is part of Durham University. Given the pressure that students place on the city of Durham, there are arguments for requiring all new expansion of this university to take place in Stockton-on-Tees.

There are a number of ways that a new wave of university building could be financed, so that the burden does not fall on the taxpayer. While students and research grants provide everyday revenue, the capital costs of a new university could be raised through capital markets. University expansion represents a secure, long-term investment for pensions and insurance companies which are already extensively involved in providing finance for UK universities. Bonds are another financing option used by some universities.

There should be clear criteria for deciding the location of these new universities, which should include location in relation to other universities, as well as socio-economic need. We believe it is essential that this new wave of universities are located in places that have experienced economic decline, where there are fewer skilled local jobs, or in the social mobility 'cold spots' where children are less likely to do well[113] . Table 19.1 suggests 10 potential locations, based on our National Conversation on Immigration research. Scotland and Wales have a more even spread of universities and we have not made proposals for these nations of the UK. In some of these locations, for example in Derry-Londonderry, Peterborough and Shrewsbury, there are already local campaigns calling for new universities. These institutions will not be a panacea for these issues, but should bring investment to the local area, and offer opportunities to the local population.

There should be clear obligations placed on these new universities to deliver additional courses below degree level, to support lifelong learning, promote good links with employers and to boost the skills of the local population. Some of these new universities may be small and specialise in particular subjects, others may be larger and offer a broader range of courses. Assuming a student body of 10,000 and using input-output modelling, we calculate that such a new university would generate 3,800 extra jobs and £208 million additional GVA to UK GDP.

Table 19.1 Demographic and socio-economic data for potential locations for new universities.

	Sub-regional economic strengths	Median age of population in years, 2017	Job density*	% of 16-64 population with Level 4 qualifications or higher, 2017	% of 16+ population in employment in professional and managerial jobs, 2017**
Barnstaple, North Devon	Pharmaceuticals, agriculture	47.1	1.05	37.7%	43.5%
Berwick-upon-Tweed (Northumberland data)	Leisure, farming, forestry, fishing	47.7	0.65	35.0%	40.4%
Chesterfield	Specialist metals, light engineering, IT	44.3	0.81	26.1%	32.4%
Derry-Londonderry	Biotechnology, textiles, creative industries, agriculture	37.2	0.57	22.0%	30.7%
Doncaster	Engineering	41.4	0.72	23.6%	34.5%
Grimsby (NE Lincolnshire data)	Maritime industries, marine biology	44.0	0.79	22.0%	32.9%
Peterborough	Intensive agriculture, biotechnology, light engineering	36.2	1.03	25.6%	37.3%
Shrewsbury	Agriculture, defence	46.7	0.80	36.9	40.2
Southend	Leisure, financial services, light engineering, IT	41.5	0.70	30.7%	46.9%
Wigan	Food and drink, glass, leisure	42.2	0.59	26.8%	34.7%
UK		40.1	0.84 (GB)	38.6% (GB)	45.7% (GB)

*Jobs to total 16-64 population.

**Standard Occupational Classification codes 1-3.

Sources: Annual Population Survey, ONS business data.

6. All universities should produce a community plan, involving university staff and local residents in its development and implementation.

Universities must play a bigger role in securing public support for the higher education sector, including consent for increased recruitment of international students. We believe that universities need to renew their links with the communities in which they are located. Some are doing this well already, but in other universities these links are weak or inconsistent.

We recommend that all universities should be obliged to develop a community plan that sets out how they work with local communities. As well as university staff, the development of this

plan should also involve local residents, sixth formers, businesses and councils. It would cover the university's cultural offer, activities to widen local participation, and also look at how a university can help local industry. Such a plan should also help reduce pressure or distortion of local housing markets brought by universities. It might also consider how international students could become better integrated into local communities.

19. Protecting refugees

The National Conversation on Immigration shows that the public are sympathetic to refugees and believe that the UK should help people in genuine need of protection. However, many people we spoke to had complex views about refugees and felt anxious and uncertain about this group. Terrorist attacks, the situation in Calais, perceptions about the integration of refugees in mainland Europe and the acceptance of age-disputed children and young people to the UK have all had a negative impact on how the public sees refugees. Views about refugees were often overlaid with concerns about security and stereotypes about Muslims or people of Middle Eastern origin. We believe that public opinion about refugees is characterised by what we have termed 'contingent support'.

Only a minority of the public believe that the Government has managed immigration competently and fairly. We need an asylum system that is efficient and fair and that commands the trust of refugees and those advocating for them *and* the trust of the public. Achieving this requires leadership from the top of politics and for politicians and civic leaders publicly to stand up for refugees.

Integration also strengthens support for the principle of refugee protection. Those who know refugees, or know others who know them, are more likely to base their views on these local experiences rather than what they read in the media. Employment assists the social and economic integration of refugees, yet it is often difficult for them to access the classes needed to improve their English sufficiently to find work. Many refugees struggle to find employment.

AIMS OF POLICY

With these findings in mind, policy should aim to:

- Uphold the principles of refugee protection.
- Put in place an efficient and humane asylum system that commands the support of refugees and those advocating for them, and of the public.
- Enable the successful integration of refugees in the UK.
- Build a movement to enshrine a culture of welcome and challenge prejudice.

CHALLENGES

As we have noted, public support for refugees is fragile and can be dented by shock events such as terrorist attacks. This, in turn, can curtail the political space for asylum reform and larger resettlement programmes. Limited social contact between refugees and wider society means that the media, rather than everyday interactions, determines how the public sees refugees. As noted above, views about refugees were often overlaid with concerns about security and prejudice towards Muslims.

Reductions in public spending have also made it difficult to argue for extra resources to support the integration of refugees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Noting the four aims set out above, we propose the following recommendations, which are addressed to central government, the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and faith and civil society organisations.

1. **Civic leaders and politicians of all parties should stand up for the principle of refugee protection.**

   The UK has a proud tradition of providing support for those fleeing persecution. The UK's ratification of the UN Refugee Convention was made by Winston Churchill's government in 1951 and every subsequent government has remained committed to those international obligations. Today, the UK is the second largest donor of aid to Syrian refugees in countries such as Lebanon and Jordan. As we leave the EU there should be no lessening of this support. Civic leaders and politicians of all parties should stand up for the principle of refugee protection as something that is intrinsic to British values. Where those with a public voice make misleading or prejudiced statements about refugees, others who hold public office should constructively challenge them.

2. **The Government should support high quality and speedy asylum decision-making through investment in staff and the merging of the Home Office budget for asylum determination with the Ministry of Justice budget for asylum appeals.**

The UK's asylum system should be fair, efficient and humane. At present it is beset with errors and backlogs. In 2017, just 21% of asylum-seekers had their cases concluded within six months, and nearly one in three asylum-seekers (30%) waited more than three years. The most recent transparency data shows that 20,793 asylum-seekers were waiting for an initial decision. In 2017, 36% of asylum-seekers who appealed against a negative decision were later granted refugee status[114], a situation that caused anxiety for these refugees while also incurring an unnecessary expense for the taxpayer. We recommend that the Government merge the Home Office budget for initial asylum determination with the Ministry of Justice budget for appeals. This would be a cost-neutral measure that would incentivise high-quality initial decision-making. We also recommend the introduction of a 'sole case owner' system for asylum determination, where a named immigration officer would deal with an asylum case from start to finish.

High-quality decision-making should also be supported through investment in Home Office staff. This should involve ongoing training, as well as incentivising high calibre staff to join the operational division of the Home Office and see it as an attractive career.

3. **The Government should maintain its commitment to resettling refugees in the UK through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, the Vulnerable Children Programme and the Gateway programme for other groups of vulnerable refugees.**

The Government has committed to resettling 20,000 Syrian refugees from camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt and Turkey in a programme that started in September 2015 and runs to May 2020. Local authorities and, sometimes, community organisations are responsible for organising a package of support that includes private rental accommodation, English language classes and integration advice. Local authorities that receive Syrian refugees through this scheme receive funding which comes from the UK's overseas aid budget, but community groups that sponsor Syrian refugees have to raise their own funds for support.

In addition to the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, the UK has agreed to resettle 3,000 vulnerable children and their families from the Middle East and North Africa through the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme, announced in 2016. There are two further refugee resettlement schemes: the Mandate and Gateway programmes. The Mandate scheme is coordinated by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and brings less than 50 people every year. Some 813 refugees[115] arrived through the larger Gateway Programme in 2017, which resettles vulnerable refugees and their families in the UK from long-term refugee camps. Similar to the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, local authorities organise a package of support which is funded out of the overseas aid budget.

The National Conversation on Immigration has found broad public support for these refugee resettlement schemes. We recommend that they be extended, with the expectation that every local authority should become involved. We also recommend that community sponsorship should also apply to refugees resettled in the UK though the Gateway programme and that those brought to the UK through community sponsorship should be in addition to the current resettlement quotas.

4. **Policy should aim to increase access to English language classes for asylum-seekers and refugees in all parts of the UK**

Integration matters to refugees themselves but also to the communities in which they live. Fluency in English is a key driver of economic and social integration. But in many parts of the UK it is difficult for refugees to access a suitable class. In England and Northern Ireland, further education funding regulations require adult asylum-seekers to pay full cost fees for English language classes unless their claim has taken more than six months to process[116]. A full-fee course typically costs £400-£600 per term and is usually beyond most asylum-seekers' means. There is a danger that delays in starting English language classes cause asylum-seekers and refugees to adopt coping mechanisms, such as relying on friends and family to interpret and translate for them. Once established, these coping mechanisms can be difficult to break down. Delays in starting English language classes may have a negative impact on integration, mental health and refugees' eventual employability.

The Integrated Communities Green Paper, covering England, commits the Government to developing an English language strategy, as well as setting up a network of conversation clubs.

These proposals are welcome but we recommend changes to the Education and Skills Funding Agency regulations to allow all asylum-seekers to be allowed to study at a concessionary rate in England. Similar changes should also be made to further education fee regulations in Northern Ireland.

Throughout the UK, the availability of English language classes is patchy, with enough provision in some places and virtually none in others. There are also shortages of specific forms of support in some places, for example, courses for young refugees who have had little or no prior education[117]. The Government has recently mapped English language provision to inform its funding of the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. Looking at ways to fill these identified gaps and make sure that all asylum-seekers and refugees have access to some formal teaching should be prioritised in all parts of the UK.

5. Allow asylum-seekers to work if their case has not been decided within six months.

Most asylum-seekers want to work and there is strong public support to allow them to do so. There is little evidence to suggest that allowing asylum-seekers to work after six months would act as a 'pull factor' or would increase asylum arrivals. We believe that there would be many benefits from such a policy change: it would help the process of social and economic integration and prevent some of the loneliness and poor mental health experienced by asylum-seekers and refugees; discourage asylum-seekers from working 'off the books'; and would also address some of the public concerns about welfare dependency and groups of bored young men loitering in town centres. Allowing asylum-seekers to work would also help avert some of the secondary migration and ethnic clustering that happens when those newly granted refugee status move from dispersal areas to London and other big cities to be near co-nationals whose networks they use to find work.

6. Councils, civil society and faith groups should work to broaden public support for refugee protection.

A majority of the public support the principle of refugee protection. But we believe that people's views are characterised by what we have termed 'contingent support'. Across the UK, we believe that civil society and faith organisations working with refugees need to be better at engaging with these concerns and building a culture of welcome. As we have already stated, some organisations do this well and the involvement of the public in supporting Syrian refugees has enabled a more open dialogue about refugee protection. But in other places, the activities of faith and civil society organisations only reach a very small sector of the public – those who are already very supportive of refugees.

Across the UK, we recommend that faith and civil society organisations working with refugees need to:

■ Undertake local 'conversations' to engage with public concerns but also to activate public support for refugees.

■ Look at the ways in which they work with others to deal with the anti-Muslim prejudice that impacts on how the public sees refugees.

■ Undertake more activity to increase the employability of refugees and their integration through work.

■ Use volunteering as a way of bringing refugees and local communities together.

■ Build on the success of City of Sanctuary and learn from initiatives such as Welcoming America to enshrine a stronger culture of welcome as an accepted social norm.

In dispersal areas, those local authorities where asylum-seekers are housed in Home Office accommodation, there should the same types of public engagement as has taken place in locations which have taken Syrian refugees. Such activities might include talking to the future neighbours of the asylum-seekers, public meetings or encouraging donations and volunteer help.

7. Require that lay members sit on Asylum and Immigration Tribunals

20. Managing the local impacts of migration

As well as common themes, the National Conversation on Immigration has found striking local differences in the views and issues raised by the participants. In some places, immigration was a more salient issue which, local people felt, had led to negative impacts on the places where they lived and worked. In other locations, a range of factors had enabled communities to adapt and come to terms with social and economic changes, including recent migration from the EU.

Neighbourhood decline and low-level anti-social behaviour appeared to be the most widely expressed localised concerns associated with immigration. Asylum-seekers and new migrants from the EU, for example, tend to be over-represented in cheaper, overcrowded and often badly-maintained private rental accommodation located in particular neighbourhoods or streets. In a large number of towns and cities this has led to an association between migration and neighbourhood decline which has diminished public support for migration.

AIMS OF POLICY

With these findings in mind, policy should aim to:

- Secure greater public consent for immigration by dealing better with its perceived and real local impacts.
- Reverse the spiral of neighbourhood decline in places with high proportions of private rental accommodation.
- Make sure users of public services do not experience a decline in the quality of provision when there is an increase in the local population.
- Build place-based resilience to enable local communities to adapt to social and economic changes.
- Enable good practice to be more widely adopted across the UK and make sure there are no postcode lotteries in public service provision.

CHALLENGES

Addressing the local pressures that result from immigration requires high level political commitment and policy change in many different areas: housing, health and education, for example. Action to deal with such impacts also needs effective inter-departmental coordination within central government, something that the Westminster government often finds difficult.

We have a situation of 'national gain but local pain' in relation to migration. At a national level our economy has benefited from immigration but it is local communities that have the everyday experiences of neighbourhood decline. Many large employers, particularly in the distribution sector, have failed to take responsibility for their local social imprint. Legislation should be the last resort when it comes to dealing with irresponsible business behaviour or the actions of rogue landlords. But our citizens' panels clearly wanted action and we feel that there is a clear need to require businesses to take measure to address their negative social impacts.

Against a backdrop of funding cuts to many public services, newcomers are often blamed for long waits in accident and emergency departments or difficulties getting an appointment with a GP. We believe it is harder to secure public consent for migration in such situations, and politicians need to be honest and acknowledge this fact. There needs to be more honesty from politicians on this issue.

Councils provide and regulate rental housing and will soon be required to take a more active role in promoting local integration so they, too, need enough money to do these jobs well. It is beyond the scope of the National Conversation on Immigration to make specific recommendations on health service funding and local government funding; suffice to say that these essential services must be adequately resourced, both in terms of capital and revenue funding. There are many strong arguments for involving the public in a national and cross party debate about future health service and local government funding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the devolved administrations should enforce standards in the private rental sector and look at better ways to reverse neighbourhood decline.

The number of UK households who are renting has nearly doubled in the last ten years and now comprise 21% of all UK households. At the same time, less funding has been available to local authorities for enforcement of the private rental sector. Many different types of households rent privately, including students, single people, young couples and families. Newly-arrived migrants are most likely to live in private rental accommodation, although many eventually become owner-occupiers. Evidence from the National Conversation on Immigration shows that neighbourhood decline in areas that house newly-arrived migrants has caused tension in some places. Making sure that private rental housing is not overcrowded or neglected would help arrest this decline. But there are big differences in the ways that local authorities approach landlord licensing and housing enforcement.

In the last two years, many more councils have brought in selective landlord licensing to address poor standards in the private rental sector. In some places, the Controlling Migration Fund is being used effectively to deal with poor quality or overcrowded rental accommodation, with councils such as Bolsover and Redbridge using this money to bring in or extend selective landlord licensing schemes. Other local authorities have relied on the existing regulatory framework that applies to homes of multiple occupancy. But across the UK as a whole, enforcement levels are extremely low and it is a small number of local authorities who are fulfilling their obligations well. In 2016, the London borough of Newham alone was responsible for 50% of all landlord prosecutions across the UK[118]. Local authority funding for the regulation of the private rental sector is not ring-fenced or demarcated and reductions in council budgets have led to many of them cutting back on this duty. We recommend that the funding that local authorities receive for housing enforcement should be demarcated with the expectation that this money should be used for this purpose. The Government should also set a minimum standard for the number of Environmental Health Officers that should be employed per head of population.

The problem, however, is deeper than this and is as much about a lack of political will to act. As the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee concludes in a recent report: *"it is clearly the case that some local authorities have placed a higher priority on addressing low standards in the private rented sector than others have done. We believe this disparity in effective action can only be resolved through political leadership."* [119] We need political leadership – nationally and locally – to make sure that action is taken against bad landlords so that parts of our towns and cities do not fall into a spiral of decline.

Taking action against rogue landlords by itself is not enough, however, to reverse neighbourhood decline in areas with much private rental property. Some local authorities are now buying and regenerating older housing stock for private rental. For example, Blackpool Council has set up a private housing company—My Blackpool Home—for which the council has been successful in attracting £28 million of borrowing from the Treasury through the Regional Growth Fund. This has stopped neighbourhoods falling into decline[120]. We need more of these initiatives and we need better ways of developing an inclusive civic pride so everyone feels that they have a stake in the place where they live. We therefore recommend that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales should prioritise driving up standards in the private rental sector and look at better ways to reverse neighbourhood decline.

2. Introduce a minimum three year tenancy term for private renters

Residential mobility impacts on the ability of people to establish local attachments and to feel that they have a stake in the place where they live. Population churn is highest in the private rental sector and housing law sustains this. The six month *de jure* minimum for a shorthold tenancy has become the *de facto* maximum for many households, forcing them to move home frequently.

We support the proposal put forward by Secretary of State for Communities James Brokenshire MP[121], for the introduction of a minimum three year tenancy term, with a six month break clause. This would help renters put down roots, and give landlords longer term financial security. This would also help to reduce undesirable population churn that is seen in some of the neighbourhoods experiencing decline.

3. **Require organisations that employ more than 250 workers in a particular local authority to account to that local authority for any increase in employees, either in a new organisation or over a threshold of 20% of the existing workforce, with regard to minimising housing market impacts of internal and international migration and encouraging integration.**

If it is to gain public consent for the immigration that it needs, business must take more responsibility for ameliorating some of the negative impacts on the local housing market, and on integration, that rapid migration can sometimes bring. We would like to see more businesses supporting workplace-based English language learning by offering spaces for classes and encouraging staff to attend. English (or Welsh) should be the workplace *lingua franca.* Planning regulation and litigation should be last resorts, but we feel there is a strong case for requiring larger employers – perhaps those employing over 250 staff – to account to councils on the integration and housing of increased numbers of migrant workers – both internal migrants and those from outside the UK. Such a requirement could be light touch for responsible employers with little housing market impact but require more of larger employers that create bigger impacts, such as Sports Direct and Amazon.

4. **Use the next Comprehensive Spending Review to secure extra funding for the Controlling Migration Fund and look at means to deal with the local impacts of migration outside England**

As we note in Chapter Twelve, the Controlling Migration Fund was set up in 2016 and over a four year period it will provide £25 million each year to local authorities to help them address the impacts of migration. This fund is similar in its aims to the Migration Impacts Fund, introduced in 2009 but ended in 2011.

Successful bids to the Controlling Migration Fund have to show benefits to the resident community. The monies set aside and the funding criteria set by the Government mean that the Controlling Migration Fund cannot be used to subsidise mainstream public services such as education and healthcare in areas experiencing rapid migration. As such, the ability of the Controlling Migration Fund to address public concerns about immigration is limited. Nevertheless, our National Conversation on Immigration visits suggest this funding is being well-used by those local authorities that are receiving it. We have been particularly impressed by initiatives to tackle rogue landlords and to deal with anti-social behaviour and street drinking. However, there is a case for involving local communities in decisions about how the Controlling Migration Fund monies might be spent. This would help increase the visibility of this fund, reassuring the public that action is being taken to address their concerns.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has a much clearer idea about how this fund can be used effectively than it did in 2011 and is committed to sharing good practice across the UK. We believe that it is essential that this fund is extended after 2021 and its budget increased. It is restricted to England, but some of the issues this fund deals with occur in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. We recommend that the Scottish and Welsh Governments and the Northern Ireland Executive set up similar funds.

5. **Ofsted should review language support for children who speak English as an additional language with the aim of reducing postcode lotteries of provision.**

Many parents and teachers who took part in the citizens' panels felt that children who spoke little English diverted teachers' attention away from other pupils. We also heard from stakeholders who felt that children in some parts of the UK did not get the help that they needed to learn to speak and write English. Recent research shows a severe attainment penalty for children who arrive in the UK at secondary school age, due to such a lack of support[122]. In England, ring-fenced funding for English language support in schools ended in 2011, when the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant was merged into general school funding.

While local authorities still receive additional funding for pupils who do not speak English through the national funding formula – used to pass money from central government to councils – not all local authorities take English language needs into account when passing this money on to schools[123][124]. Among those who take this factor into account, there is a wide variation in the money that is allocated for each child, from under £50 per year per child to over £4,500.

Such funding inconsistencies, an absence of earmarking or ring-fencing, as well as a lack of leadership from central government, all contribute to a wide variation in the amount and type of help that migrant children receive to help them learn English. In some places they get a lot of support when they first arrive, usually from a classroom assistant, but in other places they get very little help at all. Clearly, this is not in the interests of other children in the class, nor of the

migrant or refugee child. We need action to share good practice and end the postcode lottery of English language support. Ofsted should be asked to review local authority and school practice for children who speak English as an additional language, setting out a minimum standard of support. Schools should then be inspected against these criteria.

6. Use the opportunities of the 2018 Industrial Strategy and the next Comprehensive Spending Review to make sure that smaller conurbations and rural areas receive a fair share of infrastructural investment.

In this report we have described the divides that have opened up between the UK's younger, fast-changing and socially liberal core cites and those who live in the rest of the UK. These long-standing divisions are demographic, social and cultural, as well as economic and political. In the last forty years many of our smaller conurbations have lost the traditional industries that provided secure jobs and contributed to their civic identity. While some of these places have adapted to change, others are struggling. In many of our towns, anxieties about immigration are felt in the context of broader uncertainties.

The Brexit vote has cast a light on these existing divisions. But there are opportunities to heal them, and to make sure that all parts of the UK can thrive. The Industrial Strategy aims to build prosperous communities in all parts of the UK and commits the Government to upgrading the digital and transport infrastructure. The Government has identified funding to help it achieve these aims, including the National Productivity Investment Fund and the Transforming Cities Fund[125]. It is essential that this investment helps the UK's smaller conurbations and rural areas. University expansion could also better drive growth in some of the UK's under-performing sub-regions.

In 2019, the Chancellor of the Exchequer will set out public spending for the years beyond 2020. It is essential that all parts of the UK receive an equitable share of Government investment and we recommend that this Comprehensive Spending Review should aim to address divisions in the UK.

7. Have an honest political debate about public spending and demographic change.

Migration is a factor in population growth and concerns about pressures on public services are real. But other demographic and social factors place pressures on public services too, such as increasing longevity and the costs of new treatments and technologies. Our evidence shows that where public services are under pressure, it is much harder to secure public consent for the migration that the UK economy needs. It is beyond the scope of the National Conversation on Immigration to make specific recommendations on health service funding and local government funding; suffice to say that these essential services must be adequately resourced. Politicians need to lead an honest debate about future health services and local government funding. This needs take pace at a national level, across political party divides and should involve the public too.

21. Promoting Integration

The evidence from the National Conversation clearly shows that public views about integration underpin how people see immigration. Perceptions about the failure of integration, locally and nationally, lessen public support for immigration. We found that in communities where integration was seen to be working well, positive views about the impact of immigration were more predominant. Getting integration right is crucial to securing public consent for the immigration that the UK's economy needs. It is also vital if we are to heal the social divides that the EU referendum exposed.

Those who took part in the citizens' panels saw integration largely in social and cultural terms and held a mixture of views as to what it comprised. Largely, the participants saw integration as respect for British laws and customs, the absence of residential or social segregation, speaking English, good community relations and neighbourliness. Where the citizens' panels had positive social contact with migrants, their views on integration tended to be more confident and thoughtful and there was an acknowledgement that integration was a two-way process.

The citizens' panels told us of places where they thought integration was working: in schools, at work and often in their immediate neighbourhood. But there was a widespread perception that integration was not working in all parts of the UK. Almost everyone in the citizens' panels gave examples of specific locations in their home town or city where they felt integration was not working. In almost all cases these were places where large eastern European or Muslim communities were living. Many people who took part in the citizens' panels made reference to stereotypes about Muslims, who were often seen as a group who were too culturally different to integrate. Integration is not only about migrants, but is a process of mutual accommodation. Reducing prejudice, with a focus on challenging anti-Muslim prejudice, needs to be an aim of integration strategies in all parts of the UK.

Despite concerns that integration was not working, the citizens' panels had a real appetite for change. Participants wanted the Government to prioritise integration, with many people seeing this as essential if their trust in the Government's handling of integration was to be restored. The evidence we gathered showed that there is public support for greater investment in English language teaching and encouraging employers to take a bigger role in integration.

AIMS OF POLICY

Noting the above, the overarching aim of integration policy should be to build confident and welcoming communities that offer opportunities for all. We see integration a process of mutual accommodation between different sections of society and, because of this, something that applies to us all. Specific policy aims should be to:

- Make sure there is strong leadership and good coordination on integration within central government and at local authority level.
- Involve business as well as faith and civil society organisations in work to increase integration.
- Increase social contact between different sections of society.
- Increase economic opportunity for groups that risk falling behind.
- Make integration an 'everybody' agenda, and make sure that policy seeks to bridge generational and income divides and does not solely focus on ethnicity and faith.
- Make sure that everyone who needs to can learn and improve their English.
- Tackle prejudice and hate crime effectively.

CHALLENGES

The Integrated Communities Green Paper[126], covering England and published in spring 2018, is an important step forward and has put integration on the agenda again, after years of policy neglect. If its proposals are implemented, much progress will be made to bridge some of the social divides that were highlighted in the EU referendum. However, there are many challenges to be overcome before the ambitions set out in the Green Paper translate into action on the ground. Most importantly, there needs to be sustained political will and leadership from the very top of politics to take integration forward in the UK.

Integration involves many different areas of public policy and at a central government level many different departments need to be involved. In the past, integration has been held back by weak coordination across government and the competing priorities of different departments. Effective government is needed if the commitments of the Integrated Communities green paper are to be taken forward.

Local authorities also have a key role to play in coordinating initiatives to promote integration. While some are doing this well, there are too many councils where there is little vision of what an integrated society might look like, nor a clear strategy to reach this goal. The task of local authorities has been made harder by sustained budget cuts. If local authorities are to play the role that was envisaged in the Integrated Communities Green Paper, they need to have the resources and support to do so. People see integration as something that takes place in their local area, but as the National Conversation on Immigration shows, they are also affected by what happens elsewhere in the UK. If integration is not working in Birmingham and Bradford, it impacts on public opinion in Barnsley and Basildon. Unless all local authorities play a part, the UK will still face a situation where the public sees integration taking place in their immediate neighbourhood but not elsewhere in the UK.

In many places, integration is about 'them', with programmes of work largely focussed on migrants and minority ethnic and faith groups, particularly Muslims. Funding and programmes of work have tended to target large urban areas, but as the National Conversation on Immigration shows, it is often the shire counties and market towns that have struggled most to accommodate new arrivals. Integration needs to be about everybody and everywhere, or it is not really integration. Such a move would help rebuild confidence in the Government's integration agenda among Muslim communities, who have sometimes felt that they have been unfairly put under the spotlight.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Noting the above aims and challenges, we propose the following recommendations:

1. **The Westminster government and the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales should make integration a policy priority as the UK leaves the EU. Political accountability should be strengthened through a permanent House of Commons committee on integration and opportunity.**

In March 2018, the Government published its Integrated Communities Green Paper in England and the task now is to translate this into local action. In Scotland, the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy[127] sets out a vision for a welcoming Scotland where asylum-seekers and refugees can rebuild their lives from the day they arrive. Yet Scotland has no overarching integration strategy. The Welsh Government recently funded eight community cohesion officers, each covering several local authorities but, again, Wales has no overall integration strategy. Northern Ireland has its own unique challenges but has also pioneered work to bridge social divides.

Each of the four nations of the UK faces different contexts, but clearly there is a need in all parts of the UK for overarching integration strategies that frame integration as an 'everybody' issue and tackle age and income divides as well as those associated with faith and ethnicity. These strategies must be capable of securing cross-party support and there needs to be recognition that integration requires long-term policy commitment. Taking forward these strategies requires good coordination across government and leadership from the very top of politics to local authority level.

In England, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is the central government department that leads on integration. The content of the Integrated Communities Green Paper suggests that cross-departmental coordination on integration is improving and that there is political commitment to take this area of work forward. But past experiences suggest that ministerial reshuffles and changes of government risk pushing integration down the policy agenda. To guard against this, and to provide political accountability, we recommend that the House of Commons set up a permanent committee on integration and opportunity, overseeing the approach taken in all parts of the UK and across government departments.

We also recommend that the Government consider adapting the model of Germany's annual integration summits to provide a focal point for policy and public debate about the progress made and the future challenges, to share learning, and to mobilise sustained stakeholder engagement from local government, business and civic society.

2. Oblige local authorities to develop an integration strategy, in consultation with the public, and make sure that they have the resources and skills to deliver it.

Councils and combined authorities are best placed to catalyse integration locally, but currently there is a postcode lottery of practice. The National Conversation on Immigration has seen local authorities where there is a strong commitment to integration and a clear vision of what they want to achieve. But we have also encountered councils where there is little vision and strategy and where budget cuts, weak leadership and low staff morale have held back good practice.

We recommend that all local authorities develop a strategic plan to promote integration, involving other public bodies, business, civic society and the public in this process. Public engagement could take the form of local 'conversations' about integration and a local survey. But engagement with the public and civic society needs to properly reflect the pluralism of all ethnic and faith communities in the UK today, making sure they are consulted. There is a particular need to engage British Muslims in the development of local integration strategies in a way that builds trust at a time when some Muslims feel that the Government's integration agenda places them unfairly under the spotlight.

Sharing good practice about integration is a key to overcoming some of the postcode lotteries in practice. But institutional learning within councils and civil society organisations is often weak. Knowledge about interventions that are successful (or unsuccessful) in promoting integration is not captured and shared. A culture of 'reflective practice' needs to be more strongly embedded in local authorities and civil society organisations involved in integration, drawing on what already takes place in education and healthcare settings. There need to be better ways of sharing good practice across the UK, learning from the experiences of the five integration action areas (Blackburn and Darwen, Bradford, Peterborough, Waltham Forest and Walsall) and the Greater London Authority, among others.

Local government needs to be thriving and visionary if the ambitions set out in the Integrated Communities Green Paper are to be translated into action. We believe this requires a national debate on local government in the 21st century, covering funding, leadership, organisation and size, staff skills and overall direction of its work.

3. Take action to improve access to English language provision in all parts of the UK.

Fluency in English is a foundation of integration. But nearly 900,000 people did not speak English well or at all at the time of the last census. Migrants who work long hours and those who have little social contact outside their ethnic or linguistic communities are among the groups who struggle to learn English.

The Integrated Communities green paper places much emphasis on improving English language provision and proposes an English language strategy for England as well as a network of conversation clubs. This is welcome as both high quality formal classes, as well as informal support, have important roles to play in helping people learn English, building their confidence and motivation. However, a strategy for England is not, in itself, enough.

In England, recent policy towards English (ESOL) provision has been characterised by instability and change. Funding regulations, schemes and approaches have changed from year-to-year, sometimes after college terms had started. There have been significant cuts in public funding for ESOL, which have not been recovered. The new English language strategy should aim for greater policy stability and give providers the certainty they need to plan their services in the long-term.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency is the executive agency that oversees the allocation of government funds for ESOL in England. This money allows eligible students to study for free or at very low cost – an arrangement known as concessionary fees. In England asylum-seekers are only allowed to enrol at a concessionary rate after they have fulfilled six months legal residence; for a non-EEA family migrant this period is 12 months. There are also restrictions placed on those who are not actively looking for work. Similar rules apply in Northern Ireland. These regulations mean that asylum-seekers and family migrants cannot study for many months and may put in place survival mechanisms, such as relying on relatives and friends to interpret for them. Once established, these coping mechanisms can be difficult to break down. Delays in starting English language classes may have a negative impact on mental health and eventual employability. We recommend changes to fee regulations in England and Northern Ireland to allow asylum-seekers and family migrants to study English at a concessionary rate on arrival.

Across the UK, about 180,000 students are enrolled on English language courses at any given time, mostly in state further education colleges, but also in local authority adult education services, through charitable provision, private colleges and private welfare-to-work companies. In

recent years, between 75% and 85% of English language students have been female. Migrants who work long hours have often struggled to find English language support that fits in with their employment. For this group, shorter and more frequent English language learning opportunities, including conversation clubs, are needed, in or near their places of work. The proposal to develop a network of conversation clubs, made in the Integrated Communities Green Paper, is welcome but this approach needs to be extended to Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Learning from practice in mainland Europe, we also recommend that the Government works with others to set up a 'Learning English' Freeview channel.

4. Require businesses to play a greater role in promoting integration.

Work promotes social and economic integration and a theme across the National Conversation's UK visits is that deprivation is a major barrier. It is essential that integration policy addresses high levels of unemployment experienced by some migrant groups, particularly refugees.

The type of work that migrants do also affects their integration. Situations where migrants largely work with other migrants are usually not conducive to integration. During the National Conversation on Immigration we have heard about employers who organise their shifts by linguistic group, so that Poles work alongside other Polish speakers on particular production lines, for example. Yet business has been largely absent from debates about integration in the UK. This must be addressed and employers need to take a more active role in promoting integration.

Many employers are already involved in programmes that help groups at risk of unemployment find work. But across the UK, business must take more responsibility for ameliorating some of the negative impacts on the local housing market that rapid migration can sometimes bring, as well as playing a more active role in promoting integration, if it is to gain public consent for the immigration that it needs. Employers should offer more support for workplace-based English language learning, for example, by making space available and encouraging staff to attend. Organising shifts by linguistic group should be discouraged and English (or Welsh) should be the workplace *lingua franca.*

Regulation should be the last resort, but we believe that in this case it is needed. We recommend that larger employers – those with more than 250 staff based at one site – should be obliged to account to councils for changes in the size of their workforce, to a threshold of 20%, to show they will support integration. Such an obligation should be light-touch for a small employer, perhaps taking the form of a letter setting out some commitments. But for larger employers, for example a distribution centre employing hundreds of migrant workers, the requirement should be more detailed and must be enforced.

5. Encourage social contact through a Local Citizenship Service offer, mandatory schools linking and sustainable funding for parks and leisure centres.

Positive contact between different social groups is a foundation for integration. As the National Conversation on Immigration has shown, where this takes place there is often greater public consent for immigration. Projects to increase social contact across age, class, ethnic and faith divides must form part of local integration strategies.

The Integrated Communities Green Paper promotes National Citizenship Service, where young people undertake residential team-building activities with those from different backgrounds. We welcome support for this programme and also the commitment by the Government to promote new and innovative ways to promote social mixing among young people. However, we believe that the Government should review the remit of the 'National' Citizenship Service to see how it could encourage more sustained social mixing at a local level. A future 'Local' Citizenship Service might bring together school and college students of different backgrounds with older people who live in the same area, encouraging all of them to volunteer together in their local community.

We recommend that it should be mandatory for all school pupils to engage in activities that deepen their level of contact with children from different ethnic, faith and class backgrounds. We would also like to see mandatory school twinning of (i) all faith schools and (ii) all schools in local authorities with high levels of educational segregation by faith, ethnicity and social class.

Twinning might involve linking classes in schools with intakes of pupils from different backgrounds – an approach used by the Linking Network[128]. Alternatively, twinned schools might share some of their facilities, such as playing fields or performing arts spaces. Another option is for schools to twin by sharing sixth form teaching. Other options might include bringing pupils from twinned schools together to undertake volunteering through a 'local' citizenship service offer.

The Government should not be prescriptive about the form that twinning would take: schools should be able to decide the approach that works best for them. Expecting all faith schools to develop and sustain such a relationship would be a reasonable expectation of all publicly-funded schools. This balances the valuable role which faith schools play in the English educational system with a practical way to uphold the commitment, expressed by all major faiths, to educate children to be citizens of a shared society. The impact of school twinning would depend on sustained commitment from schools. Government should find effective ways to share, celebrate and reward outstanding practice and the quality of engagement should be examined in school inspections.

Sport can promote integration and during the National Conversation on Immigration we saw examples of successful projects that help bridge social divides. We also recommend that more recognition is given to the role of parks in bringing people together: an attractive and well-used public park is a site for a range of healthy, outdoor activities that cross generational, ethnic and class divides. Similar to attractive high streets, parks can help frame the identity of an area and have a role to play in developing an inclusive and welcoming civic identity. We believe that the social and economic benefits of public parks are such that they should be considered a core public service. But Heritage Lottery's 2016 State of the UK Public Parks report[129] shows that there is a growing deficit between the rising use of parks and the declining resources available to manage them. We would like funding for parks to be protected within local government funding settlements.

22. Addressing resentment, prejudice and hate

The discussions in the National Conversation citizens' panels were generally pragmatic, constructive and decent. They were much less polarised and noisy than online debates about immigration, or indeed than the responses to our online open survey. Participants often had strong opinions about immigration but, after these were aired, they listened to others and sometimes came to a different point of view. Many participants felt that face-to-face discussion about such a high profile issue was valuable and it was an opportunity for their views to be heard for the first time.

At the same time, we are concerned about hate crime and prejudice. In many places we visited, both the citizens' panels and stakeholders talked about "pockets of hostility". A few of those who took part in the citizens' panels reported experiencing hostility or racism, usually verbal abuse. While those holding actively hostile views, which can occasionally turn into violence, are a small and marginal section of society, they can have a major impact on those who live around them. It is also difficult to build integrated communities where people feel unsafe and mistrustful of those from different social groups.

Many of those who took part in the citizens' panels had seen extreme or hateful content on social media, for example from groups such as Britain First.

We are concerned about the prejudice towards eastern Europeans that we encountered in some places. This usually took the form of stereotypes that were not always challenged: that migrant workers from eastern Europe did not wish to integrate, for example.

Evidence from the National Conversation on Immigration suggests that prejudice towards Muslims is widespread in the UK and most prevalent in areas where Muslims and non-Muslims have little social contact. This prejudice takes many forms and occasionally it was expressed as blatant hatred. Much more frequently, however, anti-Muslim prejudice manifested itself as a view that that the British way of life was under threat and that Muslims were too culturally different to integrate. In many places, views about Muslims and Islam framed how the citizens' panels saw immigration, with references to Muslims and refugees sometimes mixed or conflated.

AIMS OF POLICY

The overarching aim of policy should be to build a safe, confident and welcoming Britain which offers opportunities for all. Specific policy aims should be to:
- Help local authorities and civil society develop long-term strategies that enable them to tackle prejudice and hate crime effectively.
- Find ways of reducing the influence of online prejudice and hatred.

CHALLENGES

Prejudice takes many forms, and challenging it will demand different approaches. Tackling the widespread, low-level prejudice we uncovered through our conversations must not shut down debate and it is important to maintain our commitment to freedom of expression.

We also need to look at representations of migration and minority groups in the media, and work harder to eradicate hateful content online.

An environment where prejudice goes unchallenged and there is uncertainty about the norms of decent behaviour also prevents open dialogue on immigration. Many of the citizens' panels described their avoidance of discussions about immigration for fear of being labelled as racist. This can mean fears are pushed underground or online, where anxieties can be exploited or fed, and attitudes can harden into hate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Make sure that all local authorities have long-term strategies for reducing hate crime, prejudice and intolerance.

Integrated communities are those whose members share common values: free speech, respect for democracy and the rule of law and tolerance. But hate crime, prejudice and intolerance are major barriers to integration. They stop individuals reaching their potential and fuel mistrust.

Public attitudes to race and diversity have changed in recent decades and the widespread, open racism of the 1960s has largely gone. But the spike in hate crime in the months after the EU referendum and widespread prejudice towards Muslims shows that hatred and intolerance are still major problems in the UK.

The law provides many clear boundaries – those who perpetrate abuse or a racist attack risk a criminal sentence, for example. But underneath the law lie many grey areas and difficult conversations, which professionals such as teachers and social workers grapple with on a day-to-day basis. While prejudiced attitudes may not break the law, where such views are widely held they provide the 'oxygen', in the form of tacit support, for those who hold extreme or violent views.

In too many cases, prejudiced views are not challenged. Even those local authorities that are aware of prejudiced attitudes have struggled to deal with them and hold difficult conversations, which necessarily must take place in private. Youth workers, teachers, community and faith leaders need to be equipped with the skills to hold these conversations and have the time and place to do this. This will take time and will require local commitment and leadership to progress.

The months after the EU referendum saw a substantial increase in racially and religiously motivated hate crime, with reported offences seeing a 41% increase in July 2016, compared with the same period in 2015. People of all ethnicities have been victims, but those of eastern European origin appear to have been disproportionally affected. Despite, this, there are few long-term initiatives to support this group – through third party reporting, for example. Local strategies to deal with hate crime must make sure that support is given to EU nationals.

It is important for civic actors engaged in anti- prejudice work to consider the audiences that they need to reach. If a core aim of anti-prejudice programmes is to strengthen our social norms, it is essential that these norms make sense to the broad majority of the population. Anti-prejudice messages will have little impact if they primarily reach those who are already firmly against prejudice. We believe that many of the messages used by those working to combat hate crime are still ineffective in isolating and calling out the perpetrators of hate crime – including verbal abuse – as the toxic minority. Local authorities, the police and the civil society groups who run campaigns against hate crime and prejudice should review the messages and messengers they use to make sure they reach and resonate with a broad section of society, including those more likely to hold prejudiced views.

2. Put pressure on social media companies to make sure they remove social media content that breaches existing hate speech polices.

Evidence from National Conversation on Immigration shows the extent to which prejudiced and hateful comments reach a wide audience through social media. Comments that are no longer socially acceptable in a face-to-face conversation are now expressed through platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Social media is also being used to recruit support for extremist groups that peddle hatred and violence, and to mobilise individuals for their cause. The nature of online media means that this material reaches a far larger audience than a leaflet or pamphlet. There is also a danger that the wide reach of extremist websites and hate-filled or prejudiced posts provides 'oxygen' to the minority of people who perpetrate hate crime.

But the legislative framework is not suited to dealing with online hatred and the police do not have the resources to investigate such comments. These are issues that need to be addressed. Responsibility for dealing with online hatred also lies with the technology sector. It is good news that Britain First has been banned from Facebook and Twitter but, as Parliament's Home Affairs Committee revealed, these social media platforms have been slow to take down hate speech. Technology companies must respond – by developing technology but also by making sure that enough human resources are put into moderation to remove content that breaches existing hate speech policies, with a better understanding of this content and its adaptability. Government must put pressure on social media companies to do this.

3. Provide coordinated training opportunities to groups such as youth and community workers on holding 'difficult conversations'.

Integration involves confronting some difficult issues, for example about tolerance of those who are seen as different. The law provides clear boundaries about right and wrong – a person who attacks someone because of how they dress or the colour of their skin, for instance, risks a criminal conviction.

While prejudiced attitudes may not break the law, they can provide tacit support for those who hold extreme or violent views. In too many cases, regressive and prejudiced views are not challenged. Community and faith leaders, youth workers and teachers need to be equipped with the skills to hold these conversations and have the time and place to do this.

A few organisations do offer training on holding difficult conversations. But these initiatives are piecemeal and often do not reach those who might benefit from these courses. We recommend that the Home Office, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Department for Education work with the devolved administrations to map existing provision and expertise. This exercise should be used to develop a coordinated programme of professional development on 'difficult conversations' and shared values for teachers, youth and community workers, faith leaders and others, including those in managerial positions.

4. The Government should adopt a clear definition of anti-Muslim prejudice.

While there has been a contested and politically polarised debate about antisemitism, the existence of an internationally-agreed definition from the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance has been useful in navigating the boundaries. There is no such definition of anti-Muslim prejudice.

This means an important foundation for a concerted challenge to anti-Muslim prejudice is missing. The debate often gets stuck, between competing concerns about the failure to take anti-Muslim prejudice seriously enough, and concerns that challenging it could restrict legitimate critiques of theological and political ideas. In its 2017 review of the debate about anti-Muslim prejudice, the Runnymede Trust put forward a revised definition, seeking to ensure that the focus was on prejudice against Muslims, making clear that this did not include critique of political ideas[130].

It is essential to get a broader consensus on an agreed working definition, which gets these boundaries right, and which can act as a foundation for concerted action against anti-Muslim prejudice.

To secure trust and the broadest engagement in the process, the Government should invite a cross-party panel of MPs, such as a relevant select committee, to lead on a process of public engagement with faith and civil society actors – including civic Muslims groups, those from other faiths and secular groups concerned for free speech.

This definition should be fed into Government guidance, and provided to local authorities, teachers and others to help them develop strategies to combat hate crime and prejudice.

5. Use Remembrance Day to unite people and mark a shared history.

Remembrance Day offers the opportunity to bridge social divides and address some of the anti-Muslim prejudice that is widespread in places where people have little social contact with Muslim communities.

Around 1.5 million soldiers from the Indian army – 400,000 of them Muslims from modern-day Pakistan – fought for Britain in the Great War of 1914-18. Remembrance Day is a national event and offers the opportunity to bring people from different backgrounds together to mark this shared history, and to make more people aware of the Muslim contribution to the UK's armed forces. We recommend that those organising local commemorations reach out and involve local Muslim communities in these events.

Part four:

The way forward

23. Conclusion: an ongoing National Conversation

The findings of the National Conversation on Immigration provide an invaluable evidence base on public attitudes to immigration and integration, for policy-makers, local and national government, business and civil society and other stakeholders with an interest in this important issue. We hope it is of much use to them and would welcome approaches from those interested in learning more about our findings and/or with an interest in taking forward its recommendations.

Above all, the National Conversation on Immigration is a pilot which shows the value and feasibility of large-scale public engagement on issues of public salience.

People have different opinions about immigration, as they do about many areas of public policy – such as levels of public spending and taxation, for example. It would, however, be misguided - not to mention defeatist – to conclude that immigration is a uniquely divisive issue on which efforts to build consensus are doomed to fail.

Britain's media debate on immigration is polarised and divisive, particularly on social media. It is dominated by those with the strongest-held opinions and the loudest voices. Nuance and moderation has been crowded out of the public debate. The voices and opinions of the 'balancers', who make up most of the public, do not get heard. It is time that they were.

The National Conversation on Immigration demonstrates that, through such public engagement, it is possible to build consensus, even on issues which appear to be difficult and divisive. But doing so will require action, support and strong leadership, at a local and national level.

We hope, therefore, that the Government will take forward our key recommendation of sustained and ongoing public engagement on this issue in the form of an official National Conversation on Immigration – one which ensures that all voices are heard. We strongly believe that such a commitment would play a significant role in rebuilding public trust and confidence in our immigration system.

Appendices

MAP OF VISITS

- ABERDEEN
- LERWICK
- EDINBURGH
- PAISLEY
- BERWICK-UPON-TWEED
- DERRY/LONDONDERRY
- DUMFRIES
- CARLISLE
- NORTH TYNESIDE
- NEWCASTLE
- DURHAM
- BALLYMENA
- BELFAST
- DUNGANNON
- MIDDLESBROUGH
- HARROGATE
- PRESTON
- BRADFORD
- HULL
- GRIMSBY
- BOLTON
- KNOWSLEY
- LIVERPOOL
- SHEFFIELD
- MACCLESFIELD
- LINCOLN
- CHESTERFIELD
- WREXHAM
- NOTTINGHAM
- NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME
- SUTTON COLDFIELD
- SHREWSBURY
- LEICESTER
- WOLVERHAMPTON
- CAMBRIDGE
- MARCH
- ABERYSTWYTH
- BIRMINGHAM
- KIDDERMINSTER
- NORTHAMPTON
- BEDFORD
- IPSWICH
- MILTON KEYNES
- GLOUCESTER
- BANBURY
- MERTHYR TYDFIL
- SWANSEA
- NEWPORT
- ENFIELD
- REDBRIDGE
- HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM
- BASILDON
- BRISTOL
- SUTTON
- BEXLEY
- TROWBRIDGE
- GUILDFORD
- GREATER LONDON
- YEOVIL
- FOLKESTONE
- SOUTHAMPTON
- UCKFIELD
- EXETER
- PENZANCE

LIST OF VISITS AND SUMMARIES OF LOCAL FINDINGS IN EACH LOCATION

East of England
- Basildon (December 2017)
- Bedford (preparatory panel January 2017 and final panel in April 2018)
- Cambridge (July 2017)
- Ipswich (male and female panels, June 2017)
- March (February 2017)

East Midlands
- Chesterfield (September 2017)
- Leicester (July 2017)
- Lincoln (February 2018)
- Northampton (April 2017)
- Nottingham (16-24 youth panel, June 2017)

Greater London
- Greater London stakeholder meeting (April 2017)
- Bexley (December 2017)
- Hammersmith and Fulham (November 2017)
- Enfield (March 2017)
- Redbridge (September 2017)
- Sutton (January 2018)

North West
- Bolton (May 2017)
- Carlisle (October 2017)
- Knowsley (January 2018)
- Liverpool stakeholder meeting (January 2018)
- Macclesfield (January 2018)
- Preston (January 2018)

North East
- Berwick-upon-Tweed (March 2018)
- Durham (July 2017)
- Middlesbrough (July 2017)
- Newcastle stakeholder meeting (March 2018)
- North Tyneside (February 2017)

South East
- Banbury (April 2018)
- Folkestone (October 2017)
- Guildford (November 2017)
- Milton Keynes (BME majority panel, June 2017)
- Southampton (May 2017)
- Uckfield (February 2018)

South West
- Bristol (open panel, October 2017)
- Exeter (January 2018)
- Gloucester (September 2017)
- Penzance (January 2018)
- Trowbridge (March 2017)
- Yeovil (over-50s panel March 2017)

West Midlands
- Kidderminster (November 2017)
- Newcastle-under-Lyme (May 2017)
- Shrewsbury (July 2017)
- Sutton Coldfield (October 2017)
- Wolverhampton (July 2017)

Yorkshire and Humberside
- Bradford (February 2017)
- Grimsby (February 2018)
- Harrogate (November 2017)
- Hull (November 2017)
- Sheffield (two panels, September 2017)

Northern Ireland
- Belfast stakeholder meeting (June 2017)
- Ballymena (June 2017)
- Derry/Londonderry (June 2017)
- Dungannon (June 2017)

Scotland
- Aberdeen (March 2017)
- Dumfries (October 2017)
- Edinburgh (March 2018)
- Lerwick (August 2017)
- Paisley (August 2017)

Wales
- Aberystwyth (March 2018)
- Merthyr Tydfil (May 2017)
- Newport (November 2017)
- Swansea (November 2017)
- Wrexham (March 2018)

Summary of local findings

ABERDEEN

Background

- Population: 229,000[130]
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 24.1% (UK: 14.4%)[131]
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: British Bangladeshi, Chinese, Polish, Romanian.
- Unemployment rate: 4.1% (GB: 4.4%)[132]
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: horticulture, construction, transport and fish processing.

Key findings

The oil industry has brought wealth and many jobs to Aberdeen, although it is one of the most unequal cities in the UK. At 17.5%, Aberdeen is the local authority with the highest proportion of overseas-born residents in Scotland. Its migrant and minority ethnic population is diverse and includes long-settled Bangladeshi and Chinese communities. There are two universities in the city, between them educating nearly 7,000 international students[133]. Migrants from EU form a growing population in Aberdeen, as well as in the surrounding countryside where many of them are employed in Scotland's soft fruit industry. Rent is expensive in Aberdeen and as a consequence many Eastern European migrant workers have settled where housing is affordable, most usually in deprived neighbourhoods such as Tillydrone and Torry. Here, rapid population increase has caused school place shortages.

The citizens' panel were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 6.3, with a range from 4 to 7.

Most of the Aberdeen citizen's panel balanced the benefits of migration with concerns about pressures on the school system. Participants described situations where parents had not been able to get their children into a school of their choice. Additionally some members of the panel felt their own children's education might suffer if there were large numbers of children who did not speak English in Aberdeen's schools. This panel included two university students, who had largely positive views about immigration and who saw few negative impacts.

Many of the issues raised in the discussion were similar to those brought up in England. Migration was seen as beneficial where migrants were making an economic contribution, but 'uncontrolled' and 'unvetted' migration flows were seen more negatively. Some participants felt that freedom of movement within the EU exposed communities to an increased risk of crime and terrorism. Fears about crime were more forcefully articulated that in many other places we have visited.

The panel felt that Scotland was more tolerant and welcoming to migrants than England. Migration was generally discussed in a more positive manner by those who hold political office and in everyday conversations. There was a lively debate about whether Scottish Government should have control over immigration policy, with the panel divided on this issue. Trust to manage the borders, rather than unionist sentiments, were the main reason that half the citizens' panel did not support the devolution of immigration control to the Scottish Government.

Trust, transparency and political accountability were also major themes in this discussion. Many participants felt they were being duped or lied to by the Westminster and Scottish Government. There was a strong desire for politicians to be more open and truthful about immigration, and to admit to mistakes where they had been made.

> *"We need to know about the good points, the bad things and the grey areas...Ask a question and the prime minister should answer it, straight."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Aberdeen.

ABERYSTWYTH

Background

- Population: 15,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 5.3% (Ceredigion, with Aberystwyth likely to be higher) (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Poles, Chinese
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 3.4% (Ceredigion) (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of migrants: higher education, NHS and social care, hospitality and food processing.

Key findings

Aberystwyth is the largest town in a predominantly rural local authority. Its main employers are the university, the hospital and the National Library of Wales and the majority of the skilled jobs that are available are with these three employers. Much other work in Aberystwyth and the surrounding area is low skilled, with hospitality, retail and food processing important to the local economy. An organic dairy is the biggest private sector employer in the town. There is a narrow range of employment opportunities in Aberystwyth and the surrounding countryside, which has led to population loss in many villages, with qualified young people moving away to progress their careers.

The hospital has an ethnically diverse workforce, as does the university. EU nationals, mostly from Poland, have also come to work in the town and in other parts of Ceredigion, although their numbers are small in comparison to other locations. International students – many also from Poland and from China – are a notable migrant group in Aberystwyth, although local residents tend to view this group as students rather than migrants.

Participants were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 6.3, with a range from 3 to 8.

This citizens' panel comprised many graduates who had professional and managerial jobs. They believed that migration had brought many economic benefits to Aberystwyth and to the UK. They were sympathetic to the needs of refugees. Half of this group were happy to keep the current free movement rules for EU nationals, something that was not surprising in a town that strongly supported Remain in the EU referendum Their main concern was that immigration had the potential to threaten the Welsh language and culture.

Ceredigion is a bastion of the Welsh language, with the 2011 census showing 47% of its population spoke Welsh. Seven of the ten members of our citizens' panel spoke Welsh as their first language. It was clearly something they held dear and much of the discussion focussed on the obligations of migrants to learn Welsh. We heard about a group of new Polish migrants who worked in a meat-packing factory near Aberaeron and sent their children to a Welsh-medium primary school. They felt this group *"made more of an effort than the English"*. This citizens' panel felt that new arrivals (including English incomers) who made an effort to find out about the culture of Wales and learn some Welsh would find it easier to integrate, particularly into tight-knit rural communities.

"I agree with the benefits and the business side of things about migration, but culturally I think immigration has had a negative impact on Wales. I don't want to sound nationalistic and there are positive aspects of immigration, but culturally it has been negative..... I like multiculturalism. That's why I go on holiday – to experience other cultures. But migration should not be at the cost of your own culture being wiped out in your own country."

Citizens' panel participant, Aberystwyth.

BALLYMENA

Background

- Population: 30,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2014: 3.5%
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Poles and Romanians.
- Unemployment rate: 2.5% of the working age population[134]
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: meat and other food processing, hospitality.

Key findings

The Troubles and the loss of key manufacturing industries meant that there was little international migration to Ballymena until relatively recently. While EU migrants have settled in the town, the proportion of the population born outside the UK or Ireland is still far below most other parts of the UK.

Participants were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 6.9, with a range from 5 to 8.

The citizens' panel mostly comprised those who had professional or managerial roles in their working lives and were reasonably prosperous. Generally, participants believed that immigration had brought more benefits than disadvantages to Northern Ireland. This may reflect the higher level of education of this panel and their greater levels of financial security, with migrants not seen as a threat to their economic wellbeing. Recent migration to Northern Ireland was interpreted as a vote of confidence in the peace process. Significantly, the pressures that migration can place on public services and housing were hardly mentioned, even after prompting. Panel members also drew on their own experiences of migration and that of family and friends, and these views also impacted on how they judged the impacts of migration.

There was sympathy for refugees, with most of the panel agreeing that *"we should do as much as we can."* This support was stronger than in most other places that the National Conversation on Immigration has visited and may reflect the middle-class and religiously observant composition of the citizens' panel. Some participants attended churches that had appeals for Syrian and other groups of refugees and talked about this in the discussion. But this underlying sentiment was balanced with security concerns, with migration flows from the Middle East considered a security risk because they might bring in terrorists. All panel members wanted much greater vetting of asylum-seekers. Overall, security was this citizens' panel's biggest concern in relation to migration.

There was a lengthy debate about integration. Participants felt that people were fairly welcoming and tolerant in Ballymena and that local churches had helped integration by running language classes and events to welcome new arrivals. But they also felt that religious divides could sometimes hinder integration, as new migrants could be caught between sectarian divides and not be aware of some of the signifiers and emblems of these divisions.

Some participants felt Muslims were not well integrated in mainland Britain. But compared with citizens' panels that we have held in England, participants in the three Northern Ireland panels (Ballymena, Derry-Londonderry and Dungannon) had fewer concerns about integration. That many parts of Northern Ireland are segregated by religion and political tradition may have influenced such views. Participants also talked about their own experiences of migration and of integrating into a new society as a way of explaining that social integration sometimes runs against human nature.

The panel also discussed how immigration across the UK-Ireland land border might be managed when the UK left the EU. The group included those who had voted Leave and Remain in the EU referendum. As with the other citizens' panels in Northern Ireland, there was some anxiety about the impact of Brexit on Northern Ireland, with some concerns about the impact on the peace process and the economy, although these anxieties seemed to be less acutely felt than in Derry-Londonderry and Dungannon.

"Lorries are going backward and forwards all the time, lots of goods from here are shipped from Dublin. Now we have an extra safety issue. It's not the IRA they're worried about anymore, it's people coming in from other parts of Europe and Syria. I don't know what they will have to do, but they'll have to do it gently."

Citizens' panel participant, Ballymena.

BANBURY

Background

- Population: 50,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 12.4% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Poles, Pakistanis, Hungarians
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 2.7% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: distribution, food processing health and social care and engineering.

Key findings

Banbury is an historic market town which was once home to the largest cattle market in Europe. The town grew in size as a retail and commercial centre in the 1960s when aluminium smelting and coffee processing enterprises relocated to the town, bringing with them many workers. Banbury's good transport links have contributed to a diverse and healthy local economy. The food processing, distribution, motorsport and other light engineering sectors provide many local jobs. Some of Banbury's residents also commute to Oxford.

Waves of migrants have settled in Banbury, including those coming from other parts of the UK to work or to be rehoused and others coming from overseas. Overspill housing was built in the town in the 1960s, which along with industrial relocation brought an ethnically more diverse population to the area. Bus drivers were also recruited from Pakistan in the 1960s and there is a long history of highly skilled migration to fill vacancies in north Oxfordshire's diverse industries. More recently, an estimated 6,000 eastern Europeans, mainly Poles and Hungarians, have settled in the area.

Participants were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 6.5, with a range from 5 to 9. Participants saw the pressures and gains of migration and believed that highly-skilled migrants had a major part to play in the economic success of the area. Largely, the Banbury citizens' panel thought that migration brought more advantages than disadvantages. Although EU migration had been rapid, they felt that a healthy local economy, 'openness' and a long history of social contact with outsiders meant that in Banbury people did not feel overly threatened or anxious about immigration.

The group did voice some concerns about immigration, many of which focussed on overpopulation, as well as pressures on housing and public services. New housing developments made Banbury contiguous with some of the surrounding villages. Concerns about migration leading to overpopulation, the loss of green space and pressures on public services have been common concerns across many citizens' panels in southern England. Participants also wanted the UK Government to have control over migration from the EU, with many of them expecting and wanting numbers to come down after Brexit.

The Banbury citizens' panel felt more could be done to train those living in the UK to undertake work in sectors that rely on migrants. There was also less support for international students that in most other citizens' panels. Many participants felt that the University of Oxford was more interested in recruiting international students than offering places to UK schools leavers. We were told that *"there should be a better way of supporting our children for success."*

Participants felt that immigration had positive impacts in Banbury and the surrounding area, because migrants had come to work and they had also integrated into their local communities. But this group thought that migration could lead to problems where migrants did not integrate or observe shared values.

> *"I think in Banbury itself immigration is quite positive. I don't think we've got any concerns really with other nationalities, compared to if you go up North where it's some kind of big division. … I do think Banbury overall, they have intermingled. Coming back to the jobs, I've worked at a company and the warehouse was full of Europeans, like again low paid and they are doing the jobs and they are very hard-working people, that's not to say they aren't fitting in."*

Citizens' panel participant, Banbury.

BASILDON

Background

- Population: 184,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 6.5% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Nigerians, Zimbabweans, Turks, Romanians and Poles.
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 4.0% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of migrants: distribution, food processing and construction.

Key findings

Located 30 miles east of London, Basildon was one of the UK's first wave of new towns, designated in 1949 with the aim of alleviating some of the capital's housing shortages. At this time, grants were offered to enable businesses to set up bases in Basildon: Ford, GEC-Marconi, Carreras Tobacco and Gordon's Gin all took advantage of the scheme. Of these, all but Ford have now closed down their Basildon operations, with the loss of many jobs in the area. Basildon town centre also suffered from competition from out-of-town shopping, with Marks and Spencer announcing the closure of its Basildon operation in 2018. Distribution, IT and food processing now provide many jobs and large numbers of Basildon's residents also commute to work in London.

Until recently, Basildon's population was largely of white British ethnicity, albeit one with much Irish and Jewish ancestry. As well as migrant workers from the EU, in the last 20 years significant numbers of black Africans – mostly from Nigerian and Zimbabwe – have moved from London to Basildon and other towns along the A13 corridor, drawn by cheaper property prices. EU nationals have also come to live and work in Basildon. Homeless families from London local authorities, many of them from minority ethnic communities, have also been housed in Basildon, adding to the ethnic diversity of the area.

There is a long history of far-right activity in this part of Essex and extremist candidates have stood in council elections. This activity has provided the 'oxygen' for hate crime, with Muslims, new migrants and Gypsies and Travellers often the targets.

Participants were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 4.4, with a range from 1 to 7. This is among the lowest impact scores of any of our citizens' panels. The majority of this citizens' panel saw some benefits of immigration, but for about half of this group the disadvantages outweighed what they saw as benefits.

Although some participants had lived and worked in London, this group felt disconnected from the city, and from elites. The initial discussion had a much angrier tone than most other citizens' panels. Many participants voiced strong opinions about the direct impact that migration had on their lives. Two participants worked in warehouses and another two in construction; throughout the discussion they and others described how immigration had affected their livelihood and their access to public services and housing.

The citizens' panel voiced many concerns about immigration. The labour market impact of immigration was a major concern with participants feeling that eastern European workers undercut wages and working conditions, thus making it difficult for young people to find work. This group also felt that EU migration had put pressures on the NHS and schools, with teachers unable to give their children the attention they needed.

At times, the discussion was hostile towards EU migrants and Muslims in Britain, with some voicing strong, prejudiced comments. But the tone of the discussion changed when we discussed refugees. The image of Alan Kurdi, the Syrian refugee child who drowned in the Mediterranean, was remembered by this group who were genuinely sympathetic to refugees. The Basildon citizens' panel saw refugees as people who were "*desperate*" and needed help. The majority of participants wanted to keep refugee numbers at the same level.

The Basildon group gave examples of successful integration in the town's schools and most of the group had social contact with people they saw as migrants. But they also felt that there were major integration challenges in the UK and described residential segregation in East London and communities where adults spoke little English. This was a strongly patriotic group, some of whom thought that migration threatened English culture. Many people held the view that 'political correctness' meant that they could no longer celebrate festivals such as Christmas for fear of offending Muslims.

While Basildon has a significant West African community, EU migration was a focus of this group's concerns about immigration. Some participants were keen to point out that they were not racist. Views about race and the norms of non-prejudiced behaviour may have led to the Basildon group voicing more favourable views about black Africans than about eastern Europeans. The citizens' panel felt the Nigerian community in Basildon was better integrated – they spoke English and there was some social mixing in the town's pubs and restaurants. With many Nigerians owning their homes, this community was seen as putting down roots in Basildon, rather than "*sending their money home to Poland*". The citizens' panel was also strongly Eurosceptic and opposition to EU migration appeared to be related to this group's negative attitudes towards the European Union.

"I see it in my job and my point of view where I can't get an appointment at the doctors. I can't get treated when I need to be. At work, I've got a flood of unskilled labour taking jobs off of people who were skilled but can't do it for the price that the Eastern Europeans do it for. It [immigration] totally destroyed, I believe, the building industry… I've got first-hand experience of being homeless and was told all the housing was saved for immigration and you can't have nothing. So that's how I feel."

Citizen's panel participant, Basildon.

BEDFORD

Background

- Population: 170,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 20.8% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Indians, Italians, Poles, Italians..
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 4.2% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: distribution, hospitality, health and social care and higher education.

Key findings

Bedford grew as a market town serving an agrarian hinterland. By the 20th century its economy was more diverse and included significant electronics and light engineering sectors. Migrants started arriving in significant numbers in the 1950s – mainly from Italy, the Indian Punjab and Poland – to work at the London Brick Company. Today, about 14,000 people in Bedford claim Italian ancestry, the large such community in the UK[135].

Although Bedford epitomises 'middle England' the town is much more ethnically diverse than the British average. As well as Italians and Indians, Bedford's migrant and minority ethnic groups include the Irish, African and black Caribbean communities, African Asians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. More recently, eastern Europeans have settled in Bedford, mostly from Poland and Bulgaria. The town is also home to a significant number of London commuters, attracted by fast train links and lower property prices. Perhaps as a consequence of these waves of migration, the Bedford citizens' panel saw immigration as a part of everyday life and part of Bedford's history.

Participants were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 5.4, with a range from 3 to 10.

Panellists had a diverse range of views and at times the discussion was heated, but the majority of the panel saw both positive impacts and some of the challenges of immigration. Participants valued the contribution of migrant workers to the NHS and in sectors such as construction. However, the panel also shared a number of concerns. Some felt that migrant workers were willing to work for less, so had depressed wages.

Pressures on public services, homelessness and neighbourhood decline emerged as issues throughout the discussion. There is considerable residential segregation in Bedford, with long-settled communities from Indian and Pakistan living alongside newer arrivals from the EU in the town centre and in the Queens Park area. High rates of population churn, poorly maintained rental property, litter and visible street homelessness led the Bedford citizens' panel to associate migration with a range of social ills.

The Bedford group felt that residential segregation and language barriers impeded integration. There was an animated debate about integration and the prevalence of extremist views in nearby Luton; some participants associated the town with the EDL and Islamic extremism while others challenged these opinions.

Immigration enforcement was also a topic of discussion. Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre is close to Bedford and all members of the citizens' panel knew of its existence. However, some people were unclear about the function of an immigration detention centre and there were misconceptions about its population, with participants not knowing Yarl's Wood held mostly adult women.

The treatment of the Windrush generation was in the news at the time of our visit to Bedford. Unanimously, the Bedford group thought the treatment of the 'Windrush Britons' was unfair, as they worked hard and were seen as British and not undocumented migrants. Some of the most vocal support for the Windrush group came from participants who were sceptical about many other aspects of immigration.

> *"I've lived in Bedfordshire all of my life. Fifteen years ago, let's pick one of the worst roads in Bedford, let's pick Midland Road, right? I would walk down that road, and it would be ok to walk down there. Now I wouldn't dare walk down there, you know, it is so rough, and I'm not a racist…. It is such a bad road, it seems like they've picked all of these bad people up and have just put them on one road. It seems now that it's kind of like these particular immigrants are giving a bad name to all of the other ones."*

Citizens' panel participant, Bedford.

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED, NORTHUMBERLAND

Background

- Population: 12,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 2.6% (Northumberland) (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Poles, Romanians, Bangladeshis and Filipinos.
- Unemployment rate: 5.0% (Northumberland) (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of migrants: farming, fishing, food processing, the NHS and hospitality.

Key findings

Berwick-upon-Tweed has a population of just over 12,000 people and is located just two miles south of the border with Scotland. Its residents – and those who work or shop in the town – identify as English and Scottish. Tourism, retail, farming, food processing, fishing, fish processing, timber production, textile and fertiliser manufacture are important to the local economy. But in recent years the town has lost some key industries, including carpet manufacturing and much of its fishing.

Northumberland is one of the least diverse local authorities in England and 97.2% of its population identified as white British at the time of the 2011 census. Nevertheless, there has been some new migration to Berwick and the surrounding area, particularly of eastern European migrants to work in farming, food manufacture, fish processing and tourism.

Located two miles south of the Scottish border, the town's population and those who come to work or shop in Berwick includes many Scots. Our citizens' panel reflected this mix and was made up of those who identified as English and those identified as Scottish, living and working both north and south of the border. The citizens' panel were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 5.6, with a range from 3 to 8.

The majority of this citizens' panel saw both positive impacts and some challenges of immigration. However, there were two people who had much more negative views on immigration. The panel generally supported immigration where they saw migrants making a contribution. But they had concerns about migrants coming to do low-skilled jobs undercutting local wages. This sentiment was held by most people, including younger panel members who had fewer cultural concerns about immigration. Concerns about poor working conditions, precarious employment, unemployment and a lack of investment in the North East were raised throughout the discussion.

The area has experienced population loss until recently. Its population is still ageing and, in rural areas, still falling. The citizen's panel recognised this was an issue. However, participants felt that migration was not a solution, as this would not address broader economic problems which were the root cause of depopulation in the North East.

The citizen's panel was asked whether the Scottish Government should be given control over immigration. Both the English and Scottish participants were ambivalent. Some participants felt the Scottish Government could not enforce immigration control. However, many people felt that decisions about immigration favoured the needs of London's economy. Many participants – both Scottish and English – believed that greater Scottish Government control over immigration policy was a better policy option than the current situation.

This citizens' panel was among the least sympathetic we have met in their views about refugees. Stakeholders felt that a combination of economic loss and relatively rapid migration to an area without much history of welcoming newcomers had led to some resentment about immigration, and pockets of hostility. Later in the discussion, some participants became very animated about conditions faced by Filipino fisherman, who were crew on boats that land their catches in Eyemouth, a town just north of the border. They felt that felt these migrants were being exploited and their lack of experience at sea exposed them to danger. When their case was brought up, the tone of the citizen's panel discussion changed and became more empathetic.

Most of this citizens' panel had some social contact with migrants, often though their work. Language was a key issue for participants, and some felt anxious when hearing different languages on the high street or in the workplace. There were questions about the role of business, with participants believing that employers should do more to help new migrants to learn English.

"There's so many fishermen, they come though agencies in Eyemouth on their boats. They're having to bring fishermen in, young fishermen who cannot speak a word of English, never fished in their lives. I mean it's a dangerous job, they're bringing them over from an agency….the men are going out to that sea five nights a week and getting £80 a week in their hand….They don't even know how to work the machines or anything, that's risking life and everything at the sea."

Citizens' panel participant, Berwick-upon-Tweed.

BEXLEY

Background

- Population: 246,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 15.4% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Black Africans, mostly of Nigerian heritage and south Asians
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 4.5% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of migrants: NHS, social care, hospitality, construction, retail.

Key findings

Bexley is an outer London local authority where until recently the population was overwhelmingly of white British ethnicity. By the 2011 census, the proportion of those identifying as white British had fallen to 77% from 88% ten years previously. This change has been brought about by migration from overseas, but also because black and minority ethnic families have moved into Bexley to take advantage of larger and more affordable housing.

The citizens' panel were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 5.4, with a range from 3 to 7.

The Bexley citizens' panel was a pragmatic group of 'balancers' who saw both the pressures and gains of migration. Ethnic diversity was a normal part of their lives and immigration was mostly only a salient issue when it was in the news. Many of the views of the Bexley panel were informed by what they saw in the local area. We were told *"if you look locally, you've only got to use your eyes"*. As with many citizens' panels held in London and the south east, overpopulation was a significant concern, alongside pressures on housing, the NHS and school places.

While EU migration was a little less salient an issue compared with other citizens' panels, the Bexley participants spent a long time discussing asylum. While they were sympathetic to the plight of refugees, many participants believed that not all asylum applications came from those fleeing war and persecution. The proximity Calais and the arrival of clandestine migrants in freight had made asylum a higher profile issue in Bexley than in many areas.

Concerns about security were voiced throughout the discussion. Most people felt that terrorists could enter the UK as migrants. They also felt that the lack of integration of many Muslims made it more likely that some of them would become radicalised and support violent extremism. Participants felt that the murder of Fusilier Lee Rigby in 2013 in nearby Woolwich had had a major impact on how people viewed immigration in Bexley.

This citizens' panel felt that generally people got on well together in Bexley and that most migrants were well integrated. They felt there was little residential segregation in the local authority, but believed that residential segregation and integration were a problem in some London local authorities with large Muslim populations. Some comments from the group held underlying anti-Muslim prejudice, that saw an incompatibility of Islam with British culture.

The British National Party (BNP) once had its headquarters in this local authority and parts of Bexley were once considered 'unsafe' for those from visible minority ethnic groups because of far right activity. The citizens' panel felt that community relations had improved since the 1990s although some participants still felt there was hostility to migrant and minority ethnic groups in parts of Bexley.

"There is a difference between inner London boroughs and outer London boroughs. Everyone in Bexley is commuting in, which is why people get on. But in inner London boroughs, take Newham for example, you are getting a particular religious organisation targeting women on a Saturday night for wearing too short a skirt, because in their culture they don't do that. They have their own places that they go to worship and they have their own schools. And that is the problem that we have to encounter. Bexley is a typical example of how it works. Most outer London boroughs are typical examples of how well it works. Inner London is going to be the tinder."

Citizens' panel participant, Bexley.

BOLTON

Background

- Population: 285,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 13.5% (UK: 14.4%).
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: British Pakistani, Indian, Polish, Hungarian, Lithuanian. Kurds, Iraqis and Iranians
- Unemployment rate: 5.2% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of migrants: retail, food processing.

Key Findings

Bolton's prosperity was built on textiles, but this once important industry now provides few jobs. Retail and IT are the most important industrial sectors in Bolton, although there is still some manufacturing industry: food, clothing, paper and some heavy engineering. But the economic boom of central Manchester and the Northern Powerhouse has not reached Bolton, and parts of the local authority area appear run down and neglected.

Historically, it was textiles that brought many migrants to Bolton, with workers moving to work in the textile mills from Ireland and later from India and Pakistan. Family migration from India and Pakistan continues to this day. Asylum-seekers have been housed in Bolton since the late 1990s with many of them remaining after they are granted refugee status.   As of March 2018 there were 1,038 asylum-seekers supported by the Home Office in Bolton, proportionately one of the largest populations of asylum-seekers of any local authority in the UK[136]. Bolton has also been a destination for EU migrants. There is also a university in Bolton with nearly 500 international students enrolled.

The citizens' panel were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')".* The average score for the panel was 5.2 with a range from 3 to 10.

The citizens' panel generally had balanced views on immigration, acknowledging that immigration had bought both positive and negative effects to Bolton and nationally. All participants felt immigration was an important issue, which they spoke about regularly. It was clear that the panel's attitudes towards immigration were significantly shaped by how they saw EU migration and free movement rules, as well as integration.

Asylum-seekers and EU migrants tend to be clustered in certain parts of Bolton, in an area that still has a large Pakistani community. The citizens' panel discussed residential segregation. They wanted asylum-seekers to be dispersed more evenly across the UK, so that deprived areas did not face disproportionate burdens. Unlike almost all the other places visited by the National Conversation on Immigration, most of the citizens' panel in Bolton had contact with refugees and asylum-seekers in both personal and professional capacities. They were sympathetic to those who had experienced war and persecution and understood that the criteria for granting refugee status were tough. They wanted the Government to do more to help refugees to integrate. However, many participants were sceptical about the genuineness of some asylum claims and felt the UK should take its refugees from places close to source countries.

Our visit to the town was within 48 hours of the Manchester attack where a suicide bomber killed 23 people and injured 116. Bolton is just ten miles from Manchester and many panel members had attended local vigils. The terrorist lived in Manchester and was of Libyan descent, which impacted on the discussion. This citizens' panel unanimously agreed that the terrorist attack had brought people of different backgrounds together. They felt that most people knew that the perpetrator did not represent the wider Muslim community. At the same time, the Manchester attack had heightened their concerns about immigration, and showed the need for increased security checks on migrants.

"It's really hard for me as a Muslim now because every time we feel like we're getting a step close to being properly integrated, some stupid person does something that then puts us ten steps back."

Citizens' panel participant, Bolton.

BRADFORD

Background

- Population: 535,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 15.8% (UK: 14.4%).
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: British Pakistani, Indian, Polish, Czech and Slovak Roma.
- Unemployment rate: 6.2% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of migrants: hospitality, health and social care, retail.

Key findings

Comprising Bradford city itself and surrounded by countryside and towns such as Ilkley and Keighley, the district's wealth came from iron and steel manufacture, engineering and woollen textiles. By 2016, just 12% of Bradford's jobs were in manufacturing[137], with the wholesale and retail sector now accounting for most jobs in Bradford district. The NHS, tourism and financial services also provide much employment.

The district has a long history of migration. While 65% of the district's residents identify as White British, Bradford has the largest population of people of Pakistani ethnicity (20% of the population) of any local authority in the UK. Many of them are from the Mirpur region of Pakistani Kashmir, a migration which began in the 1950s and continues to this day. Although the Pakistani community is now experiencing a degree of upward social mobility and is moving out to the more prosperous parts of the district, those of South Asian ethnicity remain disproportionately concentrated in the centre of the city, particularly in and around Manningham. Here they are often living side-by-side with EU migrants and refugees. Bradford is home to an estimated 15,000 Czech and Slovak Roma, the largest community in the UK. Home Office statistics show nearly 800 asylum-seekers were housed in the city in March 2018.

Bradford's history of migration and integration has been documented in a number of studies and reports[138]. Media coverage still portrays Bradford as a city characterised by poor race relations, religious extremism and deep-seated class, ethnic, religious and residential divides. While Bradford does face many long-standing social and economic challenges, it also has a vibrant civil society, with many organisations working hard to bring people of different backgrounds together, bridging Bradford's residential divides.

The citizens' panel were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 5.4, with a range from 4 to 7.

As with most other places visited by the National Conversation on Immigration, control and contribution were major themes of the citizens' panel discussion. While some participants wanted reductions in the numbers of low-skilled migrants, there was no resentment of migrants who were working and paying taxes. The biggest concern of this panel was a perception that migrants received preferential access to benefits and social housing. Some of the participants had insecure jobs and had been in and out of employment and they talked about their own experiences of claiming benefits. It was clear that difficulties in dealing with the welfare system had fuelled a view that migrants received better treatment.

There was lengthy discussion about integration, with the citizens' panel feeling that Bradford had a reputation as a divided city because people of different ethnic backgrounds lived in different areas. Many participants felt that this was an unfair portrayal of their city because people from different backgrounds mixed at work and at school, not just in the streets where they lived. They felt attitudes about race and diversity had shifted and it was no longer socially acceptable to voice prejudiced opinions. Festivals such as Eid brought Bradford's residents together, with Eid and Diwali now part of the city's shared heritage. The panel believed that many Bradford schools were successful in promoting integration.

This is not to say that this panel had no concerns about integration. They believed that new arrivals must respect the law and observe British values. Participants also felt that it was possible to live in the centre of Bradford without speaking English and felt that migrants had a responsibility to learn the language. While all the citizens' panel members had friends and work colleagues of south Asian ethnicity, far fewer had social contact with EU migrants or refugees.

> *"I'm a great-grandmother. My great-grandson gets to celebrate Eid at school; he learns about other cultures and he brings pictures home about different festivals. If my dad was alive now he would say 'why the heck are you doing this?' But things have changed now, attitudes are different."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Bradford.

CAMBRIDGE

Background

- Population: 125,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 30.0% (UK: 14.4%).
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Poles and Indians, but Cambridge's migrant population is increasingly super-diverse.
- Unemployment rate of the working age population: 3.5% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: biosciences and pharmaceuticals, education, health and social care, hospitality, IT.

Key findings

The prosperity of Cambridge, low levels of unemployment and the structure of its economy mean that it has always been an attractive destination for migrant workers. International migrants into the city include entrepreneurs and academics coming to work in the university or in IT, pharmaceuticals and bioscience. Cambridge's economy also relies on EU nationals to fill low-skilled jobs, particularly in the hospitality sector.

Participants were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 5.7, with a range from 3 to 8.

This citizens' panel took a pragmatic approach to those who came to work, but some of them had concerns about population growth and pressures on housing stock, particularly participants who had young families or those who were seeking to buy property. This is unsurprising given high housing costs and an acute shortage of accommodation in Cambridge.

Many participants felt that migration had made Cambridge a culturally richer and more interesting city, as well as contributing to the success of the university and the local economy. The discussion was more heated and polarised than in many places we have visited. In many ways, the discussion we held with the citizens' panel reflected local conditions in Cambridge. About half the participants believed that the economic and cultural benefits of migration far outweighed any disadvantages. However, there were other panel members who had more sceptical views, and were particularly concerned about housing pressures.

Most participants did not see international students in Cambridge as migrants as they assumed they were in the UK for a limited period and then returned to their home countries.

Both the citizens' panel and stakeholder meeting felt that community relations were generally good in Cambridge. Many of the migrants who came to Cambridge found it easy to fit into city life, as they arrived speaking English and to fill highly-skilled jobs in the NHS, the university or in local business.

"I think what people forget is that we're a tiny, tiny island. We're so small so I don't think it's about quantity, I think it's about being realistic…If you drive around there's still a few green places, but we still are a really, really small island, and I think that just has to be taken into account. It's not about how many people, it's about where we're going to put them. I want a house for my child, two children, I think when they grow up, it really, really worries me. People struggle to have houses now. It's not going to get better you know realistically, it's just not."

Citizens' panel participant, Cambridge.

CARLISLE

Background

- Population: 80,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 5.6% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Poles and Indians
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 3.3% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: hospitality, retail, health and social care, agriculture and food processing.

Key findings

Located 10 miles south of the Scottish border, Carlisle is the biggest settlement in Cumbria and a commercial and retail centre for a large rural hinterland. Food processing, retail and education are now sectors that provide a significant number of jobs in the city. Carlisle is characterised by significant economic and educational inequality. Cumbria has also kept many of its grammar schools, which impacts on the intake of 'comprehensive' schools. Large numbers of Carlisle children leave school at 16 or 17 without Level 2 qualifications.

The county has seen a steady increase in its immigrant population since 2000, but is among the least diverse parts of the UK. Its migrant and minority ethnic groups tend to be concentrated in Carlisle and other towns, or work in the hospitality sector in surrounding the area.

In Carlisle, our citizens' panel comprised young people aged between 16 and 24 years – a group whose views tend to be underrepresented. The citizens' panel was asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 5.4, with a range from 2 to 8.

Many of this citizens' panel were 'balancers' who saw the pressures and gains of migration. Similar to other young people who have been involved with the National Conversation on Immigration, most of the Carlisle citizens' panel were positive about the cultural impacts of immigration on the UK and felt that ethnic diversity had enriched the UK.

Many in this citizens' panel felt that a ready supply of migrant workers meant that there were few incentives for the long-term unemployed to work, although this view was challenged by other participants including a young mother who had struggle to find work that fitted in with childcare. Like other young people, some among the Carlisle group also had concerns about the labour market impacts of migration, fearing that it had led to job displacement and the under-cutting of wages and conditions of employment. Most of the Carlisle citizens' panel were non-graduates or had no plans to go to university; some of them had also struggled to find work. Some of these young people felt that immigration meant they faced extra competition when it came to finding a job.

While voicing concerns about immigration, most of this citizens' panel felt there had been a change in attitudes across generations. They felt that young people generally got on well in Carlisle schools and some of this group knew migrants as school friends and work colleagues.

While a few members of this citizens' panel kept abreast with current affairs, other participants had little knowledge of politics and international affairs. One participants said that she was not sure where Syria was located and many participants were confused by Brexit.

Throughout the citizens' panel discussion, security emerged as a major concern, and it was clear that the recent terror attacks in the UK had a significant impact on how the panel saw migrants and refugees. Some of this group had prejudiced attitudes to Muslims who they saw as a homogenous group that presented a risk to safety and to British culture.

> *"I want increased background checks, and the security regarding letting immigrants in should be a lot more strict, or stricter."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Carlisle.

CHESTERFIELD

Background

- Population: 70,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 4.8% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Poles, British Pakistanis
- Unemployment rate of the working age population: 6.0% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: distribution, including Sports Direct and Royal Mail; NHS.

Key findings

An improving economy and unfilled jobs have brought migrant workers to the area, mostly from Poland. When Sports Direct set up its distribution centre near Chesterfield it promised jobs to local people[139]. However, the company used an employment agency to recruit many of its staff, who were largely migrant workers from Poland. At the time this move caused tension in the area. Social contact between the new arrivals and the local community seems to have diffused a little of this conflict, with many local people feeling sympathy for those who work at the distribution depot.

Participants were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 5.5, with a range from 2 to 8.

The majority of the citizens' panel balanced the positive impacts of migration with their concerns, but for some the negative impacts were greater than the positives. Participants felt that migrants made a major contribution to the NHS but, at the same time, a growing population put extra pressure on GPs' surgeries and hospitals.

The panel had major concerns about job displacement and wage depression, making reference to Sports Direct and voicing the opinion that migrant workers were willing to work for lower wages. These opinions were more strongly articulated than in almost all other places that the National Conversation on Immigration has visited, where the labour market impacts of migration have often not been a major theme of discussions.

While there was sympathy for refugee families, almost everyone expressed concern about the movement of refugees and migrants across Europe, citing this as evidence that people were drawn westwards by the generosity of the benefits system in northern Europe.

Participants felt that community relations were good in Chesterfield and most of them knew migrants as well as members of minority ethnic and faith communities. There was a consensus that local communities needed to reach out and welcome new arrivals, with some participants describing their experience of doing this. This provoked a debate about the responsibility of migrants and receiving communities, with some participants feeling that migrants need to take on British cultural norms and celebrations.

> *"That's the problem, though isn't it? They [migrants] are prepared to work for low wages at Sports Direct…My son went for one day and he said the minority are English. Especially in the warehouse, they seem to have pushed all the Polish folk back into the warehouse."*

Citizens' panel participant, Chesterfield.

DERRY-LONDONDERRY

Background

- Population: 95,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2014: 2.5%.
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Poles and Romanians
- Unemployment rate: 5.2% of the working age population[140]
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: hospitality.

Key findings

The Troubles and the loss of key industries meant that there was little international migration to Derry-Londonderry until recently, with the main population movement being the emigration of the city's residents. In recent years, boosted by the peace process, there has been investment in Derry-Londonderry's economy, with new jobs generated in IT and tourism. Nevertheless, unemployment is the highest in Northern Ireland and the city has attracted comparatively few international migrants.

Participants were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 4.2, with a range from 2 to 8.

Most of the panel were balancers, citing the benefits of migration alongside their concerns. However, the Derry-Londonderry citizens' panel also included migration sceptics. The panel had strong views about immigration and particular concerns about competition for jobs and social housing. Preferential access to welfare benefits and concerns that migrants posed a security risk were also raised in the discussion.

As we have progressed with the National Conversation on Immigration, it has become evident that the concerns that are held about immigration often reflect local pressure points. It was therefore not surprising that in Derry-Londonderry competition for social housing was a dominant theme of the discussion, as housing statistics indicate a considerable mismatch between the supply and demand for social housing in the Derry and Strabane council area[141].

The discussion about integration was more nuanced and was not characterised by strongly-held views about EU migration. Participants believed that it was a duty for new migrants to learn English. They also felt that Muslims who lived in Northern Ireland were better integrated than elsewhere in the UK. Integration was seen as a two-way relationship, with local communities having a duty to welcome new arrivals, an opinion that was voiced more strongly than in England. There was also an acceptance that it is human nature to want to socialise with people who are similar in background, with fewer concerns about social segregation than in other panels held outside Northern Ireland.

Participants discussed immigration control and the UK-Ireland land border after Brexit. There was a great deal of anxiety about the impact on Derry-Londonderry of leaving the EU, in relation to the economy, EU grant aid and the peace process. While a few participants felt that a hard border was inevitable most did not, explaining how it would affect their daily lives. Overall, participants felt they were being given very little information about Brexit and this was contributing to their anxiety about the future.

"I work as a public servant and we've been affected very heavily by immigration. But I've another point of view: when we had our first child it was foreign people that saved my wife's life. She had a post-partum haemorrhage. So from a personal point of view, I agree there are a few problems that come, but there are positives, so two sides. The cancer centre would not work without them."

Citizens' panel participant, Derry-Londonderry.

DUMFRIES

Background

■ Population: 50,000

■ Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 4.8% (Dumfries and Galloway)
(UK: 14.4%)

■ Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Poles

■ Unemployment rate, 2017: 2.8% (GB: 4.4%)

■ Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: health and social
care, hospitality and food processing.

Key findings

Dumfries is 15 miles from the Scotland-England border and is a market town serving a rural
hinterland. Farming, food processing, timber, tourism and public sector employment provide most
jobs in the area. New migrants from Poland and other eastern European countries have helped fill
some of the vacancies caused by a declining rural population. As well as English and Irish migrants,
there is a small and long-settled British Asian community living in Dumfries and in other towns in this
local authority.

The citizens' panel was asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or
negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*.
The average score for the panel was 5.8, with a range from 2 to 10.

The Dumfries citizens' panel saw many positive impacts of migration and felt that migrants filled
vacancies and brought skills to the area. These views were balanced with some concerns, mostly
about the impact of migration on jobs and wages. Some people also voiced anxieties that
rapid immigration put pressures on housing, the NHS and other public services. The majority of
participants felt that the Government needed better controls over immigration and increased vetting
to exclude those with criminal records. In contrast to almost all citizens' panels, the Dumfries group
wanted to reduce the numbers of international students because they saw them taking the places of
deprived young people from Scotland. Overall, migration was not a particularly salient issue with
this group, on account of the small number of migrants in the area.

In Dumfries we also spent time discussing Scotland's demographic challenges. Although the urban
population of Scotland is increasing, the proportion of working-age people is falling.   The Scottish
Government has a target to increase its population and wants to take control of immigration policy
to enable this target to be reached. All but one person in the Dumfries citizens' panel wanted
immigration policy to be devolved to the Scottish Government. This desire reflected the political
views of this panel, but was also an indication of political trust. Most participants felt that the Scottish
Government would do a better job at managing migration than the Home Office and the Westminster
Government.

Dumfries and Galloway is a largely rural county, with many of its villages losing young people who
leave for university and never return. As a consequence there is a need to attract those of working
age so as to make Dumfries and Galloway's villages sustainable and to provide a rural workforce.
This issue has been discussed by the council, who want to attract migrants from elsewhere in the UK
and from further afield. But just two members of the citizens' panel were aware of this demographic
challenge and felt it was a problem. For everyone else, the area's demographic needs simply did
not resonate, something we have found elsewhere in Scotland. Instead, when we raised the need
to attract new migrants to the area, participants again raised their concerns about the impact of
migration on the local labour market. They felt the problem lay with local employers, who did not
offer high quality jobs that stopped young people from leaving.

> *"I think if the wages were higher for some of those jobs then more
> locals might actually apply for them, but they're looking for more
> money than a migrant…. If you are trying to attract younger people,
> do you not think instead of offering them 16 hour contracts, could you
> not offer them full time contracts?"*

> Citizens' panel participant, Dumfries.

DUNGANNON

Background

- Population: 16,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2014: 11%.
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: East Timorese, Portuguese, Poles, Lithuanians.
- Unemployment rate: 1.6%[142]
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: meat processing, poultry production.

Key findings

Dungannon has experienced some of the highest levels of migration in Northern Ireland, with the immigrant population of the town increasing tenfold between 2001 and 2011. Those born outside the UK or Ireland are now estimated to make up about 11% of Dungannon's population. The first arrivals in the early 2000s came from Portugal, including a number of Portuguese citizens of East Timorese, Brazilian or African origin, and more recently from Poland and Lithuania, recruited through agencies to work in the town's meat processing factory.

Participants were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 5.9, with a range from 3 to 10.

Overall, attitudes to immigration in Dungannon were quite distinct from similar areas in the UK such as March and Trowbridge, small towns that have also seen the arrival of EU migration to work in food processing. In Dungannon we found that migrant workers were seen positively: the town's meat processing factory would not be able to operate without them. The East Timorese have also come as family groups and bought property, so there has been more integration less unsettling population churn in Dungannon than in similar towns in England.

The citizens' panel raised some concerns that migration had added to pressures on the NHS and schools. But Dungannon does not seem to have experienced the neighbourhood decline associated with over-crowded and poorly maintained private rental accommodation for migrant workers. Nor have there been the community tensions triggered by street drinking. It is significant to note that the EU nationals who migrated to Dungannon have mostly done so as family groups, rather than as single people. Moreover, they seem better integrated that in other parts of the UK, putting down roots, buying their own homes and being clear in their intention to stay. Many of the Portuguese nationals who have arrived in Dungannon are practising Roman Catholics, with the church and sports clubs facilitating social integration.

Similar to other citizens' panels we held in Northern Ireland, participants in Dungannon recounted stories of friends and relatives living and working abroad. They felt that an Irish history of emigration and immigration made them more empathetic and welcoming to migrants. There was also a greater understanding of the reciprocal benefits of freedom of movement within the EU.

Brexit was also a major topic of conversation, much more so than in mainland Britain. The citizens' panel was anxious that leaving the EU posed an economic risk to Dungannon's economy. They were also worried that moves to put in place a hard land border between the UK and the Republic of Ireland could jeopardise the peace process.

"I think because we're living in this area we just don't notice it [immigration]. But if you go elsewhere they're like 'Oh Dungannon – that's like Lithuania!' But if we didn't have the immigrant population that we have here, we wouldn't have Dungannon meats, all the major industry that we have here which does support the town and keeps shops in the town, keeps restaurants, keeps things going."

Citizens' panel participant, Dungannon.

DURHAM

Background

- Population: 50,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2016: 3.7% (County Durham estimate) (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Poles, Indians
- Unemployment rate: 5.6% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: education and hospitality.

Key findings

The university dominates Durham and draws students and staff from across the UK and further afield, with over 5,000 international students. University staff and students are the main source of ethnic diversity in County Durham, which has experienced comparatively little international migration. Asylum-seekers are not dispersed to County Durham, although the local authority has agreed to house Syrian refugees, with churches playing a major role in organising for their reception.

Participants were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 5.3, with a range from 4 to 7.

For most of the citizens' panel, immigration was not an issue they considered frequently as they rarely came into contact with migrants. The international students who lived in Durham were seen as part of the student population rather than as a migrant group.

The majority of participants were 'balancers' and saw advantages as well as disadvantages from migration. Their biggest concerns were the uncontrolled and un-vetted nature of migration flows from the EU, as well as perceptions that some migrants, particularly refugees, were attracted to the UK for its generous benefits.

Opinions were divided about the UK's policy towards refugees. One participant made a strong argument for greater compassion towards this group of people, while other members qualified their underlying sympathy for refugees with concerns about numbers and the seemingly overwhelming problem of refugee flight. The movement of refugees across Europe in 2015 was discussed, with some participants arguing that the UK's benefits system was acting as a pull factor, encouraging refugees to move westwards.

"I think immigration is beneficial for any country, but I don't think it's policed right. I spent a lot of time in Australia and I think they've got it sort of spot on, and I think here we've been quite lax and letting them on to the benefit system instead of getting them into jobs and helping the economy."

Citizens' panel participant, Durham.

EDINBURGH

Background

- Population: 513,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 20.5% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Poles, Chinese, Indians, Irish, Germans, Spanish.
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 3.2% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: health and social care, education, hospitality, financial services.

Key findings

Edinburgh has a diverse and healthy economy, centred on financial services, hospitality and its four universities. The NHS, Scottish government and the council also provide many jobs in the city. Until relatively recently, Edinburgh had a much smaller proportion of people from migrant and minority ethnic groups than comparable size cities elsewhere in the UK. But in the last 15 years the overseas-born population of Edinburgh has grown rapidly, with migrants working in all sectors of the economy. There are also over 17,000 international students in the city. Although asylum-seekers are not dispersed to Edinburgh, the council has agreed to take in 500 Syrian refugees through the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.

The citizens' panel were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 6.9, with a range from 4 to 9. This was a well-informed group that reflected the social and economic mix of Edinburgh.

The citizens' panel largely felt that migration had brought many advantages to Edinburgh and to Scotland, and felt that they outweighed the disadvantages. The group did have some concerns, mostly about the added pressures that migration put on Edinburgh's housing. House prices and rents are high in the city, with the AirbnB holiday-let market further pushing up prices.

Participants wanted migration to be controlled and managed effectively. In Scotland, we have asked all our citizens' panels whether the Scottish Government should be given more powers over immigration policy. In Edinburgh, the citizens' panel was divided on this issue, seeing many practical difficulties in enforcing such a policy. However, many participants also thought there were merits in the Scottish Government being granted more powers over immigration, as it would mean greater responsiveness to Scotland's economic needs. This group felt that the Westminster government only took the needs of London into account and that greater devolution of immigration policy would be an improvement.

This group was one of the most sympathetic to refugees we have met and many believed that the UK Government should accept more refugees.

Both the citizens' panel and the stakeholders felt that Edinburgh had always been an outward-looking and welcoming capital city and that public attitudes to immigration were warmer in Scotland than in England. New migrants were usually well-integrated and Edinburgh had not seen the ethnic clustering of other UK cities. But one minority ethnic participant talked about his own and his family's experiences of racism and felt that skin colour affected how people were seen in Edinburgh.

> *"People are really risking their lives, they're not coming to Europe because it's rich, they've got to get out because where they are they are going to get bombed. I just don't think we have the sympathy for these people that we should have. We just think about the impact on us and that's not right."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Edinburgh.

ENFIELD

Background

- Population: 333,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 33.9% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Cypriot, Indian
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 6.0% of the working age population (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: retail, hospitality, health and social care.

Key findings

Enfield has long-established Cypriot and South Asian communities who were joined by Kurds and Somalis in the 1990s. New housing developments, larger properties and lower house prices, relative to many other parts of London, have seen Enfield become an attractive place to live for families and outward migration from inner London. This has contributed to the growing diversity of the local authority. More recently, migrants from the new member states of the EU have moved to the local authority area, adding a further layer to previous waves of migration.

The citizens' panel was asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 6.8, with a range from 5 to 8. The group was generally comfortable with migration, which was seen as a normal part of everyday life. There was a broad understanding among the group that attitudes to, and experiences of, immigration in London were different to those in other areas of the country due to a longer history of immigration and higher levels of diversity than elsewhere in the UK. In much of the discussions, there was little distinction between EU and non-EU migration, perhaps reflecting the diversity of immigration to Enfield.

But the panel also balanced the positive impacts of immigration with some concerns which mirrored what we have heard in other areas of the UK: that immigration put pressures on school places, public services such as the NHS and on housing, particularly with London's tight housing market. Older members of the citizens' panel in particular were more concerned about the impact of immigration on public services, including panel members who identified as migrants themselves.

Participants were generally sympathetic to the principle that those fleeing war and persecution should be offered protection. Many referred to "human" responsibilities to welcome refugees. However, as in other parts of the UK it was clear that support for refugee protection was contingent on external events. One participant spoke about child refugees evacuated to the UK from Calais, whose age was disputed in the media, and how this coverage had affected her own commitment to refugees.

The panel felt that Londoners generally got along well but some participants felt that integration is a process that takes time.

> *"Generation one or two, we struggle. Come generation three or four we've all merged into the potpourri."*
>
> Citizen's panel participant, Enfield.

EXETER

Background

- Population: 129,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 20.6% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Chinese, Poles, Indians.
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 3.4% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of migrants: health and social care, higher education, food processing and retail.

Key findings

Exeter is a cathedral city and the administrative centre for Devon, a largely rural county. Along with the university, the public sector provides many jobs in Exeter, with the Met Office, Highways Agency, local government and the NHS all major employers. Over the last 15 years, international migration has increased. There are nearly 6,000 international students enrolled at the university where they make up a quarter of the student body. Highly-skilled migrants to Exeter have come to fill posts in the NHS or at the university. EU migrants have also taken jobs in other sectors, including food processing, retail and social care.

While Exeter itself is prosperous, the rural and seaside communities of north Devon are more deprived and have seen significant population decline. Overall, Devon has an ageing population, because young people have moved away from its towns and villages and because it is a destination for retirement migration. The county council sees international migrants as a solution to its demographic challenges and wants those of working age to settle in rural areas and take jobs in social care.

Participants were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 7.4, with a range from 5 to 10. This score did not fully reflect the tone of the debate, particularly in relation to refugees.

Overall, this group believed that immigration had brought benefits to Exeter and to Devon and they were happy for all types of migration to be kept at about the same level. Participants thought that migrants brought much-needed skills to the UK as well as filling vacancies in sectors of the economy such as agriculture that struggled to recruit British workers. Migration to work in the NHS and social care was seen as particularly beneficial. Eight of the ten members of this citizens' panel were happy to keep the current rules on the free movement within the EU. However, many participants wanted more rigorous vetting of migrants from the EU. Participants also felt that that the Government needed to increase investment in housing and public services in places where international migration is high. At the same time there was very little trust in politicians to change policy and to respond to public concerns.

The EU referendum had pushed immigration up the agenda as a political issue that people discussed but it remained, for most participants, of marginal salience "*because we have had less of it in Devon*". However this group acknowledged that the pace of recent change had been rapid in Exeter and that some of its residents had found this disconcerting.

The discussion about refugees was more polarised. One participant, an EU national who had previously voiced strong support for keeping free movement, had very negative opinions about refugees, as well as migrants from outside the EU. These views were challenged by other members of the group, some of whom were well-informed about refugee protection, for example, knowing that asylum-seekers were not allowed to work. Other participants admitted feeling overwhelmed and confused by "*the sheer numbers*" and concerned that refugees did not integrate.

This group felt that most migrants who lived in Exeter were well-integrated and seen as part of the community. However, participants felt that integration was less successful in other parts of the UK, citing examples of London, Birmingham and Luton.

> *"Devon has not really kept up with the changes that have happened in Britain. It's been a bit more of a shock to find more people coming to the country from other places. Because the large scale West Indian, Afro-Caribbean immigration in the 50s and 60s did not occur down here and the same with the Asians. So what happened was people got fixated on European immigration."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Exeter.

FOLKESTONE

Background

- Population: 50,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 7.3% (Folkestone and Hythe) (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Nepalese, Slovaks, Poles, Afghans
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 3.6% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: the armed forces, hospitality, farming.

Key findings

Folkestone in Kent is a historically important port town with a long history of immigration, from elsewhere in the UK and overseas. The town has faced similar socio-economic problems to many other seaside towns, but has recently seen significant investment in improving the town's transport links. A fast railway line to London means that Folkestone is now home to commuters and second home owners. The decision was taken to use the arts to drive economic growth and a new cultural quarter provides space for artists' studios and other creative enterprises.

The Royal Gurkha Rifles has a battalion based in the town and Nepalese Gurkhas are by far the largest overseas born population in the area. The Calais refugee encampment sits just across the channel so this part of Kent is the point of arrival for asylum-seekers, including children separated from their families, with some refugees settling in the town. EU nationals have also come to live in Folkestone, some of whom work in Kent's agricultural sector and there is a Czech and Slovak Roma community, some of whom have lived there since the 1990s. London local authorities have also moved homeless families to Folkestone, a disproportionate number of whom are from black and minority ethnic communities. Although most of the latter group have lived in the UK for some time, the Folkestone citizens' panel saw them as 'migrants.'

The citizens' panel was asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 5.1, with a range from 3 to 8. Participants held a range of views on immigration, and the discussion was more polarised than many other National Conversation on Immigration discussions. To some extent these divisions reflected social fractures in this divided town, between long-established residents of Folkestone and more recent incomers from London.

EU migration was the most prominent topic of discussion, and many participants saw free movement rules as evidence of immigration being 'uncontrolled'. The group believed that highly skilled migrants brought economic benefits, but also voiced a variety of concerns about the impacts of immigration on the labour market and public services.

Given the proximity of Calais and the coverage of refugees in the local media, we expected asylum to be a highly salient topic in this part of Kent. Some people felt that the Government could do more to prevent people becoming refugees and that British foreign policy had sometimes worsened the conflicts that caused people to flee. But participants' views about refugees were largely no different from elsewhere in the UK.

"I think that what they're doing in pushing immigrants out here is what they did twenty odd years ago, when they put a lot of poor people out here in counties and towns like Hastings actually just took in loads of poor people from London boroughs. And it's just another bunch of poor people, they just happen to have a different colour skin."

Citizens' panel participant, Folkestone.

GLOUCESTER

Background

- Population: 129,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 10.2% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Poles.
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 3.6% (GB: 4.4%).
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: health and social care, hospitality.

Key findings

Gloucester has been a significant urban centre since medieval times, with its prosperity based on wool and later on iron and heavy engineering. Its manufacturing base is now diminished, with financial services providing many jobs in the city today. There has also been investment in the university and considerable regeneration of the dock area.

Small numbers of migrants from south Asia and the Caribbean settled in Gloucester in the 1950s and 1960s. More recently, the city has seen the arrival of asylum-seekers, international students and migrant workers from the EU. This has made Gloucester the most ethnically diverse urban settlement in the county, although the overseas born population is still below the national average.

The citizens' panel was asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 5.1 with a range from 3 to 8. The citizens' panel comprised balancers who cited both positive and negative impacts of migration. They felt that migrants made a positive contribution to the economy and to the NHS, but had concerns about the pressures that migration placed on schools and public services.

For some of the panel, there were more negative impacts than positive. Within Gloucester, many of the new migrants have settled in Barton and Tredworth, an inner city ward which has seen waves of migration. A significant part of the debate was about integration in this area, although none of the participants lived there. They felt that landlords neglected the properties they rented to migrant workers in these areas and much of the accommodation was overcrowded. This had led to neighbourhood decline. Some participants also reported feeling threatened by groups of young men 'hanging around' in Barton Street and outside the GL1 leisure centre. In contrast, those who attended the stakeholders meeting argued that Barton and Tredworth epitomised successful multiculturalism.

Few members of the citizens' panel had social contact with migrants as friends, neighbours or work colleagues. Their views about migration were largely formed by what they read in the media, and what they saw in central Gloucester and other UK towns and cities. Similar to what we found in Trowbridge, migrants were often described as a nameless 'them'. Participants' views appeared to be 'local narratives' that were being reproduced within peer groups.

"I'm a bit on the fence really because I live in a very small town outside Gloucester. There isn't any visibility of immigration whatsoever, so it's purely based on what you hear in the media which is, you know, biased one way or the other, so it's very difficult to make up a valid opinion based on that."

Citizens' panel participant, Gloucester.

GRIMSBY

Background

- Population: 90,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 5.1% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Poles
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 5.5% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of migrants: NHS, food processing and distribution.

Key findings

Until the mid 20th century, Grimsby had largest fishing fleet in the world, but the town has now lost the most of the industry that defined it. Although the causes are complex, this loss has been blamed on the EU's Common Fisheries Policy. This has heightened the town's Euro-scepticism and impacted on how EU migration is viewed by local residents. In the EU referendum, 70% of voters in North East Lincolnshire voted for Leave.

Transport links into Grimsby are poor and its economic indicators well below the UK average. Some 14.4% of children in North East Lincolnshire are growing up in workless households and most of the jobs that are available are low skilled, low paid and often insecure.

High unemployment has meant that Grimsby and other parts of Humberside have seen very little international migration until recently. An estimated 2,000 EU nationals have settled in and around Grimsby, although this figure excludes short-term migrants working in food and farming. A small number of asylum-seekers are housed in Grimsby by the Home Office. Many new arrivals have settled in the most deprived parts of the town where rental accommodation is cheapest.

Participants were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 4.5, with a range from 3 to 5. This is among the lowest impact scores of any citizens' panels. While many participants did see some positive impacts of immigration, for almost everyone the disadvantages outweighed what they saw as benefits.

While the labour market impacts of immigration have not been dominant issues in most parts of the UK, the view that migrants took jobs and undercut employment conditions dominated the discussion in Grimsby. While some participants felt that migrants worked hard in jobs that British people were unwilling to do, most of this group felt that EU migrants were willing to take jobs in worse conditions and for less pay. This citizens' panel also perceived migrants to have preferential access to welfare benefits and social housing. Towards the end of the discussion, this citizens' panel also voiced concerns that the English way of life was under threat because people were forced to pander to the sensitivities of migrants and minority ethnic groups. Similar to some other citizens' panels, underlying prejudice and stereotypes about Muslims underpinned participants' views that could no longer celebrate traditional festivals such as Easter for fear of causing offense.

The majority of the panels' concerns about migration related to wider issues in their lives. These centred around loss: of status and civic pride, secure employment and optimism about the future. When we asked the citizens' panel if they expected the local economy to get better after Brexit, we were told *"it could hardly get worse."*

Grimsby's poverty, loss of status, poor transport connectivity and largely white British population suggest 'closed' communities that struggle to adapt to change and absorb newcomers. Participants clearly had anxieties about immigration, but securing greater public trust for immigration in Grimsby will require more than changes to immigration policy. Better transport, industrial investment and skills training are needed to address the economic decline that contributes to the resentment of migrants.

> *"They [migrants] are coming and just taking our resources.*
> *Because, I've got to wait now until I'm sixty-seven instead of*
> *retiring at sixty. So, I've got another eleven years, instead of four.*
> *And it might even go up again yet before that. So where is my,*
> *after working all my life, where's my bit of life?"*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Grimsby.

GUILDFORD

Background

- Population: 80,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 11.6% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Unemployment rate, 2017: 2.2% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of migrants: IT, pharmaceuticals, higher education, the NHS and retail.

Key findings

Guildford is a prosperous town 30 miles south west of London. Its local economy is diverse with many leading businesses having bases in the area. Electronics, telecommunications, IT, financial services and pharmaceuticals are important industries, with Guildford being a leading centre for video games. Some residents also commute into London for work, with the town often seen as typical of the 'stockbroker belt'.

Over the last 25 years Guildford has seen a gradual increase in its migrant and minority ethnic population. The IT and pharmaceutical sector have brought highly-skilled migrants to the area. EU nationals have also come to take up low-skilled jobs, often in retail and hospitality. There are two universities in Guildford, with the larger University of Surrey having nearly 5,000 international students enrolled in 2016-17. There are also a number of independent schools in the area which also attract international students.

Participants were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 5.8, with a range from 4 to 7.

Most of this citizens' panel knew migrants as friends or work colleagues and this was reflected in a thoughtful and well-argued discussion. The citizens' panel were 'balancers' who saw benefits and disadvantages of migration, with contribution and control major themes of the discussion. All participants thought that migrants had brought many skills that benefited the area, as well as undertaking jobs that British residents were unwilling to do. The group gave many personal examples of the contribution of migrants to the NHS, social care, the IT sector, construction and airline industry. Many participants liked the cultural diversity that migration had brought to Guildford and wanted their children to mix outside the *"white middle class bubble"'*.

Over-population and housing pressures emerged as the biggest concern of this citizens' panel, a finding common to London and the south east. Participants were worried that further migration would lead to the need to build on the green belt. However, this group balanced the need to preserve the countryside with economic needs. Participants did not express a strong desire to reduce the numbers of low-skilled and seasonal workers coming from the EU; rather they were content for numbers to remain the same.

The citizens' panel wanted migration to be better controlled and more selective. Many people felt that the UK was a *"soft touch"* for migrants who wanted to take advantage of the benefits system. Many people wanted a more selective immigration system, similar to that of Australia, and more rigorous criminal vetting.

> *"I think there are more pros than cons, regarding immigration, particularly on employment, a lot of roles seem to be covered by immigrants. It's been in the news a lot with the NHS and the potential shortage of those workers. From a control aspect, I think the downside is too many. Well not too many, but there are those that see the UK as a soft touch and don't necessary think they have to contribute to the country. So I think on the whole, it's quite positive but there are some negatives, I think we need more control and monitoring of immigrants coming in regardless of country of origin."*

Citizens' panel participant, Guildford.

HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM

Background

- Population: 183,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 45.1% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: French, Australians, Irish, Poles, Portuguese and New Zealanders. There are also smaller communities who came to the UK as refugees including Somalis, Iranians and Iraqis.
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 5.4% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: hospitality, retail, transport, health and social care.

Key findings

Hammersmith and Fulham is a densely populated inner London borough. The population, typical of any central London local authority is young and diverse with a high proportion of foreign-born residents. House prices are very high and the area comprises neighbourhoods of great wealth, but also pockets of economic deprivation, with a third of under-16s in the area living in poverty.

The citizens' panel was asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 7.1, with a range from 5 to 8.

The citizens' panel was a liberal group who reflected the demographic composition of the local authority, with participants including prosperous young professionals and long-settled working class residents as well as new migrants. This group was largely supportive of immigration and brought their family and work experiences of migration into the discussion. For this group immigration and ethnic diversity were a normal part of everyday life in London.

The citizens' panel believed that migration had been beneficial with its economic, social and cultural gains outweighing negative impacts. However, they also felt that migration had not always been managed well by the Government. Some participants felt that potential migrants should be vetted more rigorously. A number of participants felt that migration put pressures on public services and housing, although concerns about over-population were not so acutely felt as in other London citizens' panels.

A discussion about Brexit dominated the first half of this citizens' panel. Participants were mostly Remain voters who told us they were angry about the referendum campaign and shocked at its result. This group felt that migration had become an everyday topic of conversation because of the EU referendum, but also acknowledged that there were benefits from a more open discussion. The majority of participants wanted to keep the current freedom of movement rules, which they saw as benefitting their own lives as well as the UK's economy.

This panel were distinct from many other panels across the UK in their approach to irregular migration. Most groups argue for compassion and fairness in the treatment of the case studies we use in the discussion, but at the same time see irregular or illegal migration as a concern and as evidence of a 'broken system' and of the Government's failures of border control. But for the Hammersmith group there was an acceptance that there were undocumented migrants in London and we were told that *"Grenfell is an absolute example"*, referring to the June 2017 fire in a tower block near Hammersmith.

This citizens' panel felt that community relations were good in the area. While they felt London was much more integrated than other parts of the UK, they made reference to other parts of the country where they believed there were high levels of residential segregation. Participants also made reference to certain groups – the French, Jews and South Asians – who they perceived as living in ethnic and faith enclaves In London.

"I used to feel like it [immigration] was taboo…Under New Labour, it was taboo to talk about, and the country was having masses of problems but it couldn't broach the subject without having a dog whistle. The Brexit thing just made everyone talk about it, whereas before I think if you made any comments, people would jump on it. Now because everyone is talking about it, not necessarily in the right way, but it's just a much more open discussion now."

Citizens' panel participant, Hammersmith and Fulham.

HARROGATE

Background

- Population: 75,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 8.4% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Poles, Indians.
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 3.8% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: hospitality, retail, farming, health and social care.

Key findings

Harrogate is a prosperous commuter town and tourist destination in the Yorkshire Dales, some 15 miles north of Leeds. Twenty years ago, Harrogate's population was largely of white British ethnicity. Today, over 8% of the population has been born overseas, as a result of migration from within and outside the EU, the settlement of former armed forces personnel in the area and the arrival of people who had previously lived in Leeds and Bradford.

The citizens' panel was asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 6.5, with a range from 4 to 10.

Immigration was not a hugely salient issue for most of this citizens' panel, who only really talked about this subject when it was in the news. They knew little about immigration policy and regulations governing different types of migration flows.

All the participants were balancers who believed that migration brought benefits and disadvantages. The contribution of skilled migrants, particularly those who work in the NHS, was seen as a gain. In contrast to most other citizens' panels, the Harrogate group did not want to reduce the numbers of seasonal workers from the EU, recognising their contribution to the local economy. At the same time, participants felt that immigration put pressures on housing and public services, in an area where affordable and socially rented housing is in short supply. Over-population and the pressure to build on rural land were significant concerns of this panel – issues which have been raised in other areas of natural beauty.

This citizens' panel wanted the UK Government to have more control over EU migration, but did not support EU nationals being offered temporary visas, an option that had recently been in the news after the leak of a Home Office memo. They felt that such a system was unfair to migrants and that local employers *'need the continuity'*.

Harrogate District Council has agreed to take in 50 Syrian refugees through the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. We found there was limited sympathy for refugees from this citizens' panel, with doubts about the genuineness of asylum claims and concerns that refugees put pressures on housing. 'Charity begins at home' was a sentiment voiced by this citizens' panel.

International migration to Harrogate is a relatively new trend and some panel members still noticed when they heard foreign languages spoken in the town. For them, ethnic and linguistic diversity were not an everyday part of life. However, the group felt that migrants were generally well-integrated, with many participants knowing them as colleagues and neighbours. While they felt integration was working in Harrogate, they did not feel that this was the case in nearby Bradford and Leeds, where they felt language barriers and residential segregation challenged integration.

> *"Historically all the way through the ages immigration has been good for us. I guess there's good and bad in every society, but basically it has been good for us. I just feel now, that geographically we are a certain size, and I just wonder sometimes how long it will take for this green and pleasant land to become not so green or pleasant."*

Citizens panel participant, Harrogate.

HULL

Background

- Population: 261,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 12.9% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Poles, Romanians, Lithuanians, Iraqis and Kurds
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 7.1% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: health and social care, hospitality, retail, construction and meat processing.

Key findings

Hull was once the UK's third largest port. But fishing quotas, containerisation, the loss of manufacturing industry, together with poor road and rail links led to growing unemployment from the 1970s. As jobs were lost, its residents moved away; in 1931 Hull's population stood at 309,000, but by 2001 it had fallen to 244,000. People continued to leave Hull at a time when other northern cities were seeing a reversal of their population decline and were growing. Decades of decline have now started to be reversed, with the city centre and the old docks seeing considerable regeneration. There has also been recent investment from large companies such as Siemens and through the UK City of Culture.

High unemployment meant that Hull saw little immigration until recently, though significant numbers of international students have always been enrolled at the university. But cheap, vacant property made it attractive to disperse asylum-seekers to Hull: as of March 2018 nearly 500 asylum-seekers were supported in Hull by the Home Office. EU migrants have also moved to work in the city.

Many EU migrants, as well as asylum-seekers and refugees, are living in the Hessle Road area, or around Spring Bank, in poorly maintained 19th century terraces, some of which were set for demolition under a stalled regeneration programme. Stakeholders reported racial tensions in this area ten years ago, with refugees and EU migrants being the targets of this harassment. Although hate crime is still a problem, community relations now seem to have improved.

The citizens' panel was asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 5.8, with a range from 3 to 10. Immigration was a salient issue for this citizens' panel, many of whom were vocal in their support of Brexit.

The citizens' panel in Hull were 'balancers' who saw the pressures and gains of migration. They felt that migrants often did work that British people "don't want to do", such as long shifts in sectors such as meat packing. Although residential segregation was raised at different points in the discussion, many participants felt that recent immigration had led to a reversal of neighbourhood decline in poorer parts of the city. At the same time, this group saw a number of challenges, feeling that rapid migration had put pressures on public services.

Participants also wanted immigration to be better controlled, suggesting EU nationals should only be able to move to the UK if they were subject to criminal vetting and had a job offer. They had very little trust in the Government to fix what they saw as a 'broken immigration system'.

This group included a police officer and a foster carer who had professional contact with refugees and provided their own insights into the asylum system and people smuggling. Participants were sympathetic to refugees, but wanted asylum-seekers to be subject to greater vetting as there was scepticism that not all claims were genuine.

The citizens' panel felt that integration worked well in environments where people of different backgrounds mixed naturally, such as at work or school. However, they shared concerns about language barriers and residential segregation.

> *"Hull is a funny city anyway. For the last ten years, you could go to a very small part of Hull and see, in Spring Bank in particular, that's the only place you saw foreign people. Because we are in the far end of nowhere, and we have one road in, one road out, it [immigration] is a bit of a culture shock for a lot of people."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Hull.

IPSWICH

Background

- Population: 138,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 16.2% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Black Caribbean, Indian, Polish,
- Portuguese, Romanian, Afghan and Filipino.
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 4.5% (UK: 4.4%).
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: health and social care, hospitality and food processing.

Key findings

There is a long history of immigration into Ipswich although, more recently, Ipswich has seen the arrival of refugees, international students, Filipino healthcare staff as well as eastern European migrant workers. Refugees started arriving in Ipswich in the 1990s, with significant numbers coming as clandestine entrants through the nearby ports or in freight traffic along motorways. Local refugee groups estimate that about 2,000 refugees live in and around Ipswich, with the largest groups coming from Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq. Suffolk County Council had agreed to take 230 Syrian refugees over five years through the Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme. Many of the refugees who live in Ipswich as well as new arrivals from eastern Europe have settled in the north east of the town in an area with large amounts of private rental accommodation.

We held two citizens' panels in Ipswich, one with women and one with men, to understand more about how gender affects how we see immigration. The panels were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panels was 5.3, with a range from 3 to 8.

Almost everyone on both panels saw positives and negatives of immigration, believing that migrants made a contribution to the economy but voicing concerns about the draw of benefits and pressures on public services. We were also conscious that there was a hierarchy of preferences towards recent migrants, with the Portuguese and Poles put ahead of Romanians, who were seen to be less well-integrated.

National events and local media coverage made immigration a topic of everyday conversation, most recently as a consequence of the London and Manchester terrorist attacks. Both panels were concerned about undocumented migration, referring to a recent incident when migrants were apprehended arriving on the Suffolk coast by boat.

It would be easy to overestimate the differences between our gendered panels. Both our male and female panels mostly saw the same benefits of immigration, and shared many concerns. Responses to issues such as refugee rights or the treatment of undocumented migrants were talked about with more emotion on the female panel, whereas men tended to spend more time debating the impact of immigration on the economy. Differences that did emerge between our gendered panels were not so much about *what* was said, but *how*. The discussion on the men's panel was lively and people challenged each other on different aspects. At times the conversation was confrontational, but the male panel did find common ground on most issues. In contrast, the female panel was less argumentative. Participants listened to each other to a greater extent and there were no voices that dominated the discussion. However, at times it felt like the participants were holding back.

> *"What I see is a country that's not equipped with the resources – I work in education as well – and we've had a lad turn up last week who can't speak a word of English and we've had to use our own students in the classroom to interpret…. I'm not saying they shouldn't be here because I'm quite an inclusive person but I just don't think the country has been equipped in regards to housing, education, public services."*

Female citizens' panel participant, Ipswich.

KIDDERMINSTER

Background

- Population: 56,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 5.0% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Poles, south Asians and Italians
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 3.9% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: distribution.

Key findings

Kidderminster, located 17 miles south west of Birmingham, grew as a market town, later becoming a centre of carpet manufacture. Although this traditional industry has declined, carpet manufacture and distribution still provide some jobs in Kidderminster. The town is also home to many commuters who work in nearby conurbations. Despite its proximity to Birmingham, the migrant population is small, although the expansion of the EU brought considerable numbers of migrant workers to Worcestershire. Rapid population change in other parts of Worcestershire – particularly the Vale of Evesham – has made immigration a high profile issue in the whole county.

The citizens' panel was asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 4.5, with a range from 1 to 7. Although this score was below the National Conversation on Immigration average impact score, it did not fully reflect the tone of the discussion. All of the citizens' panel were 'balancers', seeing both positive and negative impacts of immigration, and thoughtfully debated issues.

Participants felt that many migrants made an important economic contribution, filled vacancies and brought important skills. At the same time, most participants voiced concerns about the labour market impacts of migration, with some of this citizens' panel having strongly anti-elitist views. Although careful not to blame migrants, participants felt that migration had depressed wages and undercut working conditions, with participants particularly critical of employment agencies. This panel also felt employers turned to migrant workers rather than investing in up-skilling local residents. All these changes to working had a negative impact on their lives, decreasing job satisfaction and pride.

We were told that *"the good times have gone in Kidderminster"*. The loss of traditional industries and the changing nature of work were seen as a trigger for worsening racial tensions in the local area. Both stakeholders and the citizens' panel mentioned pockets of active hostility in the area, sometimes stoked by some far-right groups.

The citizens' panel felt that there was a good sense of community in Kidderminster and participants described their good relations with neighbours and work colleagues who were migrants. At the same time, they gave examples of migrants who they felt were not integrating. As with many other citizens' panels, the Kidderminster group had concerns about integration elsewhere in the UK, and in this case compared experiences in the town to nearby Birmingham. Participants talking about experiencing *"culture shock"* when visiting parts of Birmingham, as well as describing what they saw as a lack of integration among Birmingham's Pakistani Muslim community.

> *"Companies have stopped paying their lower paid workers and use these agencies that couldn't care less who they are, as long as they get somebody into this job, they don't care who they are, or getting job satisfaction for the people."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Kidderminster.

KNOWSLEY

Background

- Population: 149,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 3.4% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Indians, Filipinos, Poles and Romanians
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 4.5% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of migrants: NHS and social care, agriculture.

Key findings

A largely rural area for the first half of the 20th century, the area which now comprises the borough of Knowsley saw rapid population growth in the 1950s and 1960s as a result of housing development and industrialisation. Although close to Liverpool, the borough is made up of a cluster of towns – including Halewood, Huyton, Kirby and Prescot – separated by countryside. The automobile industry is an important local employer – Ford was based at Halewood, on a site that is now part of Jaguar Land Rover. However, Knowsley's population and prosperity declined from the 1970s, as a consequence of unemployment and the loss of much manufacturing industry. Subsequently, a population stabilisation strategy, focussed on house building and attracting inward investment, has helped to stem this decline.

There is a long history of migration to Merseyside, particularly to Liverpool, and a strong Irish presence in this part of England. But industrial decline and, until recently, higher than average unemployment meant that Knowsley saw less international migration than most other parts of the UK. However, migrants have come to work in the NHS and there are significant numbers of international students living in Knowsley while studying at one the four universities in the area. Small numbers of asylum-seekers are housed in Knowsley, although many tend to leave when they get refugee status. Most EU migrants live in the north of the borough, including some agriculture workers.

Participants were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 4.9, with a range from 1 to 8. This score did not fully reflect the tone of the discussion, which was more balanced. It was skewed by one individual who gave a score of one and initially voiced strong views about pressures that migration placed on the NHS. Later in the discussion she voiced more positive opinions about migrants and refugees and was happy to increase the numbers of international students coming to the UK.

The citizens' panel described the pressures and gains of migration. They felt that migrants brought useful skills to the UK and filled labour shortages. At the same time, they felt that migration had some disadvantages. These included pressures on the NHS and over-population. The Knowsley citizens' panel was held in January 2018 when the NHS 'winter crisis' was in the news, so this may explain the prominence of this particular concern in the discussion. We were told that immigration was a *"hot topic"* as a result of the EU referendum and for most people it was something they did discuss with family, friends and work colleagues. Brexit was raised at different points in the discussion, with a number of participants concerned about that leaving the EU would damage the car industry.

The group also felt that some migrants come to the UK to take advantage of benefits. Most participants had a strong sense of fairness and compassion and this informed how they felt migrants and refugees should be treated. We also spent some time talking about temporary migration. This issue had been in the days news, as a London think tank had proposed a post-Brexit temporary visa regime for EU nationals who would be willing to undertake night-time or weekend work. This proposal was dismissed as unenforceable and unfair and we were told that it would "*create a class of people you would never see*".

Throughout the discussion, this citizens' panel compared immigration and integration in Knowsley with their perceptions about Liverpool. Older participants talked about the demographic change they had seen in Kensington and around the Smithdown Road over their lifetimes.

This group had a lot of concerns about migrant crime in Liverpool. While they felt migrants were well integrated in Knowsley, they did not think this was the case in Liverpool, where residential segregation was higher. Participants described Somalis, Poles and Romanians as migrants groups that they felt struggled to learn English and integrate.

> *"It's very hard, if you put yourself in that position, you'd want the best for your family. You'd do anything you can to protect them, so it's hard to have the emotion and the sensitivity of the people in this situation but then be able to understand that we can't take every refugee and not everyone can be assisted here. It's heartbreaking and something I find quite difficult when you see it on the news, when they are children."*

Citizens' panel participant, Knowsley.

LEICESTER

Background

- Population: 354,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 37.0% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: South Asians, Black Caribbean, Somali,Polish
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 5.5% of the working age population (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of migrants: hospitality, clothing and footwear, food processing.

Key findings

Leicester is the largest industrial centre in the East Midlands. While some of its manufacturing industry has been relocated abroad, engineering, footwear, hosiery and textile manufacture still take place in Leicester. Financial services and food processing are also important to the city's diverse economy.

Leicester was the first city where those of White British ethnicity were in a minority – 45.1% of the population at the time of the 2011 Census. In the period after the Second World War, Polish ex-combatants settled in the city and soon after were joined by migrants from Ireland, South Asia and the Caribbean. When Idi Amin expelled Ugandan Asians in 1972, about a quarter of those who arrived in the UK settled in Leicester. The Ugandan Asians soon made a large economic contribution to the city, reviving the textile industry and setting up many new businesses. More recently, Leicester has seen the arrival of asylum-seekers, international students and EU nationals, whose numbers include Somalis with EU passports.

Participants were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 5.7, with a range from 4 to 8.

Migration and the presence of migrants in Leicester were seen as a normal part of everyday life in this city. While their experiences and media coverage prompted panel member to think or talk about immigration on occasions, it was not an issue that dominated the panel's concerns and thoughts.

The majority of the Leicester citizens' panel were 'balancers' who described the benefits as well as their views about negative impacts. Both the benefits and disadvantages of migration were seen in economic and fiscal terms, in relation to the skills migrants bought to the UK, their contribution as tax-payers or the drain on the exchequer as benefit claimants. The citizens' panel saw international students making a positive contribution to both Leicester itself and to the county of Leicestershire, although there was some disagreement about how much money entered the local economy.

There was sympathy for genuine refugees seeking safety, but this was qualified with concerns about security. The case of age-disputed children who were evacuated from Calais was raised in the discussion, as evidence that refugees were not being rigorously vetted. It was mostly female members of the panel who raised concerns about asylum-seekers, with some of them talking about groups of young male asylum-seekers who 'hung around' in the city centre.

Both the stakeholder meeting and the citizens' panel felt that community relations were good in Leicester. The Mayor, Sir Peter Soulsby, was seen as a positive voice for immigration and integration. Both groups felt that Leicester has a strong civic identity which embraces the contribution of its East African Asians and other Commonwealth migrants. Festivals once associated with particular ethnic or faith groups were now being celebrated by the wider community.

Over half of the panel had direct experience of migration, having moved to the UK themselves or having close family members who had done so. These experiences were brought up at various points in the discussion. There was a view that immigration had worked better for everyone in the past, but more recent migrants included those who did not integrate or share British values. Participants felt that there was now a risk that the city was becoming more segregated over time, rather than more integrated.

While community relations were good, there was a consensus that a small minority held prejudiced views. Additionally, we were told that the opinions and actions of a tiny minority of religious extremists had caused Leicester's Asians to been seen differently by the white population, irrespective of their religion.

"They can't tell whether someone's Muslim or Sikh. When a situation like terrorism occurs and is committed by one Islamic sect, everybody's put in that category. It's 000.1%, but as white society, they see all Asians as Muslims because they can't tell the difference."

Citizens' panel participant, Leicester.

LERWICK, SHETLAND

Background

- Population: 23,000 (Shetland), 7,000 (Lerwick)
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 4.3% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Hungarian, Polish, Thai, Chinese.
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 2.2% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of migrants: oil and gas, fisheries, aquaculture, fish processing, health and social care, construction and tourism.

Key findings

North Sea oil and a growing aquaculture industry means that Shetland has a healthy economy which has attracted migrants, whether from elsewhere in the UK or overseas. The largest overseas born population are Hungarians who are undertaking high- and low-skilled work in Shetland. Unique to this part of the UK are migrants who have come to marry men (and sometimes women) who live in isolated areas and have not been able to meet a local partner. Not included in the statistics, however, are Shetland's short-term migrants, who intend to stay for less than a year and are not included in Annual Population Survey data. Tourism and the oil industry employ many workers on short-term contracts, including international migrants.

The citizens' panel was asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 6.5, with a range from 1 to 10.

Most participants cited positive views about immigration alongside concerns about housing pressure. However, two members of this citizens' panel had views that were more negative. As a mainly rural community, both stakeholders and the citizens' panel felt that Shetland was a place where people got along well.

The majority of this panel believed that migrants had brought skills and made an important economic contribution to Shetland, but pressures on housing and, to a lesser extent, the NHS emerged as concerns. As a result of a shortage of housing – and of construction workers – property is expensive and rents are high in Shetland. There was an interesting debate between those who felt that migrants were culpable and those who felt that the Government and local council had failed to provide adequate housing. Dealing with Shetland's housing shortage would go a long way to address residents' concerns about immigration.

The views voiced by this citizens' panel were similar to those articulated elsewhere in the UK, with contribution and control being key themes of the discussion. Most participants wanted to increase the numbers of high-skilled workers but reduce the numbers of migrants coming to take up low-skilled employment. However, there was more support for seasonal migrant workers than in many places we have visited: participants were happy for the number of seasonal migrants to be increased, which is likely to reflect their importance to the tourism and oil economy.

The citizens' panel was clear that they did not have a great deal of confidence in the Westminster or Scottish governments, nor the local authority, to handle immigration. Shetland and Orkney have traditionally opposed Scottish independence, so it was not surprising that there was no support from the Shetland citizens' panel for the Scottish Government being given powers over immigration policy.

"I think it's not all positive but it's certainly positive…. All the ones I've met all seem to be working and paying taxes. And you're right about services bursting at the seams, but these people, they're paying money and that money should go towards providing these services and housing."

Citizens' panel participant, Shetland.

LINCOLN

Background

- Population: 98,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 11.5% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Romanians, Poles, Lithuanians, Portuguese
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 5.9% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: farming, food processing, hospitality, higher education.

Key findings

Lincoln is a cathedral city that serves a large rural hinterland. It had a diverse economy, with significant numbers of jobs in heavy engineering, food processing, tourism and education. Until recently, Lincoln's population was largely of white British ethnicity. This has changed, although Lincoln has not experienced the rapid immigration of the Fens further south, where the number of new migrants is much higher. EU nationals in Lincoln mostly work in tourism and food processing. There are two universities in the town, the larger of which – the University of Lincoln – had 1,300 international students enrolled in 2016-17, out of a student body of 13,000.

The citizens' panel was asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 5.1, with a range from 3 to 7.

All of the citizens' panel were 'balancers' who described positive and negative impacts of immigration, although a few participants thought that the pressures of migration outweighed the benefits. Participants felt that Lincolnshire's rural economy had benefitted from the contribution of migrant workers who were doing jobs that British workers did not want to do and had a stronger work ethic than many young British people. The citizens' panel also believed that international students had brought many benefits to Lincoln and did not view this group as migrants.

Parts of Lincolnshire have experienced rapid migration and the situation in Boston – where 24% of the population has been born overseas – was brought up throughout the discussion. Most participants felt that migration to Boson had been too rapid. While recognising the contribution that migrants made to the local economy, the group voiced concerns about pressures on housing and public services, as well as about integration.

Concerns about language barriers were more strongly voiced in Lincoln than anywhere else we have visited so far. There was a perception that those who could not speak English ended up working in particular sectors of the economy such as farming and food processing, where they could rely on colleague to interpret for them. This exacerbated social segregation in Lincolnshire. Dealing with this language barrier would help restore confidence in the immigration system in Lincoln and there was a consensus that migrants should learn English.

> *"I used to work at a recruitment agency in their accounts department and 90% of the workforce there were foreign and the majority of the work we offered was food factories. I know from this experience that foreign people are very qualified but the language barrier restricts them from the jobs they could go for, so they tend to settle for the lower jobs."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Lincoln.

MACCLESFIELD

Background

- Population: 54,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 7.5% (Cheshire East) (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Indians, Poles
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 3.1% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of migrants: bioscience and pharmaceuticals, retail, hospitality, health and social care

Key findings

Macclesfield is a prosperous market town with a local economy that is based on bioscience and pharmaceuticals. AstraZeneca manufactures pharmaceuticals in Macclesfield and employs nearly 4,500 people. This company's former research and development site at nearby Alderley Park is now home to many bioscience start-ups. These two sectors have a workforce that includes many highly-skilled migrants. Migrants have also taken up low-skilled work, in sectors such as retail and hospitality.

Participants were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 6.0, with a range from 4 to 8.

This citizen's panel were 'balancers' who saw migration as bringing benefits and some challenges. However, immigration was not a hugely salient issue for this group as they felt the numbers of arrivals in the area had been smaller than in other parts of the UK.

Participants felt that migration had many economic benefits. Migrants filled vacancies in sectors of the economy where employers struggled to recruit within the UK. This citizens' panel also talked about the highly-skilled migrants who came to work in bioscience and pharmaceuticals and the contribution that they had made.

The group had one dominant concern about immigration – pressure on the NHS, particularly on accident and emergency departments. This is an issue that has been voiced in many parts of the UK, but predominantly in London and the South East where the rate of recent population increase has been highest. Macclesfield has not seen such a significant population increase but the NHS 'winter crisis' was a high profile issue in the news at the time that this citizens' panel was held. Some participants described their own recent experiences of using the NHS and linked this to recent migration. They were, however, clear that they did not blame new migrants for this situation and felt that more of the taxes that migrants pay should be invested in public services.

The Macclesfield citizens' panel had a different reaction to the questions we asked about migration and the Brexit negotiations. All citizens' panels are asked if they would be willing to accept fewer restrictions on EU migration if it meant that British businesses could get a better deal in the negotiations and better access to the single market. Most citizens' panels reject such a trade-off. We are often told that British business will be able to trade with other parts of the world even if faced with tariffs and barriers from the EU. Even those who are willing to accept fewer restrictions on migration as a price for a better deal for business often qualify their opinion, saying that the economic benefits would have to be big. In Macclesfield, however, the citizens' panel took a different view. Unanimously, they felt that the UK government should be willing to make such a trade-off in the negotiations, with this opinion voiced by Leave and Remain voters alike. Participants believed this was essential for their big local employer – the pharmaceutical giant, AstraZeneca – as well as for the area's growing bioscience sector. They saw the migration/market-access trade-off in concrete terms that related to local employers and the wellbeing of their local area.

> *"Immigration is crucial to a lot of businesses. In the industry I work in it is crucial and it [pharmaceuticals] happens to be the best industry for manufacturing in the UK."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Macclesfield.

MARCH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Background

- Population: 23,000.
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 10.1% (Fenland) (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Polish, Romanian, Lithuanian
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 3.2% (GB: 4.4%)[143].
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of migrants: farming, food packing and food processing.

Key findings

March is a town in the Fens, the UK's agricultural heartland. This area is a major producer of cereals and vegetables, which in turn supports a large food packing and processing industry. The farms and factories of the Fens have always relied on outsiders. But the intensification of agriculture, greater consumption of processed food and just-in-time food production has required a larger workforce and this demand has largely been met by EU migrants. Migration into the Fens has been rapid, with the overseas-born population in the Fenland district increasing by 177% between 2001 and 2011.

The citizens' panel was asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 4.7, with a range from 2 to 7.

The citizens' panel lived in March and in neighbouring Wisbech. Participants had a range of views, with three people having sceptical views about migration, as well as two people who were willing to challenge some of the more negative statements, including stereotypes about EU nationals and Muslims that were voices by a a small number of participants.

EU migration dominated the citizens' panel discussion. Concerns about EU migration and the desire for it to be brought under UK Government control had undoubtedly contributed to a large Leave vote in the EU referendum: some 71.4% of votes were for Leave in the Fenland district council area. The scale and pace of migration was seen as putting pressure on housing supply, as well as schools and GP surgeries. Neighbourhood decline was another prominent theme of the discussion. Of the 11,500 dwellings in Wisbech, 1,100 are thought to be houses of multiple occupancy (HMOs) – essentially private-rental accommodation for migrant workers, much of it of poor quality and overcrowded. Both the citizens' panel and the stakeholder meeting wanted stronger powers to regulate landlords.

There were also concerns that young single migrant workers kept to themselves, often hanging out on the street and rarely speaking English, which many on our panel – especially women – found intimidating.

Despite some strong views that were expressed at the start of the meeting, the discussion about the integration of EU migrants was more reflective and thoughtful. Many members of the citizens' panel had friends, neighbours and work colleagues who were migrants. Participants had also come to know migrants as fellow parents at their children's schools. They knew migrant workers who were making an effort to 'join in' and become part of the local community. Even the most sceptical members of this citizens' panel were of the opinion that EU nationals who lived and worked here must be allowed to remain in the UK. At the same time, both the citizens' panel and local stakeholders believed that there were real tensions, particularly in Wisbech. We were told that too many migrants lack fluent English and lead separate lives from the majority community.

While businesses has profited from migration to the Fens, many local residents are not seeing the benefits of migration. It is clear that local infrastructure needs to keep up with the pace of change if public concerns are to be eased.

> *"Everyone who is working, who is putting into the pot, who doesn't have a criminal record, they should stay here after Brexit."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, March.

MERTHYR TYDFIL

Background

- Population: 60,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 5.1% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Poles, Portuguese, Filipino.
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 5.8% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: food processing, particularly meat packing, and health and social care.

Key findings

This area was once a major producer of coal, iron and steel, with these industries attracting migrant workers from elsewhere in the UK and Ireland, as well as from continental Europe. Merthyr Tydfil's isolation and competition from abroad has meant the end of these traditional industries. While new jobs have been created, it remains one of the most deprived towns in the UK and its population experiences multi-dimensional disadvantages.

Merthyr Tydfil's economic problems have also meant that levels of recent international migration have been lower than in many other places in the UK. In the late 1990s, however, nearly 200 Portuguese workers were recruited by an employment agency to work in the meat processing factory in the town. After Poland joined the EU, Polish workers were also recruited. The factory operates round the clock, with around 1,000 workers on site at any given time, 50-60% of whom are migrant workers.

The citizens' panel was asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 4.7, with a range from 2 to 8.

Most of the citizens' panel cited both positive and negative impacts of migration, although some participants had more sceptical views and mostly dwelt on the negative.

This citizens' panel's biggest concern centred on welfare benefits, which they felt attracted migrants to come to the UK. A rule that allows UK child benefit to be sent overseas was a policy that this panel particularly opposed. Participants also believed that migrants received preferential treatment within the welfare system. Some participants also felt that migrants were prioritised over British citizens in NHS waiting lists and for the allocation of social housing, while others told of their own difficulties negotiating the welfare system. This appears to have led to resentment of others and the view that migrants receive preferential treatment.

Stakeholders told us that attitudes to immigration in Merthyr Tydfil and in other Welsh Valley towns were largely due to the area's poverty and isolation, alongside a lack of meaningful social contact with migrant and minority ethnic communities. We were told that attitudes in close-knit Valleys communities are very parochial, with a strong sense of belonging attached to a small local area. These sentiments were echoed in the citizens' panel, with one participant telling of her experience of moving to another Valley community where she felt an outsider: *"close-knit does not always mean close"*.

Despite Merthyr's long history of migration, a strong Valleys identity and an active and internationalist labour movement, it is a town where new arrivals and longer-settled residents are struggling to accommodate each other, in the context of deprivation and changing patterns of employment.

> *"I'm a bit half and half about migration. Some come here and work, but I don't really agree with those who come over and send all their money over to their families and take benefits and don't want to work. And I think there are just too many in the country. I've got no problem against them individually, and I've had Czech lodgers, and they're nice people, a lot more straight than a lot of British people, but I just think there are too many in the country."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Merthyr Tydfil.

MIDDLESBROUGH

Background

- Population: 140,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 10.8% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: British Pakistani, Irish, Yemeni, Polish, Romanian.
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 7.7% (GB: 4.4%).
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: NHS and social care, higher education.

Key findings

Middlesbrough grew as an urban area in the 19th century as a consequence of its iron and steel industry, when there was substantial migration from elsewhere in the UK and Ireland. But over the last 40 years the coal mines and foundries have closed and its maritime engineering and large chemical industry is also much reduced. This has made the Tees Valley one of the most deprived parts of the UK, with unemployment and under-employment – where people want to work more hours than they are offered[144] – far above the national average.

Of the five local authorities in the Tees Valley, Middlesbrough has the most diverse population, as a consequence of historic migration, the more recent arrival of asylum-seekers and nearly 1,000 international students at Teesside University. About 600 asylum-seekers were being housed and supported by the Home Office when we visited Middlesbrough, although at times this number has been higher. The treatment of asylum-seekers in Middlesbrough has been the focus of media coverage in relation to the numbers dispersed there by the Home Office, as well as the identification of asylum accommodation in the 'red front door' debacle[145].

The citizens' panel was asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 5.5, with a range from 4 to 7.

The Middlesbrough panel raised issues that were common to many areas. Most of the group were 'balancers' who cited both positive and negative outcomes of migration. As with many other panels, contribution and control were central themes of the discussion. Migration was seen as beneficial where migrants were making an economic contribution, but 'uncontrolled' migration flows were seen as negative.

There was a consensus that international students at Teesside University were not seen as migrants by the local population. This panel felt that international students made an economic contribution to the area, with no-one wanting to reduce their numbers.

With Middlesbrough hosting relatively large numbers of asylum-seekers, policy towards refugees formed a major part of the discussion for the Middlesbrough panel. Yet many of the views held by the Middlesbrough panel seemed similar to those held elsewhere in the UK. Concerns about asylum-seekers were balanced against recognition that they had fled war and persecution and deserved sympathy. However, much asylum accommodation is concentrated in particular parts of the town centre and here asylum-seekers form a visible group. Prevented from working, many asylum-seekers have little else to do but to loiter on the streets. This has provoked anxiety or hostility among longer-settled residents, including among some of those who attended the citizens' panel.

There was broad support in the citizens' panel for offering asylum-seekers the right to work. This would improve the quality of life for those seeking asylum, alleviate some of the concerns about the public behaviour of these young men, as well as enabling asylum- seekers to make an economic contribution.

While people of different backgrounds generally got on well in Middlesbrough, participants were concerned about residential segregation, with most asylum-seekers and many EU nationals living in the town centre. The stakeholders we met felt that more could be done to help asylum-seekers integrate, but their transient nature, poverty and lack of English posed many practical challenges.

> *"I've Syrian neighbours and Romanian neighbours and they're all really nice and friendly but then if you go out of central Middlesbrough… its quite gang-y, and different communities have, like left and right – they're all, it's quite intimidating walking down there, it's a lot of … people there, they all stick together, people do feel intimidated, I feel intimidated at times, but on a one-to-one basis I don't really notice."*

Citizens' panel participant, Middlesbrough.

MILTON KEYNES

Background

- Population: 268,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 21.3% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Indian, Polish, Ghanaian, Zimbabwean, Somali.
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 4.1% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: distribution, higher education, health and social care.

Key findings

Milton Keynes was developed as a purpose built town to ease the overspill of London. Planned as a realisation of garden city idealism, its layout consists of a number of 'grid squares' of housing estates constructed around town centres. Grants were offered to encourage businesses to locate to the area and today Milton Keynes has a diverse and thriving economy. Low unemployment, cheaper housing and a fast train line to London have made it attractive both to international migrants and those who have moved out of London. Between 2001 and 2011, the foreign born population of Milton Keynes increased by 125%.

The Milton Keynes citizens' panel was deliberately recruited to have a majority (6 out of 10) participants who were from minority ethnic groups. We did this to see how such a demographic composition might impact on the nature of the discussion. Participants were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 5.9, with a range from 3 to 10.

While many participants made reference to their family history of migration, this did not often make them more sympathetic to new arrivals. Instead, a comparison was made between past waves of migrants, mostly from the Commonwealth, who were seen to integrate, and new arrivals who were perceived as being reluctant to do so. Most of the citizens' panel wanted greater controls on migrants from the EU, with many calling for cuts to the numbers of low-skilled EU nationals and criminal record checks on would-be migrants.

Significantly, there was almost no discussion about pressures on public services associated with population growth and migration, although the citizens' panel included a number of parents and older people, who in other places have raised such issues as 'life cycle' concerns.

Undocumented migration emerged as this citizens' panel's greatest concern, with participants recounting stories of clandestine migrants who had been found hiding in lorries travelling up the nearby motorway. These incidents had been covered in the local paper but, in one case, a participant who worked in transport had come into direct contact with a clandestine migrant.

The citizens' panel and stakeholder meeting also discussed the impact of Milton Keynes' built environment on community relations. Both groups felt that the layout of Milton Keynes, with its distinct town centres, can help to forge a sense of community as residents share public space and civic amenities. But some of these town centres can become identified with particular ethnic groups, for example Fishermead with the Somali community. Perceptions about residential segregation in Milton Keynes can have an impact of public views on integration and belonging.

> *"I came to this country in 1956 and when I first came here it was an entirely different country. At that time people who came here, they wanted to integrate, they came here for the right reasons. They understood the values of this country."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Milton Keynes.

NEWPORT

Background

- Population: 151,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 7.5% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Pakistanis, Poles, Romanians.
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 5.3% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: distribution, hospitality.

Key findings

Just 12 miles from Cardiff, Newport is the third largest conurbation in Wales, with its growth built on a diverse economy including its port as well as coal, iron and steel. Although its mines and foundries have now closed, Newport's broad economic base and good transport links have meant that it has not experienced the decline of other coal field communities. Engineering, distribution, financial services and public administration provide many jobs in the area.

Newport has a long history of migration. Its docks and steelworks have attracted people from across the globe, with post-1945 arrivals including migrants from Ireland, Italy, Bangladesh and Pakistan. It is a consequence of this previous migration, to parts of Newport where affordable housing was available, that there are marked patterns of residential segregation in Newport, with migrant and minority groups, including many EU nationals, clustering in the inner city wards of Pillgwenlly, Victoria and Stow Hill.

In more recent times, Newport has seen the arrival of EU nationals, including a significant and visible population of Slovak and Romanian Roma. There is a small and long-settled Somali community in Newport who have been joined more recently by asylum-seekers accommodated in the city by the Home Office. The University of South Wales, which educates over 3,000 international students, has one of its main campuses in Newport.

Participants were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 6.6, with a range from 5 to 8. This citizens' panel generally saw the pressures and gains of migration and for many of them the advantages that it brought outweighed its challenges.

Immigration was not a hugely salient issue for many in this citizens' panel, unless it was in the news, as it was during the EU referendum. They felt that immigration was just a normal part of life in cities such as Newport, Cardiff and Bristol, but also not something that directly affected their own lives very often.

This discussion was somewhat divided between those who thought that the benefits of EU migration had largely been positive and those who saw both pressures and gains. Many participants wanted EU migration to be brought under the control of the UK Government. Some of the group also argued for a contributory welfare system, where migrants would need to 'pay in' before they could claim benefits.

There were two refugees in this citizens' panel. Although they did not speak fluent English, other participants listened to what they said with respect and curiosity. Generally, this citizens' panel was sympathetic to the needs of refugees and supported the principle of refugee protection.

Almost everyone in this group felt that the media coverage of migration was biased and sensationalist and risked fuelling tensions. While participants felt Newport's docks and long history of migration made it feel welcoming and open, they had some concerns about integration, in particular, language barriers, residential segregation and social mixing in Newport.

> *"I see how the media can be used to give negative perceptions, so I don't see why the Government doesn't use the media to give a more positive perception. I'd like to see something like national adverts run, giving us information, informing us more. I think things could be portrayed better from the media."*

Citizens' panel participant, Newport.

NORTHAMPTON

Background

- Population: 226,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 24.4% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Black Caribbean, Bangladeshi,
- Zimbabwean, Polish
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 5.0% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: the NHS, distribution and transport.

Key findings

Until recently, Northampton was a centre of manufacturing industry, particularly in shoe-making and engineering. Over the last 20 years, several large employers have relocated their production abroad where labour costs are lower. Only a small number of specialist shoemakers remain and today financial services, drink manufacture and logistics and distribution are major employers in the town. Many of the new jobs that have been created – particularly in warehouses – are precarious and low paid, and often taken up by migrant workers.

There is a long history of immigration to Northampton, with migrants from the Caribbean settling there from the 1950s. There are also long-settled Bangladeshi and Zimbabwean communities in Northampton and a small number of international students attending its university. More recently the town has seen rapid migration from eastern Europe, with over 25,000 EU nationals now estimated to be living in Northampton, a population change that has caused some tensions.

In-migration from elsewhere in the UK has also heightened Northampton's divisions, with substantial investment to attract new residents, including a new railway station, a new university campus and a cultural quarter with gallery space and cafes. At the same time the town has seen little action by the council to deal with the impacts of international migration.

The citizens' panel was asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 5.3 with a range from 1 to 8. Most people in the group were 'balancers', weighing up the benefits of immigration against what they saw as negative impacts. There were, however, some members of panel who saw migration in largely negative terms and sometimes expressed prejudiced views about migrant and minority ethnic groups.

The discussion mostly centred on EU migration, particularly its impacts on the labour market. Participants believed that migration from the EU undercut wages and drove down working conditions, talking about the direct impact that migration had on their lives. Views about the labour market impact of migration were linked to employment practices in Northampton's growing distribution sector, such as the large-scale use of zero hours' contracts and agency staff. The negative labour market impacts of immigration is an issue that has been raised by other citizen's panels in areas where the distribution sector is a major local employer, for example Basildon and Chesterfield.

The risk posed by uncontrolled migration flows was another area of concern. Participants felt that foreign criminals had taken advantage of free movement and entered the UK. This citizens' panel argued strongly for criminal record checks on EU migrants if the Government is to regain public trust in the way it handles immigration.

Most participants knew migrants as friends or work colleagues. However, concerns about integration were raised in the discussion. Many new migrants are living in rental accommodation in the poorer parts of the town, with this residential clustering influencing participants' views about integration. EU migration was associated with neighbourhood decline. Female participants – including those with more sympathetic views about migration – found street drinking by groups of eastern European men in the town centre to be intimidating.

Some participants saw Muslims as a group that did not want to integrate. There was significant generalisation and stereotyping of Muslims, which was largely not challenged in the discussion. A minority of participants felt that British traditions were under threat from a more assertive Muslim population and resented that they had to pander to 'political correctness' and the sensitivities of Muslim communities.

> *"There's plenty of people out there in the market looking for jobs but employers, they don't want to have to deal with people's flexibility. 'You do as we tell you, you do it'. Great. 'You don't – you go home.'"*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Northampton.

NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE

Background

- Population: 255,000 (Stoke-on-Trent); 129,000 (Newcastle-under-Lyme).
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 10.8% (Stoke-on-Trent); 7.1% (Newcastle-under-Lyme) (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: British Pakistani, Polish, Romanian.
- Unemployment rate: 5.9% (Stoke-on-Trent); 4.0% (Newcastle-under-Lyme); (GB:4.4%).
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: health and social care, higher education, hospitality and retail.

Key findings

The Potteries of North Staffordshire comprise six town centres and spans two local authority areas: Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme. This citizens' panel was held in Newcastle-under-Lyme, although its participants lived in both local authorities.

The decline of the Potteries' traditional industries meant that there was little international migration to the area until relatively recently. However, an estimated 6,000 EU nationals are now estimated to live in this part of North Staffordshire, many of whom are living in neighbourhoods where there is affordable rental accommodation. Asylum-seekers are also dispersed to Stoke-on-Trent, with nearly 1,000 living there in June 2017. Two universities – Keele and Staffordshire – educate over 2,500 international students between them.

The citizens' panel was asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 5.1, with a range from 4 to 7.

This citizens' panel voiced some strong opinions about neighbourhood decline in parts of Stoke-on-Trent where EU nationals live in private rental accommodation. They felt intimidated by street drinking, complained of littering and were concerned that neither landlords nor tenants maintained their properties. Greater regulation of the private rental sector was a key demand of this panel.

It was notable that few members of this citizens' panel had migrants as friends and work colleagues. In this respect, the views of panel members were not being informed or mediated by close personal contact. Social and print media had informed the opinions of some panel members, alongside the opinions of family, friends and acquaintances: immigration was an issue that many participants discussed with their friends and relatives. A few had tried to research immigration online, but had been unable to find trusted and accessible sources of information. This prompted an interesting debate about reliable and unreliable sources of evidence about immigration, as well as the role of social media in disseminating hateful and prejudiced views about migrants and minorities.

There was also a discussion about the Manchester bombing that occurred three days before the citizens' panel. While participants asserted that it was only a tiny minority of people, they were open in stating that this terrorist attack had negatively impacted on their views on immigration. For some panel members, violent religious extremism was seen as an outcome of accepting migrants from certain countries in North Africa and the Middle East.

> *"You get ghettoized areas, where one immigrant group moves into an area and others follow. It kind of clashes with the culture. Then you have an area where it's mostly British people."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, North Staffordshire.

NORTH TYNESIDE

Background

- Population: 204,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 7.4% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: British Bangladeshi, Chinese, Indian, Polish
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 5.8% (GB: 4.4%).
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: hospitality.

Key findings

North Tyneside is made up of a number of towns which together form a continuous built up area bordering Newcastle. The citizens' panel was held in Whitley Bay. In the past, mining and maritime industries provided much employment in the area. Despite the loss of these traditional industries, the proportion of the working-age population in work is higher in North Tyneside than elsewhere in the North East.

The loss of its traditional industries and on-going economic weakness has meant that there has been less international migration to the North East compared to other English regions. Just 6% of North Tyneside's population is estimated to have been born abroad, lower than the UK average of 14.1%. There are Bangladeshi, Indian and Chinese communities in North Tyneside whose members include UK-born citizens as well as newer arrivals. There is also a significant Polish community. With three universities in the area, North Tyneside is also home to many international students. Small numbers of asylum-seekers are also housed in North Tyneside by the Home Office.

The citizens' panel was asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 5.9, with a range from 5 to 8.

All of the members of this panel described many benefits of migration alongside views about its disadvantages. As in other parts of the UK, contribution was a major theme of the discussion. The citizens' panel was happy for migrants who had a job to come to the UK, but participants were concerned that some migrants came to the UK because of the generosity of its benefits system. Concerns about the pull of welfare benefits featured more prominently in this discussion than in many other parts of the UK.

This citizens' panel also balanced their views on refugee protection. Participants supported the principle that the UK should give sanctuary to those fleeing war and persecution. They also felt that refugees were made to feel welcome in the North East. But the citizens' panel also expressed concerns about the situation in Calais, which they associated with criminality.

Participants believed that the arrival of the age-disputed young people from Calais was evidence of a lack of vetting of would-be migrants.

Both the citizens' panel and the stakeholder meeting also raised the issue of skills and training for those living in the UK. Both groups felt that not enough was being done to equip local school leavers with the skills they need to find work. As a consequence, employers were more likely to turn to migrants to fill vacancies, particularly in the construction and hospitality sectors. Lack of employer investment in training and over-reliance by business on migrant workers was a strong theme of the discussion in North Tyneside, more so than in many other parts of the UK.

> *"There is so much emphasis on going to university that we have forgotten about the 50% who don't."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, North Tyneside.

NOTTINGHAM

Background

- Population: 315,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 23.0% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: South Asian, Polish, Romanian.
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 8.3% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large numbers of new migrants: higher education, health and social care, retail.

Key findings

Like most big urban areas, Nottingham has a long history of immigration which includes post-war arrivals from the Caribbean and South Asia. A long-settled Polish community has recently been joined by new arrivals from elsewhere in Eastern Europe. It is estimated that about 6,000 refugees live in the city and in December 2016 nearly 1,000 asylum-seekers were being supported by the Home Office in the city of Nottingham. Together, Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council have also agreed to provide homes for 500 Syrian refugees over five years who have been accepted under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. There are also two universities in Nottingham and between them they are educating nearly 11,000 international students.

This citizens' panel was different from most of the previous panels as we specifically recruited young people aged between 16 and 24 years. Participants were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 6.5, with a range from 5 to 8.

Participants felt that migration brought more advantages than disadvantages to Nottingham. The benefits of migration were seen in both economic and cultural terms. Compared with the mixed-age panels we have held, this panel placed much greater emphasis on the cultural benefits that migration had brought to the UK. This is not to say that participants had no concerns about immigration. The impact of migration on the labour market, particularly young people's ability to find work, was a particular concern of this group. This youth panel also shared other panels' concerns around security. In addition, participants felt strongly that migrants must be making a contribution to British society and they wanted increased criminal vetting of would-be migrants.

There was no discussion of pressures on public services, and no negative anecdotes were given of how immigration had adversely affected panel members themselves or people they knew. This may in part have been reflective of their age and current lack of interaction with public services.

Participants felt that Nottingham was a friendly city where people of different backgrounds generally got on well. They saw a generational gap in attitudes to immigration between themselves and their families, an outcome of growing up at a time when Nottingham was more diverse. The young people viewed immigration as a constant and a part of their life that had *"always been that way,"* and perceived the older generation as seeing immigration as a change to their lives. The EU referendum had been an area of conflict and division within some of our participants' families, and had provoked arguments about immigration.

> *"It's kind of part of our life that's always been here. There is a generation that see it [migration] as an imposition and as something unnatural… I feel like the older generation were raised with timelier prejudices and they were more prevalent. Younger people are raised to be more tolerant to other cultures and races."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Nottingham.

PAISLEY

Background

- Population: 76,000.
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 6.4% (Renfrewshire) (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Poles
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 4.3% (Renfrewshire) (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: hospitality.

Key findings

While Paisley's textile industry drew migrants from Ireland, there was very little international migration into the town in the 20th century. In 2001, just over 1% of Renfrewshire's population was from a minority ethnic group; even by Census 2011 this had only risen to 3%, lower than Scotland's average. But in recent years, the size of Paisley's Polish community has grown and a small number of international students live in Paisley, many of whom are studying at the University of the West of Scotland. Asylum-seekers are not dispersed to Renfrewshire although the council has taken in nearly 100 Syrian refugees, making it one of the most generous local authorities in the UK.

Participants were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 7.9, with a range from 6 to 9.

The Paisley panel had largely positive attitudes towards migration, although they also had some concerns, for example, about residential segregation and integration, and the 'pull' of the UK benefits system. However, a characteristic of this largely non-graduate citizens' panel was that participants recognised the economic and labour market contribution of migrants, and felt that these benefits outweighed any negative impacts associated with migration.

As in all citizens' panel discussions, participants voted on the options for dealing with EU migration after Brexit. A majority wanted to keep freedom of movement, because they felt that it had brought more benefits than disadvantages.

The Paisley citizens' panel was sympathetic to the plight of refugees, much more so than most other citizens' panels. Immigration detention, specifically the detention of asylum-seekers, was an issue raised in the stakeholder meeting, with some of them opposed to indefinite detention or holding women and children. Dungavel Immigration Removal Centre is located about 20 miles from Paisley, but when we asked the citizens' panel if detention was ever something that was discussed, no-one responded and not one participant knew of Dungavel.

The citizens' panel then discussed whether the Scottish Government should be given control of immigration policy. Opinions were divided: some participants wanted Scotland to have such powers, while others did not have sufficient confidence in the Scottish Government to control the borders.

While the citizens' panel had positive views on immigration, its participants felt that not everyone who lived in Paisley shared their opinion, as we were told of xenophobic posts shared on local social media groups. This led on to a debate about differences in attitudes to migration between Scotland and England. Participants felt that national media and political discourses about immigration were more positive and welcoming in Scotland, compared with other parts of the UK, with such narratives having some impact on public opinion.

Some participants were the descendants of Irish immigrants and made reference to their family history, which they felt made them empathetic to new migrants. The Roman Catholic Church has a strong presence in Paisley and has been at the forefront of Syrian refugee settlement as well as initiatives to promote integration in the area. The moral leadership of the churches may have influenced local attitudes to migration, with the citizens' panel including a number of practicing Christians who talked about this work with migrants and refugees.

"I think we could go from one extreme to another, I think potentially we could be doing more for refugees, but again, I think, because you don't want an influx all at the same time, you want it more controlled… it will help with integration."

Citizens' panel participant, Paisley.

PENZANCE

Background

- Population: 22,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 4.9% (Cornwall) (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Poles, Portuguese
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 3.0% (Cornwall) (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: farming, food processing, hospitality, higher education, health and social care.

Key findings

Penzance is the most westerly major town in Cornwall. Although migrants only make up 4.9% of the county's population, the local economy relies on workers from the EU, often to fill seasonal vacancies. Tourism, horticulture and food processing provide many jobs in the area around Penzance and without migrant workers, much local business would struggle. As in many other parts of the UK, social care providers and the NHS also employ many migrant staff. Rural depopulation and second-home ownership is causing the loss of rural amenities and threatening the sustainability of village communities. The county needs families to live in Cornwall's small towns and rural areas, but unlike many Scottish local authorities, Cornwall does not have a population strategy. There are also three university campuses in the area, with Camborne School of Mines, in particular, having a large intake of international students as well as many non-UK born staff.

The citizens' panel was asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 7.0, with a range from 5 to 10. The score did not fully reflect the tone of the discussion, with participants having diverse, independent and sometimes idiosyncratic views on immigration.

Almost all the citizens' panel saw the important role that migrant workers play in the farming and tourism sectors. At the same time, most people also voiced concerns. Some of the younger participants felt that immigration had depressed wages and undercut working conditions. Other people believed that the population growth caused by migration had put extra pressures on housing, in a county where affordable homes are in short supply and prices have been pushed up by second-home ownership.

Both the stakeholders we met and the citizens' panel told us that internal migration, with many wealthy people moving down to Cornwall or buying second homes, had fuelled resentment of newcomers from other parts of the UK and also from abroad. There was a discussion where second home owners were compared with international migrants, with some participants feeling that migrants – who came and stayed – helped Cornwall's towns and villages to be more sustainable.

Cornwall suffers from significant social deprivation alongside pockets of prosperity. The immigration of wealthy outsiders had added to a sense of being hard done by and 'left behind'. The visit to Penzance thus showed how internal migration within the UK can impact on views towards international migrants.

The citizens' panel was sympathetic to refugees, who they felt needed help.

There was an extensive discussion about integration. Although some participants had met migrants through their work, they felt that they had not got to know them as friends. Language barriers and population churn had impeded integration, with many of Cornwall's migrants coming to the area as seasonal workers in sectors that have a highly transient labour force.

"I think the biggest problem with Cornwall is housing, and there's such a massive number of empty homes through either people renting, holiday trade, or just empty. In Mousehole, 80% of the housing there now is second homes, holiday homes, and there's virtually no community, so therefore, children, young people down here, they have to go away. That leaves us without a workforce and we've got a very elderly population and we need the elderly cared for, so we just couldn't manage without migrant workers down here, it would be impossible."

Citizens' panel participant, Penzance.

PRESTON

Background

- Population: 141,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 12.9% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Indians, Pakistanis, Poles and Bulgarians.
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 4.3% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of migrants: NHS, higher education, engineering, retail, hospitality and distribution.

Key findings

Textiles and engineering once provided much of Preston's wealth. Although the cotton mills have long since closed, Preston is still a major centre for engineering. BAE Systems, a leading defence aerospace company, is a major local employer. Although badly hit by factory closures in the 1970s Preston still has a diverse economy; the city has not experienced as much post-industrial decline as other northern towns and cities. The city council has also taken an active role in creating a more equitable local economy by using its procurement to benefit local business[146].

It was employment opportunities that first drew many immigrants to Preston, with workers moving to work in the textile mills from Ireland and later from India, Pakistan and the Caribbean. Migration from India and Pakistan continues to this day, mainly through family routes. Those of South Asian ethnicity made up 15.5% of Preston's population in the 2011 census. But international migration to Preston is now more diverse with regard to the countries of origin of new arrivals. The area has seen recent migration from the EU, mostly from Poland and Bulgaria. Asylum-seekers have been housed by the Home Office, with their numbers increasing from the end of 2014. Nearly 2,500 international students were also enrolled at the University of Central Lancashire in 2016-17, out of a student body that numbered over 24,000.

In Preston the citizens' panel comprised those of white and Asian Muslim heritage and we were interested to see how their views on immigration and integration differed from the white British participants. Participants were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 6.8, with a range from 6 to 8.

All of this group believed that immigration had both positive and negative impacts, though for most people the positives outweighed the negatives. For the South Asian participants their concerns focused on the view that some migrants were abusing the benefits system. For the white UK participants integration was biggest concern, although everyone agreed that integration was important and once the discussion got going there were few differences between the two groups.

Migration from outside of the EU was a more salient issue in Preston than EU migration. Most of the panel had some knowledge of these immigration controls and many of the Asian Muslim participants had first or second-hand experience with the application and processing of non-EU visas, mostly the family migration system. The panel agreed that immigration rules should be clear and consistent, and wanted to see greater parity between EU and non-EU immigration controls.

Integration dominated a thoughtful discussion in Preston and there was a consensus that social contact between people of different backgrounds helped break down misconceptions. This group saw integration as "mutual respect" between communities, a view that was different from many other citizens' panels.

The citizens' panel also described some of the initiatives that were being put in place to increase social contact between people of different backgrounds. They felt that schools were doing a good job to help pupils of different backgrounds mix and learn about each other. As with other towns and cities, migrants have tended to move into parts of Preston where rental housing is cheapest. This has led to residential segregation by faith and ethnicity, with new arrivals from eastern Europe living alongside asylum-seekers and longer settled south Asian residents. The citizens' panel thought that there was still significant residential segregation in Preston, but to a lesser degree than in other parts of Lancashire. Unlike many other areas, all member of the Preston citizens' panel saw how housing and wealth influence where people live and the social contact they have with those from different backgrounds.

"I would say personally, I don't know many people that, of white British people, like my family members, who have friends who are Muslim, but then it's not to say that we wouldn't have. I love football, would I not watch football with them? Of course I would. When you do interact, it's perfectly respectful on both sides."

Citizens' panel participant, Preston.

REDBRIDGE

Background

- Population: 302,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 44.0% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: British Asians, Poles
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 5.6% (GB: 4.4%).
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: retail, hospitality, health and social care.

Key findings

Generations of immigrants settled in Redbridge in a journey from the East End of London to the Home Counties. Many of its residents have Irish ancestors and there is a large Jewish community. The Bangladeshi community in Redbridge is growing as they, too, move out of central London to more affluent neighbourhoods. This trend, alongside increased longevity, has led to population growth, with Redbridge's residents numbering 241,000 in 2001 and growing to 299,000 in 2016.

Participants were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 6.1, with a range from 3 to 8.

Contribution was a central theme of the citizens' panel discussion, with participants largely content with international migration, just as long as migrants were working. The biggest concern of this citizens' panel was population pressure. This is understandable given that the population of Redbridge has grown by 24% in the last 15 years; participants were concerned about housing pressures and a lack of school places. They felt that the Government has not put the infrastructure in place to deal with population growth and were careful to say it was *"not the fault of the migrants."*

There was a discussion about future options for EU migration, with participants sceptical about plans for short-term visas. They had had little confidence in the ability of the Government to enforce a short-term visa regime for EU nationals, feeling that there would be many overstayers. Some participants also voiced concern that employers would lose good workers if there were no options to renew visas or settle in the UK and become a citizen.

Almost all members of the citizens' panel made reference to their own family history of migration at different points in the discussion. Some of the older participants felt that immigration had worked better for the UK in the past, although not everyone agreed with this. There was a debate between two Jewish panel members who held different opinions about whether London's Jewish communities were well integrated, socially and economically. Integration was equated with community spirit and neighbourliness.

"I think that's one of the biggest problems we've got in our country. We don't even talk to our next-door neighbours now, wherever they are. To have somebody from a foreign land, try to integrate with them, and it's not always our side of it, it's them as well."

Citizens' panel participant, Redbridge.

SHEFFIELD

Background

- Population: 558,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 13.6% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Pakistanis, Indians, Poles, Somalis, Yemenis, Slovaks, Chinese, Bangladeshis, Iranians.
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 6% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: distribution, hospitality, food processing, health and social care and higher education.

Key findings

Sheffield's wealth was, historically, based on steel. Although competition from overseas dealt its steel industry a severe blow, Sheffield is still a centre of specialist metal production. However, IT and financial services now provide many more jobs, although a large proportion of this employment is low paid work in call centres. Sheffield suffered badly from the demise of its manufacturing base, experiencing 50 years of population loss and neighbourhood decline which has only recently halted.

It was steel that brought many migrants to Sheffield, first from Ireland and, after the Second World War, from Poland, Pakistan, India, the Caribbean and Yemen. More recently, refugees made Sheffield their home as asylum-seekers have been housed in the city by the Home Office. Sheffield was also the first city to accept refugees brought to the UK through the Gateway Resettlement programme and is still accepting refugees through this programme as well as Syrians brought to the UK through the Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Programme. There is a large international student population, with 10,940 enrolled in Sheffield's two universities. Some 16,000 central and eastern European migrants are thought to be living in Sheffield, including a Czech and Slovak Roma community.

We took a different approach to the two citizens' panels we held in Sheffield. Generally we have screened out those with the most polarised views, either overly for or against immigration. Using the recruitment question *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"* we held two citizens' panels in Sheffield, one for those who gave a score 1-3 (Group A) and another for those who gave 8-10 (Group B). We decided to undertake these two panels because we wanted to understand how the tone and themes of the discussions in these two groups differed from a citizens' panel recruited from those whose views lie in the mid-range of public opinion.

Group A

This was a diverse group in respect to their social class, ethnicity, politics and their understanding of the norms of non-prejudiced behaviour. The men in this citizens' panel dominated the discussion and generally had stronger views than women. Participants felt that immigration was *"out of control"* and there was almost no trust in the Government to manage immigration competently.   Participants had a wide variety of economic concerns which were often similar to those voiced in other parts of the UK, although often expressed more forcefully and less politely. Fears about overpopulation and pressures on the NHS were also raised in the discussion. There was a prevailing view that some immigrants had only come to the UK to claim benefits, something that the group condemned, with arguments made for a contributory welfare system.

All but one member of this citizens' panel did try and balance the negative impacts of immigration with what they saw as gains. Generally, participants supported migrants who were making a contribution; there was only one person who wanted to reduce the numbers of international students and highly-skilled migrants from outside the EU. From what was a heated discussion, the group became quiet when talking about refugees. Many people were sympathetic but others had conflicting views, which may have explained their reticence.

This group had strong opinions about conditions in the Page Hall area of Sheffield. Here a Czech and Slovak Roma community is living in rental property, previously marked for demolition in a stalled regeneration project. Participants' concerns focused on neighbourhood decline, damage to property, litter, street drinking and loitering; but they also felt that there were other parts of Sheffield where integration was not working. Inter-ethnic conflict was an issue raised at different points in the discussion. Many in this group held stereotypes about Muslims and saw them as a direct threat to British culture. There was widespread resentment in this group by participants who felt that they had to pander to 'political correctness' and the perceived sensitivities of Muslim communities.

The tone and nature of the discussion was markedly different from other National Conversation

on Immigration citizens' panels. Participants were in the main angrier and less restrained about swearing. At times participants made strong discriminatory remarks. This was a discussion where grievance, pessimism and political mistrust framed much of what was said. Most participants were resentful, feeling that their opinions and needs had been neglected. Many saw their lives and careers determined by external forces. There was little optimism about the future nor sense that their lives would improve and little trust in the Government to help them.

> *"I don't think there's been a government in the past thirty, forty years that you can trust. The only government you can trust to stand up to the EU to Europe, whatever, was Thatcher, and she screwed her own people anyway. You can't trust governments, they're all out for themselves. They're not here to make the country a better place. They're here to fill their own pockets and just get that big pension at the end of the day."*

Citizens' panel participant, Group A, Sheffield.

Group B

Group B were mostly non-graduates with a strongly working class identity. Unlike Group A, most people in this group had secure jobs. It was a more homogenous citizens' panel in relation to participants' backgrounds and political views. Although most of this group were not politically active, they talked about immigration with their families and colleagues. The EU referendum had catalysed such discussion and the citizens' panel included many Leave voters, who nevertheless supported migration.

This citizens' panel felt the positive impacts of immigration outweighed any disadvantages. Contribution and notions of fairness were common sentiments in much of the discussion. Participants saw migrants largely as hard working, bringing skills and *"doing jobs that Brits don't want to do"*. There was almost no mention of pressures on public services and housing. Although some participants felt that large-scale immigration had undercut wages and working conditions, they blamed big business and not migrants themselves.

This citizens' panel did have some specific local concerns about immigration and integration. They felt the failure to take action on the men who sexually exploited girls and women in Rotherham had had a negative impact on people's opinions of people of Asian heritage. A number of participants felt that there were migrant and minority ethnic communities that had regressive views about gender equality. We were told that migration was *"not very good in regards to equality and sex and gender, and the roles that women and guys play."* This group also voiced strong opinions about conditions in the Page Hall area of Sheffield, with most participants perceiving this a *"no-go area."*

There were some key differences between these two Sheffield groups. Many people in Group B knew migrants as friends, neighbours or work colleagues, something not shared by many in Group A. This meant that this group was able to base their opinions on these social interactions, rather than on national and community narratives drawn from the media and peer group debate. Group B was less resentful and more optimistic about their future and had much more trust in the Government to facilitate positive political change, fix immigration and change their lives.

> *"I've been very lucky with my neighbours, I've had whites, Africans, and they've all given me food and I've been the same with them. There's never been a problem. They integrate and communicate because at the end of the day if there was a fire in that person's house or their house got flooded, my door's open for them for them – I'm not just going to keep the door locked."*

Citizens' panel participant, Group B, Sheffield

SHREWSBURY

Background

- Population: 72,000.
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 4.9% (Shropshire) (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Polish
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 3.5 % (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: distribution, retail and food processing.

Key findings

Shrewsbury is a market town and a commercial centre for Shropshire and much of mid-Wales. Employment in the town reflects this position, with retail, tourism and distribution providing significant numbers of jobs. Unemployment is low and there are no large spatial and economic divides in Shrewsbury compared with similar towns. As a consequence, new migrants have not clustered in particular areas where there is available rental accommodation.

Despite a healthy economy, good transport links and its proximity to Telford and Birmingham, Shrewsbury's migrant and minority ethnic population is small. About 7% of the population was born outside the UK, including some new migrants from eastern Europe. The town opened its first mosque in 2013 and there are a number of civil society organisations working to promote the integration of migrant workers and refugees.

The citizens' panel was asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 6.1, with a range from 2 to 8.

This citizens' panel took a largely positive and pragmatic view of labour migration. They were comfortable for the numbers of low- and high-skilled workers to stay the same or to be increased, as long as migrants were vetted and paying taxes, and the economy needed them. Some participants voiced strong opinions about migrant criminality and the lack of criminal record checks on migrants from the EU. However, even these participants were happy to keep levels of high- and low-skilled labour migration at the same level if those with criminal convictions could be excluded.

The citizens' panel was sympathetic to the plight of refugees, but had some concerns, particularly about the situation in Calais, which they saw as evidence of a lack of state control over migration flows. Most participants felt that asylum-seekers should be allowed to work so as to help them integrate.

Although the population of migrants in Shrewsbury is small, compared with elsewhere in the UK, most of the citizens' panel had work colleagues who were migrants. In this respect, migration was seen as normal aspect of life in Shrewsbury. Participants felt that there were few integration problems in Shrewsbury and people generally got on well. They felt this was because the number of recent arrivals was small and new migrants were not clustered in particular parts of town. This is not to say that there were no integration concerns raised by this panel, however: many people felt that residential segregation was a problem in the UK, including in nearby Telford and Wolverhampton.

Overall the discussion was dominated by three 'Cs': control, criminality and contribution. For panel members in Shrewsbury, securing greater support for immigration policy needs to address these three issues.

"I think there's a difference here between immigrants and immigration. And I think it's the immigration policy that is broken. I have no issue with immigrants, but I do have an issue with the way that it's managed. And I think that, for me, is markedly different and we don't really seem to have control over the borders."

Citizens' panel participant, Shrewsbury

SOUTHAMPTON

Background

- Population: 252,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 23.5% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Polish.
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 4.4% (GB: 4.4%).
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: education, health and social care, food processing, engineering.

Key findings

Southampton's economy was built on the docks and its shipyards and the city is still a significant passenger port. Later in the 20th century, a more diverse range of industries were established, including heavy and light engineering, petrochemicals and food processing. The NHS and higher education sectors also provide many jobs, with two universities in the city. As a port, Southampton has had a long history of immigration and emigration, although 91% of its population was still of white British ethnicity at the time of the 2001 census. More recently, an estimated 20,000 Poles – about one in ten of the total population – have made their home in Southampton, with the centres of this community being suburbs such as St Mary's and Shirley.

The citizens' panel was asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 6.6 with a range from 5 to 8.

There was a wide acknowledgement that migration had brought economic benefits to Southampton, as well as broad respect for migrant workers who were contributing to the community. The group saw immigration as having a positive impact on the city, reviving areas that were previously run down.

Despite some concerns around residential segregation of the Polish community, participants generally felt that people of different backgrounds got on well. Southampton's Poles appear to be welcomed, with participants telling of their trips to the Polish delicatessen and stating proudly, *"We are Poland number two."*

Unusually, this citizens' panel had detailed discussion about the trade-offs between greater controls on low-skilled migration and the price of goods and services. Most citizens' panels do not make these links, even when prompted.

Over-population emerged as the biggest concern of this panel; this is unsurprising given that Southampton is densely populated, and part of a continuously built up area from Bournemouth to Brighton. Some participants argued that the UK was "*too full'* and that the number of migrants coming to the UK should be reduced.

This citizens' panel also discussed integration in some depth and agreed that migrants themselves, receiving communities, councils and the Government all had responsibilities when it came to integration. With such a large Polish population it is possible to live and work in Southampton without speaking much English by depending on family, friends and work colleagues to translate. At the time of the 2011 Census over 5,000 people in Southampton did not speak English well or at all, including many adults from Poland. This panel included two Polish migrants who talked about those from their own communities who worked long hours with co-nationals and had learned very little English.

> *"People want it all don't they? They want the cheapest flight tickets, they want the cheapest taxis, the cheapest hotels. But ultimately it comes at a cost that they don't necessarily see, and this is the price that it comes at. That we can't offer British workers the top wage. That we can't offer you, now, a hotel worker, 20-30 grand a year. So it'll be a lower paid wage which, like we've said, British people aren't willing to work for."*

> Citizens' panel participant, Southampton.

SUTTON

Background

- Population: 203,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 26.5%(UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: EU migrants, Indian and Sri Lankan Tamils.
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 5.1% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: retail, hospitality, health and social care.

Key findings

Sutton is a suburban, outer London local authority with a large commuter population. From a largely white British area in 1990, in-migration from within the UK, the arrival of refugees and sustained migration from inside and outside the EU has led Sutton's population to become more ethnically diverse and closer to the London average. Sutton has been described as the most 'normal place in Britain': educational standards are high and there are no marked economic divides that characterise so much of London. Despite the pro-EU Liberal Democrats controlling the council, Sutton was one of the five London local authorities that voted Leave in the 2016 referendum.

The citizens' panel was asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 6.3, with a range from 3 to 8. This was a pragmatic group of balancers who were mostly employed in intermediate and junior managerial and administrative roles. There were two EU nationals in the group who brought their own perspectives into a polite and constructive discussion.

The group mostly saw the positive impacts of migration through an economic framework of contribution, through the jobs that migrants did and the skills that they brought with them. At the same time, most participants felt that migration led to additional pressures on housing and public services, a view that is common in much of London and the south east. However, participants were keen to emphasise that these pressures were not the fault of migrants, but rather an outcome of the Government's lack of control over EU migration.

Control and contribution were dominant themes in the discussion. The citizens' panel felt that there were not adequate checks on migrants to make sure that they would contribute to the economy and not exploit the welfare system. Participants had concerns about migrant criminality and that the EU's "open borders" risked allowing terrorists to enter the UK. While the group was sympathetic to the plight of refugees, there were concerns that terrorists might enter the UK as refugees. The case of the age-disputed children was seen as evidence of lax controls and lack of vetting.

Many participants felt that migration had changed the face of Sutton, although they largely saw these changes as neutral or positive. The group felt that people generally got on well with each other and that integration generally worked well in Sutton. They told us that lower numbers of migrant and minority groups, compared with some London boroughs, and the absence of one dominant community made integration easier in Sutton.

> *"I think Sutton's changed a lot over the years, and the area as a whole, growing up, I always perceived it as quite an English place, but I think diversity has come to Sutton over the years. I don't necessarily see it as a bad thing, but obviously I can see certain areas, which might not be perceived as the nicer parts, and why people would label certain people in certain ways."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Sutton.

SUTTON COLDFIELD

Background

- Population: 96,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 23.9% (Birmingham). Some 8.9% of Sutton Coldfield's population was born abroad at the time of 2011 census.
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Indians, Pakistanis, Irish and Poles
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 4.8% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of migrants: health and social care and retail.

Key findings

Sutton Coldfield is a largely residential suburb on the north east edge of Birmingham. Historically part of Warwickshire, it became an administrative part of Birmingham in 1974. However, many of Sutton's residents do not see their town as part of Birmingham. Sutton Coldfield is also one of the less ethnically diverse parts of Birmingham. Among those who live within the boundaries of the constituency, 88% are white British, compared with 59% in Birmingham[147]. Those of Indian ethnicity are the largest minority group, making up about 4% of the population. Small numbers of migrant workers from the EU live and work in the area, some of them moving there from nearby Erdington which has a substantial Polish population.

The citizens' panel was asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 5.9, with a range from 4 to 8.

This was a well-educated and articulate group from a prosperous Birmingham suburb. All of the group were balancers who had many positive views about migration, as long as migrants were making an economic contribution. Many of their opinions were formed not by what they saw in Sutton, but from their impressions of visiting or working in Birmingham. While this citizens' panel saw immigration working well in Sutton Coldfield, they felt that the same could not be said for parts of Birmingham. Many participants felt that in Birmingham some migrant and minority ethnic groups led separate lives.

Job displacement was a concern of this group – two people were unemployed. But the stakeholder meeting also mentioned that there was resentment to new migrants because they were seen as 'taking jobs'. This is perhaps as unemployment in Birmingham is nearly twice the GB average. But the panel was careful not to blame migrants for negative impacts, instead focusing their criticism on what they saw as *"a broken system."* There was little mention of pressures on public services, compared with many other citizens' panels.

Similar to other citizens' panels, the Sutton Coldfield discussion often focused on security and control. The citizens' panel took place two weeks after the Parson's Green terrorist attack, which may have impacted on the views expressed by this group. Participants wanted more background checks on EU migrants and asylum-seekers. While some participants had strong views about abuse of the asylum system, most of this citizens' panel also believed that more should be done to help refugees to integrate.

Integration was also an issue that was raised throughout the discussion. Participants talked about ethnic clustering in Birmingham and felt that levels of integration were low. At the same time, they understood why this situation had arisen and that some of the causes of this segregation lay in the availability of affordable housing. Unanimously, this citizens' panel thought that being in work was an essential component of integration, although learning English and socially mixed schools were also important.

"Because you're in Sutton, it's not really in the city, so I don't think we see it as much as some of the inner city, Aston, Handsworth, Erdington, where there's a lot more immigration. Where it concerns me is the integration. Because I work with in a school and you see a lot of kids, especially in deprived areas, there are kids that are growing up these days who are quite happy to be apart."

Citizens' panel participant, Sutton Coldfield.

SWANSEA

Background

- Population: 245,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 10.4% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Chinese, Bangladeshis.
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 4.8% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of migrants: health and social care, higher education, food processing and retail.

Key findings

Swansea is the second largest conurbation in Wales and was once a leading producer of metals. This heavy industry has now gone and in its place is a local economy that is heavily dependent on the public sector, financial services and IT. The city has seen many waves of labour migration since its docks were developed in the 19th century, with its first international migrants including Irish, Italians, Chinese, Poles and Bangladeshis. More recently, EU nationals have moved to Swansea to work, although levels of EU migration have been much lower than in many other parts of the UK. Swansea has also provided a home to asylum-seekers and refugees: as of March 2018, 900 asylum-seekers are housed there by the Home Office. Its two universities educate nearly 4,000 international students.

The citizens' panel was mostly made up of those in with junior managerial or administrative jobs and skilled workers. Participants were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 5.7, with a range from 3 to 8.

All but one of this citizens' panel were 'balancers' who believed that migration to Swansea had brought benefits but also had some negative impacts. One participant, a migrant herself, had more sceptical views and voiced strong concerns about over-population.

This citizens' panel believed that migrants had brought much-needed skills, particularly to the NHS. A key demand from group was that the future systems for EU migration made sure that those who came here could support themselves through work.

Migration from the EU was largely not an issue of major concern for this citizens' panel. Participants were also sympathetic to the plight of refugees, although this sympathy was qualified with concerns that not all asylum applications were genuine. In contrast, there was much less support for student migration. While most citizens' panels do not want reductions in their numbers, this was not the case in Swansea. There appeared to be significant 'town-and-gown' tensions in some areas. Pressures on GP practices, late night noise and poorly-maintained private rental accommodation appeared to be issues of concern. However, the Swansea citizens' panel did not specifically see international students as a problem, rather the overall student body and the university institutions.

At times the discussion in Swansea had an anti-elitist tone and there was very little trust in the Westminster government to make policy changes to immigration or on broader social issues. For most of the group, immigration was not a hugely salient issue, and something they rarely discussed with friends and family. The long history of migration to Swansea meant it was now seen as a normal aspect of everyday life. We were told that because Swansea was a port city, people were *"used to foreign faces and different cultures"*. Swansea has also not experienced the rapid population change of some parts of the UK, a phenomenon that can raise the profile of immigration as an issue of public concern. Trigger events and media coverage can make migration a salient issue for the public and the Swansea citizens' panel coincided with a time when migration stories had not featured in the news.

> *"I think it is too heavy, well, too much, particularly students, who seem to come from everywhere and they are drawing on resources … I don't understand why we accept so many students from outside of the EU. There are kids in Bridgend who say that Swansea University has such a reputation for only liking foreign students. Why is that then? I suspect it's something to do with funds."*

Citizens' panel participant, Swansea.

TROWBRIDGE

Background

- Population: 35,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2016: 10.2% (Wiltshire) (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Poles and Moroccans.
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 2.9% (Wiltshire) (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: food processing and farming.

Key findings

Trowbridge is a market town that serves a largely rural hinterland. In recent years, however, jobs and wealth have shifted out of Trowbridge as factories have closed, including Pork Farms Bowyers in 2008. Today, the largest employers in the town are the council and the food processing company Apetito. Trowbridge's population is largely of white British ethnicity, although there are also small but long-established Moroccan and Bangladeshi communities. More recently the town has seen the arrival of migrant workers from Poland and other EU counties, mostly to take up low-paid jobs in meat processing. Levels of employment are above the national average and Wiltshire is generally seen as a prosperous county; however the indices of multiple deprivation identify Trowbridge as the most deprived part of Wiltshire.

The citizens' panel was asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 5.0 with a range from 1 to 7.

Most of the citizens' panel were 'balancers' and believed that migration had brought benefits but also led to negative impacts such as additional pressures on schools and housing. However, two panel members had more negative views, expressing strong opinions that welfare benefits acted as a pull factor – *"soft-touch Britain"* – encouraging migration to the UK. Some of their remarks focused on specific groups, such as refugees and Muslims, although the stereotypes voiced by these two participants were politely challenged by other panel members.

While migration was an issue that clearly concerned a few citizens' panel members, most participants rarely considered migration and did not often discuss it. Knowledge of migration was limited and most of the negative statements by panel members had not arisen from personal experiences or direct contact with migrants, who were portrayed as a nameless 'them'. Nor could some of the statements be linked directly to media coverage. Rather, these views appeared to be 'local narratives' that were being reproduced within peer groups.

Participants wanted additional investment in housing, healthcare and education if migration was to remain at current levels. Some panel members wanted electoral promises on immigration to be set out openly and in clear simple English, which would help them understand immigration better and rebuild confidence in the way that the government handles immigration.

> *"You don't see too much of it round these parts. You're more sheltered from it [migration]. You don't know the impact it has on schools. I do worry about the impact it has on schools, but to me it hasn't been too noted."*

> Citizens' panel participant, Trowbridge.

UCKFIELD

Background

- Population: 15,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 7.7% (Wealden) (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Polish, Bulgarian and Romanian.
- Unemployment rate: 2.7% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: agriculture, construction, health and social care, tourism, hospitality.

Key findings

Uckfield is a prosperous commuter town in East Sussex. Until recently it had experienced little international migration, but the area's agricultural and tourism industries, as well as the health and social care sector, have drawn international migrants to the town, mostly from eastern Europe.

The citizens' panel was asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 6.1, with a range from 2 to 8.

The citizens' panel in Uckfield was a pragmatic group of balancers who saw the pressures and gains of migration. They thought that migrants, particularly those working in the NHS, brought skills and filled vacancies. But similar to many citizens' panels in London and the south east, they also had some concerns about population growth and the pressures that placed on housing. Younger panel members also voiced concerns about job displacement and wage suppression.

Immigration was not a hugely salient issue. While some members of the citizens' panel worked alongside migrants and had migrants among their friends and neighbours, participants felt that migration was something they rarely considered.

Most of this citizens' panels were frequent visitors to London and Brighton. Throughout the discussion, participants compared Uckfield's experience of migration and integration to that of London and Brighton. Ethnic difference emerged in this discussion to a greater extent than many other citizens' panels, with the Uckfield group suggesting that race partly determined how local people saw immigration. We were told that new arrivals from eastern Europe were not noticed by the local population *"because they are white."* The jobs that migrants were undertaking – on farms, in hotels and in care homes – also rendered them largely invisible.

The citizens' panel was sympathetic to refugees, although participants believed that not all asylum applications were genuine. Many of this panel knew that local authorities in this part of the UK were looking after significant numbers of unaccompanied refugee children.

Some members of the citizens' panel thought that migration had added cultural richness to life in the UK. Again, they drew on their experiences of visiting London and Brighton. But many participants had concerns about integration, too, particularly in relation to residential segregation and English language fluency.

While not referring to specific ethnic or faith communities, this group felt that migration threatened British cultural traditions and we were told that "*You can't be white and proud anymore. If you're white and proud, you're normally viewed as a racist.*" Participants felt that "*political correctness*" meant that people could no longer talk about Christmas; rather this celebration had to be described as a winter festival. These opinions were most strongly held among the younger panel members, whose numbers included graduates and those who saw immigration at bringing economic benefits. Reference was made to the nearby Lewes Bonfire Society with its tradition of 'blacking up'[148]. Controversy about this practice was in the news at the time of our visit and may have informed the views of some of the participants about 'political correctness.'

> *"You get it [immigration] a bit, but it's mainly white European, Polish, Romanian, things like that. In my experience they [migrants] normally work, for example, in hotels and things like that, doing kitchen portering or housekeeping, and jobs like that. So you don't necessarily see them."*
>
> Citizens' panel participant, Uckfield.

WOLVERHAMPTON

Background

- Population: 256,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 19.2% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Indian, Pakistani, Black Caribbean, Polish.
- Unemployment rate: 7.6% (GB: 4.4%).
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of new migrants: retail, higher education health and social care.

Key findings

Wolverhampton was once a major centre for mining, steel and heavy engineering. Although much of its manufacturing base has now been relocated overseas, the engineering sector is still a significant employer in the city along with financial services. Wolverhampton's economy is increasingly diverse but unemployment, at 7.6% of the working age population, remains a problem and is higher than both the national and West Midlands average[149]. More than one in ten people of working age are also economically inactive due to long-term ill-health.

Wolverhampton has a long and enduring history of immigration. By 1851, one in eight of its inhabitants was Irish. In the 1950s and 1960s Wolverhampton became home to many Commonwealth migrants and the city's population continues to reflect this settlement, with a large Sikh community. In recent years, Wolverhampton has become increasingly super-diverse, as a consequence of the dispersal of asylum-seekers and the arrival of international students. The city has also taken in around 200 Syrian refugees, settled through the Vulnerable People's Relocation Programme; and some 1,240 international students were enrolled at the university in 2016-17.

Participants were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 7.1, with a range from 5 to 10.

The benefits of migration largely outweighed the disadvantages for this mostly non-graduate panel. For them immigration was part of the everyday life of this city. Enoch Powell was the MP for Wolverhampton South West from 1950-1974 and drew from his observations in his constituency for his infamous 'Rivers of blood' speech, made in Birmingham in April 1968. Yet, we were told that locally, the speech had some positive outcomes: in Wolverhampton it led to better inter-faith dialogue and promoted efforts to improve community relations. Fifty years on, Wolverhampton has developed an inclusive civic identity and strong Commonwealth and inter-faith links, which are still being utilised to integrate newcomers.

Those who arrived in the past are largely well-integrated into the life of the city and community relations were generally felt to be good. The citizens' panel members told a strong story of integration slowly happening across generations in Wolverhampton and a city that understood itself today to be a very different place to that of Enoch Powell's speech.

Recent EU migration was not the major issue of concern that it has been in other towns and cities, nor were there anxieties about numbers. Both the local stakeholders and the citizens' panel felt, however, that more effort was needed to help newly arrived asylum-seekers and migrant workers to integrate. There was an undercurrent of sympathy for those fleeing war and persecution, but it was clear that some panel members felt confused and threatened by large groups of young male asylum-seekers who "hang around" in the city centre.

> *"When it is the first generation, from personal experience, they come over and keep to themselves. Its only when the children are going to school, they are being educated and there is integration. They are in the system of education, English becoming the first language. When they go home they still speak their own language, but that will tend to disappear in the second and third generation, there is a lot more integration afterwards."*

Citizens' panel participant, Wolverhampton.

WREXHAM

Background

- Population: 136,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 8.8% (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Portuguese, Poles, Bangladeshis, Filipinos.
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 4.4% (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of migrants: NHS, retail, food and drink.

Key findings

Wrexham is the largest town in north Wales and a commercial and retail centre. It grew during the Industrial Revolution as a consequence of nearby coal and iron deposits. It was also a centre of leather processing. But its mines and foundries have now closed and the town no longer produces leather. Retail, food and drink, biotechnology and IT are now significant industrial sectors in Wrexham.

Polish ex-combatants settled in the area after the Second World War. But late 20th century de-industrialisation meant that Wrexham experienced little international migration until recently. Since 2000, there has been rapid migration from the EU, with the overseas born population of the town increasing by more than 250% between 2001 and 2016[150]. The pace of change has caused tensions and there was a spike in hate crime after the EU referendum.

Wrexham has one of the largest Portuguese communities in the UK outside London. In addition, about 150 asylum-seekers are housed in Wrexham by the Home Office and Glyndwr University, founded in 2008, educates nearly 1,000 international students.

Citizens' panel participants were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 5.3, with a range from 4 to 7.

Most people were 'balancers' who described both positive and negative impacts of immigration. For some participants, however, the disadvantages outweighed the benefits. This citizens' panel believed that migration had brought skilled workers to the UK, with NHS staff cited as an example of this. At the same time, this group felt that migration had led to major pressures on schools and the NHS. They gave many examples of lengthy waits in accident and emergency departments or to get an appointment with a doctor. Pressure on public services was an issue that was more strongly felt by the Wrexham citizens' panel than many others we have met.

There is some residential segregation in Wrexham, with EU migrants and asylum-seekers often settling in the town centre and in Hightown. However, the citizens' panel felt that this clustering was less marked in Wrexham than in cities such as Birmingham. Wrexham has a visible street homeless population, with some of this group comprising EU nationals. Homelessness, street drinking, drugs and neighbourhood decline were all problems that this citizens' panel associated with migration.

Immigration and integration were salient issues for almost all participants, and clearly something they had spent some time considering. An outcome of this previous debate was the extent to which the Wrexham citizens' panel put forward practical solutions to improve immigration and integration. In the course of the discussion, this citizens' panel suggested health insurance and contributory welfare systems to ease the pressures on public services. They wanted an Australian-style points-based system to match immigration to the UK's economic needs. The Wrexham citizens' believed migrants should be obliged to learn English and that volunteering would aid integration.

> *"They got this figure, the net migration target because they wanted it to be in the tens of thousands. This was just a figure they pulled out of thin area which they thought we'll do this to buy votes. Of course, it was meaningless because it can't be achieved because of the situation in the EU and freedom of movement."*

> Citizens' panel participant, Wrexham.

YEOVIL

Background

- Population: 45,000
- Percentage of the population born overseas, 2017: 6.1% (South Somerset) (UK: 14.4%)
- Major migrant and minority ethnic groups: Poles, Pakistanis, Hungarians.
- Unemployment rate, 2017: 3.4% (South Somerset) (GB: 4.4%)
- Industrial sectors employing large proportions of migrants: food processing, hospitality.

Key findings

Yeovil is a market town, once famed for its glove-making. Its economy now depends on the manufacture of military equipment: Augusta Westland is Yeovil's biggest employer. The armed forces play an important role in the life of the town. The Fleet Air Arm has a base at nearby RNAS Yeovilton with 4,300 service and civilian staff working at this base.

In Yeovil, our citizens' panel comprised those aged 45 and over and included armed services veterans and others with military links. Participants were asked *"on a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK including your local area? (1 is 'very negative', 10 is 'very positive')"*. The average score for the panel was 4.0, with a range from 1 to 8.

The tone of the initial discussion was angry, with some participants feeling that migrants had preferential access to benefits and social housing, something that had directly impacted on their lives. After these views had been aired, participants' became more positive. It was clear that all of the group were 'balancers' who saw migration as having positive and negative impacts. The citizens' panel voiced its support for skilled migration, particularly of those coming to work in the NHS. At the same time, this group felt that a ready supply of migrant workers was a disincentive for unemployed UK residents to take low-skilled work.

Most participants felt that immigration to the UK had not been controlled and, as a result, the impacts had been more negative than they had been positive. The local stakeholders told us that South Somerset's historic lack of diversity had meant it sometimes struggled to adapt to change.

While figures show that the migrant population in Yeovil is very small, all of the citizens' panel members told us that they had friends, colleagues and neighbours who were migrants. This group felt that migrants who lived in Yeovil were generally well integrated and that a strong community spirit helped this process. At the same time, participants also gave accounts of tensions and new migrants who had been made to feel unwelcome.

For some participants, immigration was not a salient issue. But two of this group has substantial contact with members of the public and felt it was something that was discussed by their customers.

Overall, this group felt that there was a lot about immigration that they did not understand, or know enough about. They felt that the EU referendum campaign was a prime example of not having enough information. Greater transparency and more information from an independent source, provided in an accessible form, was a key demand of this citizens' panel.

> *"I think in small, rural communities, which we have got a lot of, you don't tend to see a lot of immigrants as such. I've been in Yeovil itself now for six years, and I've noticed more and more eastern Europeans coming into the area, because we're a growing town, and that's what happens. People get very defensive, because it's hard, whereas living in London, you're used to such diverse societies to start with, that it doesn't impact as much on you. I think a lot are very wary of intermingling. Because I think they feel ostracised."*

Citizens' panel participant, Yeovil.

Citizens' panel questions

Below are the common questions that we used in each citizens' panel. The questions guided the discussion, alongside voting packs that were used to collect information about views on the impacts of immigration, options for EU migration and immigration numbers. We also included questions relevant for particular towns and cities, for example, extra questions on detention in Bedford and student migration in Lincoln.

GENERAL VIEWS

- On a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK, including your local area? (1 is "very negative", 10 is "very positive").
- Maybe you could say why you gave this score?
- What do you think have been the positive and negative impacts of immigration into the local area?
- Is immigration an important issue for you? Is it something that comes up in conversation?
- Where do you get your information about immigration? What information sources do you trust?
- Do you think that people see immigration differently in Scotland compared with England? (Question for Scotland, Berwick-upon-Tweed and Carlisle groups).

EU MIGRATION

- What changes, if any, would you like to see made to EU migration after the UK leaves the EU?
- Do you expect the numbers of EU migrants to go down after Britain leaves the EU?
- Is Brexit something you still discuss?

The Government is looking at a number of policy options, which are likely to cover the options set out in your packs. Could you tick which option you think the Government should adopt.

The Government should keep free movement rules for EU migrants in the UK and for UK nations who might want to live and work in the EU.	
The Government should set an annual cap covering EU migrants in low-skilled jobs, but not for EU nationals in highly-skilled work.	
The Government should apply the same restrictions on immigration for EU migrants and those coming from outside the EU, even if it means more restrictions placed on British citizens who might want to live in the EU.	
The Government should only offer temporary visas lasting a maximum of three years for EU nationals	

- Why did you make that choice?
- What do you see as a low-skilled job?
- How should the Government – and other groups, for example businesses, better manage the local impacts of migration on public services and housing?
- What do you think would happen in this area if the number of EU migrants decreased?
- The Government is look at offering short-term visas for EU migrants – both those coming to do low-skilled and high-skilled work. Do you think there are advantages or disadvantages to offering short-term visas of, say, two or three years?

- EU immigration will be part of the Brexit negotiations. We don't know how they will go; there will have to be give and take on both sides. It is important that British businesses have tariff free access to the single market if they can. If accepting fewer restrictions on EU migration is a compromise we have to accept to enable British businesses to get a better deal, is that something you would be prepared to accept?
- An estimated 3 million EU nationals currently live in the UK and many of them have been settled here a long time. How should they be treated now we are going to leave the EU? (Question asked to first 20 citizens' panels).

MIGRATION FROM OUTSIDE THE EU

- Do you think the Government has got its approach right about non-EU work migration? Is this a live issue in this area?
- Should the Scottish/Welsh/Northern Ireland Government be given the power to determine immigration policy? (Question for citizens' panels in these places).

ASYLUM-SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

- Please write down five words that come into you head when you hear the word 'refugee'?
- Maybe you would like to share what you wrote?
- Are there any policies you would want to see changed for asylum-seekers and refugees?
- Do you think the UK does enough to help people fleeing war or persecution?

BORDER CONTROL AND IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT

- What do the words 'better control' mean to you? What changes would you like to see, so that we get more control?
- Border control is something we pay for out of taxation. Locating undocumented migrants, detaining then removing them, is very expensive. At the moment 0.2% of public spending goes on the whole immigration system, which covers visas, what happens at the airport, the asylum-system, detention and deportation. If you, as an average tax payer, were asked to pay £5 more each year in tax for a better immigration system – more immigration officers, better technology – is that something you would be willing to pay if that meant the UK removed more undocumented migrants?
- In your packs you have a case study of an undocumented or illegal immigrant. It's a real story, it is someone interviewed for a research project. Everyone's story is different, but I would like to ask you to read through the story and tell us how H should be treated. What would you do about H? Should H be allowed to use the NHS?

OVERALL NUMBERS

For each of the following groups, please vote on whether you would prefer the Government to increase number of people coming to live in the UK, to reduce it, or to let the numbers remain at about the same level.

	Increased	Reduced	Remain about the same
High skilled workers from the EU			
Low-skilled workers from the EU			
Seasonal workers employed on farms and in food factories and hotels			
High-skilled workers from outside the EU			
Asylum-seekers and refugees			
Non-British immediate family members (spouses, civil partners, children under 18 and other dependent relatives)			
Non-British university and college students			

- ■ Does anyone want to give their views on the choice they made?
- ■ The Government has a target to reduce immigration – the net migration target. How many of you have heard about this target? There have been some criticisms of this policy, as it means the Government treats all types of migrants the same way. Do you think the Government should have different targets for different types of migrants?

INTEGRATION AND GOOD COMMUNITY RELATIONS

- ■ In this area, do you think migrants are generally well-integrated in their new neighbourhoods, schools and workplaces?
- ■ Do you have migrants and refugees among your friends and work colleagues?
- ■ How do you think the Government should best encourage integration?
- ■ What about local councils and employers?
- ■ What responsibilities should migrants have to integrate?
- ■ And us, as receiving communities? Are there things we should be doing to help new arrivals?

FINALLY...

- ■ Some people find it difficult to talk about immigration – they may be worried about being accused on racism, for example. We wanted to know what you thought the boundaries were between a decent discussion about migration and one that was racist? How do we keep the discussion decent?
- ■ If the Government was to get your trust and broad support for how it handles immigration, what one or two things would need to change?
- ■ Is there anything important that you think we have not talked about?

Case studies

All the three case studies are real (they were collected in two research projects[151]. We rotated them, with our citizens' panels asked to decide how they should be treated.

CASE STUDY ONE

H is 19 years old and was born in the UK to a Nigerian mother and a Jamaican father. H's mother arrived in the UK with a five year work visa, but overstayed this visa when it ran out in 2001, when H was two years old. H and her mother have had no contact with H's father since H was four. She has no address for him and does not know if he is still living in the UK.

H and her mother have lived in rented rooms as long as she can remember and her mother has worked as a cleaner. Growing up, H was aware that they had much less money than most other families. When H was 14 she was cautioned for shop lifting – she tried to steal clothes from an Oxford Street shop.

H did not know she was not legally in the UK until she was 17 and wanted to apply for university. She then found out that she was an undocumented migrant. This caused a lot of tension between her and her mother. H has subsequently found out that she and her mother can apply for leave to remain in the UK for compassionate reasons. However, coming forward and doing this is risky: as H is no longer a child, her mother risks being deported, even if H is given permission to stay. H does not want to be separated from her mother, but she has never been to Nigeria and does not wish to live there.

CASE STUDY TWO

H is 35 years old and was born in New Zealand. He came here nine years ago with a British Ancestry Visa – this is a visa that anyone with a British grandparent can apply for, providing they are a citizen of a Commonwealth country. A British Ancestry visa costs about £700, including an annual surcharge for using the NHS. It allows the visa holder to work in the UK, but they are not allowed any benefits or social housing.

H has worked at the bar of a small London pub since he arrived. Four years into his stay in the UK his landlord reported him to the police and he was fined for cultivating two cannabis plants.

When his visa expired in 2012 he did not renew it, because he thought he would return to New Zealand. But just before his planned flight he found out that his British girlfriend was pregnant. He delayed his flight and over-stayed his visa.

Initially H did not know what to do, and whether he and his girlfriend would have the child. They decided to have the baby and H remained in the UK, but without a visa. He went to work in the same pub as before, who took him back without any further checks. He continues to pay tax.

Two years ago, H split up with his girlfriend ,who now lives in Edinburgh. He sees his son (who is now five) three times a year. He remains in the UK as an undocumented migrant and was told by a solicitor that his 'bad' immigration history and criminal record means that he would not be granted another Ancestry visa. He wants to remain in the UK so he can see his son.

To remove H from the UK, immigration officers will have to locate him, detain him and arrange for him to be returned to New Zealand.

CASE STUDY THREE

H is now 42 years old and was born in Nigeria. He came here aged 17 in 1992 to visit his mother who is now a British citizen after she married her second husband, who is also a British citizen. H came to the UK with a six-month visitors' visa, then he applied for asylum in 1993 as he wanted to stay in the UK. H's asylum case was rejected (he could not show that he had been persecuted and there was no case for giving him refugee status), but he was not detained or removed from the UK.

H has survived by undertaking cash-in-hand work, painting, gardening and working in car washes. In 1994 he gave £6,000 of his and his mother's savings to pay an immigration solicitor to try and sort out his immigration case with the Home Office. The solicitor took the money and disappeared.

H's step father has now died, and in 2003 his mother had a stroke. Since then H has been his mother's main carer. He has no immediate family in Nigeria – his father is dead and he had no brothers or sisters.
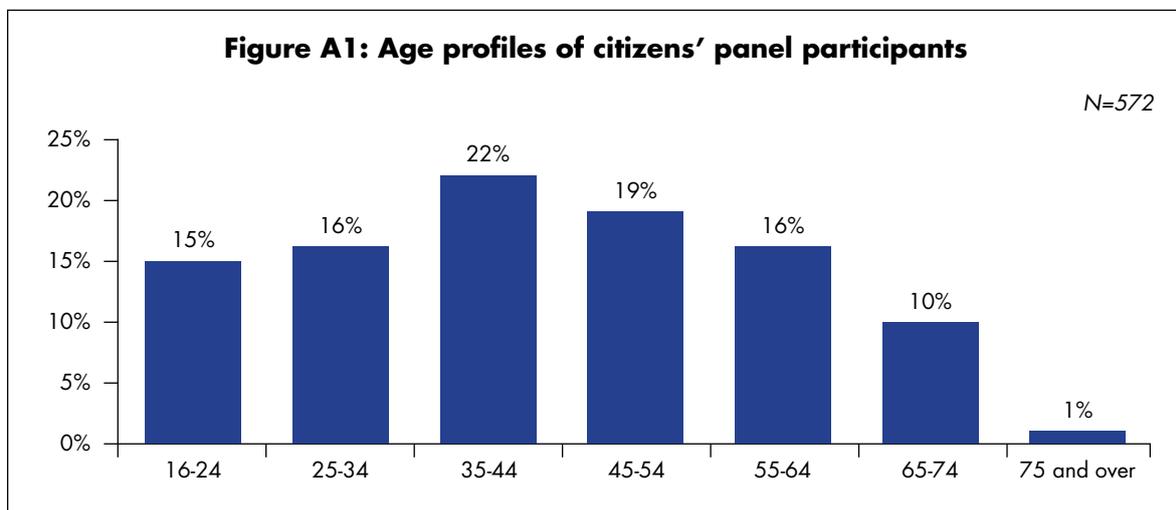
To remove H from the UK, immigration officers will have to locate H, detain him, arrange documents for him and then get the Nigerian authorities to accept him back. If he is returned to Nigeria, it is likely that he will be removed on a charter flight.

Demographic information of the citizens' panels

Excluding the preparatory panel in Bedford, we conducted 60 citizens' panels in 58 different locations across the UK. For each panel, we recruited 10 participants and in total we spoke to 572 people. In most cases, the citizens' panels comprised five men and five women, with participants selected to be representative of their local area in terms of their ethnicity. We also wanted the panels to have a mix of ages and social grades. Further demographic information about the panels is given below.

Gender – Of the 572 participants, 50.6% were female and 49.4% were male.

Age – All but three of our citizens' panels aimed for a range of ages. Our youngest participants were 16 years old and our oldest was 91. We also held two citizens' panels (in Carlisle and Nottingham) where participants were aged between 16 and 24 years. We also held one panel in Yeovil where all the participants were aged 50 years or older. Figure A1 gives further information about the ages of the citizens' panel participants. There was a small under-representation of those aged 65 and older. This may have been caused by our decision to hold the citizens' panels in the evening – transport difficulties and concerns about safety often contribute to lower recruitment for social research among older people.

Figure A1: Age profiles of citizens' panel participants

N=572

Age group	Percentage
16-24	15%
25-34	16%
35-44	22%
45-54	19%
55-64	16%
65-74	10%
75 and over	1%

Social grade – Social grade is the socio-economic classification used in much market research. It is based on the occupation of the respondent and is used as a proxy for social class. We aimed for a mix of social grades in each citizens' panel, although there are age and geographic differences in the representation of social grades in the UK. There is a clustering of social grades A, B and C1 in London and the south east – in London people in these social grades made up 62.5% of the working age population at the time of the 2011 census, compared with 46.2% in the north east.

Table xxx provides more detail about the participants' social grade alongside data about the representation of each social grade in the UK population.

Table A2: Social grade profile of citizens' panel participants

Social grade	Description	Representation in UK population[152]	Representation in citizens' panels
A	Higher managerial, administrative or professional, for example doctor or company director	4%	3%
B	Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional, for example a teacher or software engineer.	23%	21%
C1	Supervisory, clerical or junior managerial, administrative or professional, for example a qualified care worker or office administrator.	28%	33%
C2	Skilled manual workers, for example a plumber or electrician.	20%	22%
D	Semi-skilled or unskilled workers, for example food production line operative or supermarket cashier.	15%	11%
E	Casual or lowest grade workers and those who depend on welfare state for their main income such as state pensioners and casual agricultural workers.	10%	7%

Ethnicity – We wanted the citizens' panels to be representative of the places we visited in relation to the ethnicity of the participants. But we decided at the start of the project to operate a policy of recruiting at least two participants from minority ethnic or migrant communities to panels, or having none at all. This was because we did not want to have a situation where potentially awkward questions about migration or ethnicity might focus on a single person. As a consequence, participants of some citizens' panels were exclusively of white British ethnicity. Overall, however, the ethnicity of the 572 citizens' panel participants was similar to the UK population, with Figure A2 giving more details.

The largest single minority ethnic groups were mixed white/black, white Irish, Asian Pakistani, white eastern European and Asian Indian.

The citizens' panels included migrants. Based on self declaration in the citizens' panels, we estimate that 12% of our participants were born outside the UK, just below the UK average of 14.3%. Of those born outside the UK, the largest groups were from Poland, Ireland and Pakistan. Many of them had lived in the UK for a significant period of time, although participants included some new migrants, mostly EU nationals from eastern Europe. Participants also included two refugees who had lived in the UK for less than five years.

Figure A3: Ethnicity profiles of citizens' panel participants
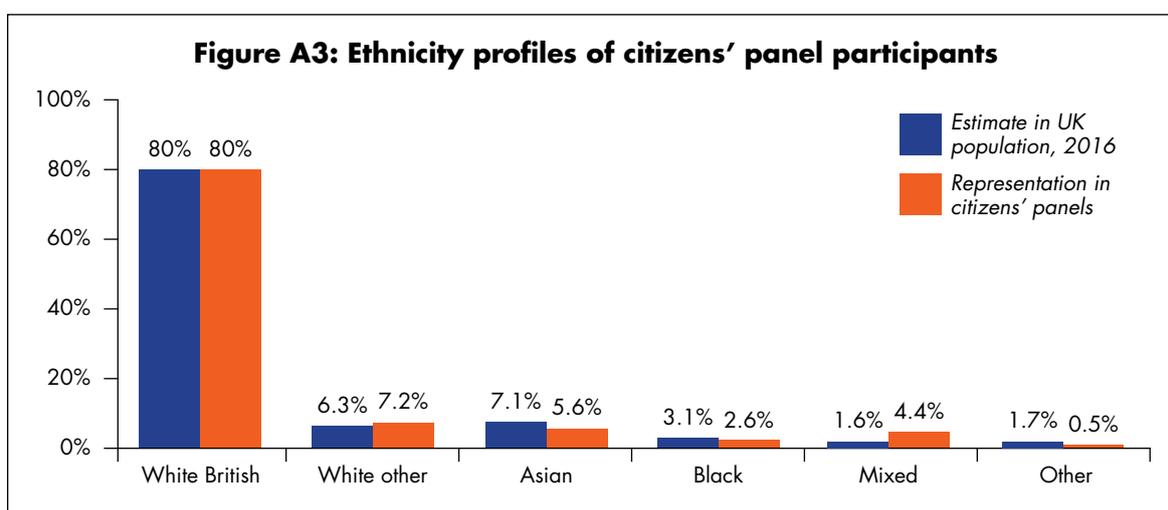
Stakeholders represented in consultation meetings

4Together Lancashire

4Wings Liverpool

Aberaid

Aber Arts

Aberdeen City Council

Aberdeenshire Council

Aberdeen University

Aberystwyth University

African Communities Association of Bolton

AgeUK

Amnesty International

Aramathea Trust

Asford Borough Council

Asley Community Housing

Association of Voluntary Organisations in Wrexham

Asylum Matters

Avaz Cumbria

Bahai Leicester

Ballymena Intercultural Forum

Banbury Quaker Meeting

Barnardos

Basildon Borough Council

Bath Spa University

BAWSO, Wrexham

Bedford Council

BEGIN – Nottingham

Belfast City Council

Beyond Borders, Totnes

Bishop Grossteste University

BOAZ Trust

Bradford Chamber of Commerce

Bradford Council

BRAP

Bright Blue

British Red Cross

Business West

Cambridge Ethnic Communities Forum

Cambridge Refugee Resettlement

Cambridge Stays

Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce

Cambridgeshire County Council

Canterbury Christchurch University

Carlisle Refugee Action Network

Ceredigion Council

Cherwell District Council

Children's Society

Chinese Welfare Association, Northern Ireland

Churches Together in Basildon

Churches Together in Cumbria

Citizens Advice North East Lincolnshire

Citizens Advice Southend

Citizens Advice South Somerset

CitizensUK

CLEAR, Southampton

COEMO, Bradford

Community Aid Enfield

Community Integration Advocacy Centre

Coram Children's Legal Centre

Cornwall County Council

Cornwall Faiths Forum

COSLA

Council of Faith in Leicester

Croeso Teifi

Derbyshire County Council

Detention Action

Devon County Council

Diocese of Durham

Diocese of Paisley

Dumfries and Galloway Council

Durham County Council

Early Years Temporary Accommodation Project, Enfield

East Hoathly Village of Sanctuary

East Lancashire NHS Trust

East Midlands Chamber of Commerce

East of England Strategic Migration Partnership

Edgehill University

Edinburgh City Council

Enfield Council

Enfield Race Equality Council

Enfield Saheli Association

ERMS UK

Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team Wales

EU Welcome

Faithful Neighbours (Diocese of Bradford)

Faiths Forum for London

Falmouth University

Fenland District Council

FRESh

Friends of Refugees in Bedford

InCommunities

Institute for Public Policy Research

GEMS, Northern Ireland

Gloucestershire Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Grampian Regional Equality Council

Greater Manchester NHS Trust

Harrogate District City of Sanctuary

Health and Social Care Partnership Inverclyde

Help Refugees

Hope Projects

Hull City of Sanctuary

Humans of Wolverhampton

Humber Chamber of Commerce

Humber Community Advice Services

Indian Community Centre

Ipswich and Suffolk Race Equality Council

JET North

Job Centre Plus, Aberdeen

John Ellerman Foundation

Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust

Justice First

Kent Refugee Action Network

Kings Arms Project

Knowsley Council

Lancashire County Council

Leicester Mammas

Leicester Progressive Jewish Congregation

Leicester Quaker Meeting

Liverpool City Council

London First

Macclesfield Quaker Meeting

Malvern Town of Sanctuary

Manchester City of Sanctuary

Melanie Onn MP

Methodist Asylum Project, Middlesbrough

Middlesbrough City of Sanctuary

Middlesbrough Council

Middlesex University

Minority Housing Project, Aberdeen

Migrant Help

Migrant Resource Centre

Migrants Organise

Migration Matters Trust

Migration Policy Institute

Migration Yorkshire

Mojatu

MRANG

Muslim Welfare Association, Chesterfield

NEST, Newcastle University

New Neighbours Together in Burnley

Newcastle City Council

Newcastle City of Sanctuary

Newport City Council

No Accommodation Network

Northamptonshire Race Equality Council

North East England Chamber of Commerce

North East Lincolnshire Council

North East Refugee Service

North East Strategic Migration Partnership

Northern Ireland Centre for Racial Equality

North Tyneside Council

North Tyneside CAB

North Yorkshire District Council

Northumberland County Council

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

Northumbria Police

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum

Nottingham Trent University

Office of Elin Jones AC/AM

Office of Mhairi Black MP

Office of Alan Campbell MP

Office of Dan Carden MP

Office of Mike Gapes MP

Office of Richard Graham MP

Office of Ian Lucas MP

Office of Chi Onwurah MP

Office of Toby Perkins MP

Office of Naz Shah MP

Office of Derek Thomas MP

Office of Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP

Open Doors

Open University

Peterborough City Council

Polish Centre, Shrewsbury

Polish Expat Association

Porchlight

Praxis

Preston City of Sanctuary

Refugee Action

Refugee and Migrant Centre, Black Country and Birmingham

Refugee and Migrant Network, Sutton

Refugee Council

Refugee Support Devon

Refugee Voices

Refugees Welcome Milton Keynes

Regional Asylum Activism

Renfrewshire Community Council

Renfrewshire Council

Renfrewshire Polish Association

Restore

Romanian Chaplaincy

Rosmini Centre, Wisbech

Scottish Government

Share Knowsley

Sharing Voices

Sheffield City Council

Shepway District Council

Shetland Council

Shropshire Council

Shropshire Supports Refugees

Somerset County Council

Southampton City Council

South Northamptonshire Council

South Somerset District Council

South Tyrone Empowerment Project

South East Strategic Migration Partnership

South West Migrant Workers Forum

South West Strategic Migration Partnership

St Cuthbert's Care

Suffolk Chamber of Commerce

Suffolk Refugee Support

Sutton Council

Sutton for Sanctuary

Sutton Peace and Justice

Sutton Quaker Meeting

Sutton Refugee Community Sponsorship Group

Swansea City of Sanctuary

Swansea University

The Challenge

The Equality Practice

The3million

Tim Parry and Jonathan Ball Foundation for Peace

Trust for London

TUC

Uckfield Quaker Meeting

Unite the Union

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Universities UK

University of Cambridge

University of Central Lancashire

University of Edinburgh

University of Gloucestershire

University of Leicester

University of Lincoln

University of Liverpool

University of Suffolk

University of the West of Scotland

USDAW

Valley Steps

Victim Support

Visit Banbury

Wales TUC

Walking With

Wealden District Council

Welsh Government

Welsh Refugee Council

West London Mental Health NHS Trust

West Midlands Ambulance Service

Wiltshire Community Forum

Wiltshire Race Equality Council

Wrexham Council

Wolverhampton City Council

Wolverhampton City of Sanctuary

Women of Wolverhampton

Worcestershire County Council

Worcestershire Interfaith Forum

World Evangelical Alliance

Wyre Forest District Council

Wyre Forest Refugees Welcome

Yeovil Trades Council

Yorkshire Housing

In total 405 people attended the stakeholder meetings including 34 individuals who came in a personal capacity.

Nationally-representative research by ICM: Questions and results

A nationally representative poll of 3,267 UK adults was undertaken by ICM between 13 and 18 June 2018. In addition to the core sample, run as part of an online omnibus survey, four boosts were undertaken to enable more detailed analysis to be undertaken. These boosts comprised:

- 700 adults resident in Scotland
- 250 adults resident in Northern Ireland
- 400 adults born outside the UK
- 500 minority ethnic adults

The poll findings were analysed by gender, age cohort, ethnicity, country of birth (UK and EU but non-UK, non-EU), education, social grade, region/nation of residence in UK, rural/urban settlement classification and voting behaviour in the EU referendum and in the 2017 general election.

Many of the questions we asked were the same as those included in the open survey which ran from February 2017 to July 2018. However, we included a number of additional questions to enable us to examine issues that were raised by the citizens' panels, but not covered in the open survey.

GENERAL VIEWS

Note – figures rounded up or down to nearest percentage point so may not total 100

1. Do you have friends, neighbours or work colleagues of a different ethnic background to yourself? Yes 75%, No 24%, Don't know 2%.

2. Do you have friends, neighbours or work colleagues who are migrants or refugees? Yes 29%, No 61%, Don't know 11%

3. On a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK, including your local community? (1 is "very negative", 10 is "very positive").

Score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Percentage who gave that score	8%	4%	7%	8%	20%	11%	16%	13%	5%	7%

Mean score for poll = 5.7. Mean score for citizens' panels = 5.7 (n=572).

4. To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Migrant workers support the British economy by doing jobs British people don't want to do.	23%	40%	20%	9%	5%	3%
Diversity is a good thing for British culture	25%	35%	23%	10%	6%	2%
Immigrants have preferential access to housing and public services	15%	25%	24%	17%	12%	7%
Public services are under strain because of immigration	22%	30%	20%	15%	10%	4%
Migrants bring valuable skills for our economy and public services like the NHS	27%	38%	22%	7%	4%	2%
Migrants are willing to work for less money so put jobs at risk and lower wages	15%	37%	25%	14%	5%	4%

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The public should be consulted more on important national issues, like immigration	24%	38%	23%	8%	3%	4%
Migrants face discrimination in the media and on social media	18%	36%	25%	11%	5%	5%
Politicians have shown strong leadership on immigration	4%	10%	26%	29%	26%	5%
Migrants do not integrate into their local communities	15%	29%	30%	16%	5%	3%

NUMBERS

6. For each of the following groups, please tell us whether you would prefer the number of people coming to live in the UK to be increased, reduced, or to remain about the same.

	Increased	Remain the same	Reduced	Don't know
High-skilled workers from the EU	39%	36%	14%	10%
Low-skilled workers from the EU	12%	31%	45%	12%
Seasonal workers	17%	46%	23%	14%
High-skilled workers from outside the EU	39%	35%	15%	11%
Asylum-seekers and refugees	16%	29%	43%	12%
Non-British immediate family members	15%	40%	29%	17%
Overseas students	24%	44%	21%	11%

7. The Government has a target to reduce net migration to 'tens of thousands'. Net migration is the number of all immigrants entering the UK in a given time period (migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees, family members, foreign students), minus the number of emigrants leaving in the same period, this includes British citizens leaving and returning to the UK. Which one of the following do you most agree with?

The Government should keep the net migration target	21%
The Government should have different targets and approaches for dealing with different kinds of immigration i.e. different for higher skilled and lower-skilled migrant workers, overseas students etc.	57%
The Government should not set targets for immigration	10%
Don't know	11%

RESTORING TRUST

8. For each of the following sources of information about immigration, how much do you trust each to tell the truth?

	Tell the truth all of the time	Tell the truth most of the time	Tell the truth sometimes	Never tell the truth	Don't know
Members of Parliament	2%	11%	51%	28%	8%
The Government	3%	14%	48%	28%	7%
Your local council	3%	20%	47%	17%	12%
Television	3%	23%	55%	12%	7%
National newspapers	3%	17%	55%	18%	7%
Local news	4%	30%	48%	9%	9%
Social media	2%	8%	52%	26%	12%
Business leaders	2%	16%	53%	18%	12%
Academics/experts	7%	40%	36%	6%	10%

9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
On the whole, I feel that the Government has managed immigration into the UK competently and fairly	3%	12%	25%	29%	24%	7%
The Government's performance on migration should be reviewed every year, through an annual migration day in Parliament which should involve consulting members of the public	21%	40%	19%	8%	4%	8%

10. For each of the following, please tell us whether it would make you more or less confident, or would make no difference, in the ability of the Government to manage migration into the UK?

	A lot more confident	A little more confident	No difference	A little less confident	A lot less confident	Don't Know
A simple and independent website that sets out statistics, government policy and its performance	14%	34%	35%	5%	2%	10%
A system where the UK government had more control over the numbers of migrants coming to the UK	25%	33%	23%	7%	3%	9%
Increasing the Home Office budget so it can employ more immigration officers and make better use of technology	14%	34%	31%	6%	3%	10%
Better ways of dealing with the local impacts of migration on housing and public services	17%	40%	26%	5%	3%	9%
Better support to help migrants integrate and become part of their local communities	14%	33%	33%	7%	4%	9%
Government ministers held to account and forced to resign if they make serious mistakes	28%	33%	22%	5%	3%	8%

11. How long should migrants, excluding asylum seekers and refugees, be working and paying tax in the UK before they are eligible for benefits and social housing?

12 months or less	11%
1-3 years	30%
3-5 years	29%
6-10 years	9%
Longer than 10 years	5%
Only UK citizens should be eligible for benefits and social housing	17%

MIGRATION AND BUSINESS

12. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Businesses should be able to recruit the highly skilled workers they need	33%	43%	16%	3%	1%	4%
The NHS should be able to recruit health professionals from abroad to fill vacancies	37%	35%	17%	4%	2%	4%
Employers should not be able to take on migrant workers, even if they can't find British staff.	6%	9%	21%	29%	29%	5%
Businesses that employ migrants should be obliged to pay into a training fund that is used to develop skills in UK workers	19%	35%	25%	9%	4%	8%
Farmers should be able to recruit seasonal migrants from the EU that they need	23%	40%	21%	8%	3%	5%
Wage regulations should be enforced better, so migrant workers do not undercut British workers	30%	40%	17%	6%	2%	5%

MIGRATION FROM THE EU

13. Leaving the EU may mean changes to immigration policies for EU nationals.

Please indicate which option you prefer if you had to pick one.

1. The Government should keep free movement rules for EU migrants in the UK and UK migrants living in the EU after Britain leaves the EU	27%
2. The Government should set an annual cap covering EU migrants in low-skilled jobs, but not for EU migrants coming to do highly-skilled work	26%
3. The Government should apply the same restrictions on immigration for EU migrants and those coming from outside the EU, even if this would mean more restrictions on UK nationals who might want to live and work in the EU	30%
4. EU nationals coming to fill low-skilled jobs should only be offered temporary visas lasting a maximum of three years.	16%

14. When migrants do come to Britain, which of the following options, if you had to pick one, do you think is better?

"It is better when migrants commit to stay in Britain, put down roots and integrate."	61%
"It is better when migrants come here to work for a few years without putting down roots and then return home"	39%

15. If you had to pick one, please indicate which approach you would like the UK Government to take in the Brexit negotiations.

If it means a better deal for British business, the UK Government should keep the free movement of EU citizens in and out of the UK and stay in the single market"	39%
"If it means a better deal for British business, the UK government should end free movement but offer the EU an immigration deal where EU nationals get preferential treatment to migrants from outside the EU".	28%
"The UK Government should end free movement with no preferential immigration deal with the EU, even if this limits the trade deal Britain can strike.	33%

MIGRATION FROM OUTSIDE THE EU

16. In recent years about half of immigration has come from outside the EU, with migrants arriving through work visa routes, as students, to join their family or as asylum-seekers and refugees. Please indicate if you agree or disagree with these policies.

	Strongly Agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The devolved governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland should have the powers to decide how many visas are issued for people who want to work in these parts of the UK.	18%	37%	21%	10%	7%	8%
Government policy should be to encourage international students to study at UK universities, rather than having policies that discourage students from overseas.	19%	32%	29%	8%	4%	8%
UK citizens should be allowed to bring immediate family (e.g. spouse/partner, children under 18) irrespective of their income, as long as they can support them and provide housing.	22%	41%	20%	7%	5%	5%

17. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

	Strongly Agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
"Children born in the UK should be eligible for British citizenship"	31%	36%	18%	8%	4%	4%

REFUGEES

18. Do you agree or disagree with these statements?

	Strongly Agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Britain should protect refugees fleeing war and persecution'	22%	34%	26%	8%	5%	5%
When people come to the UK seeking asylum it is important they integrate, learn English and get to know people. It would help integration if asylum-seekers were allowed to work if their claim takes more than six months to process.	29%	41%	17%	5%	3%	6%

INTEGRATION

19. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
People get along best when there is two-way tolerance and respect for each other	46%	38%	11%	2%	*	3%
It takes effort from both UK citizens and new migrants to build integrated communities	36%	44%	12%	3%	2%	3%
Discrimination and hate crime divide communities	49%	34%	11%	2%	1%	3%
When communities live apart from each other, this causes problems	36%	40%	15%	4%	1%	4%
Integration is showing respect for British traditions and values	38%	37%	16%	4%	2%	3%

20. What do you think migrants should do in order to integrate and become successful members of our society? Please indicate if you agree or disagree whether these are important.

	Strongly Agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Learn English	65%	23%	8%	1%	*	2%
Observe our shared values (e.g. democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance)	52%	33%	10%	2%	1%	3%
Contribute to the economy and pay taxes	61%	27%	8%	2%	*	2%
Be active members of the community (e.g. by volunteering)	24%	39%	28%	4%	1%	4%
Take up UK citizenship	21%	32%	32%	6%	4%	5%
Attend a course to find out about British customs and everyday life	33%	37%	19%	5%	2%	4%
Mix and build relationships with others in the community where they live.	37%	45%	13%	1%	1%	3%

21. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Councils should take firm action against landlords who accommodate migrants in overcrowded and/or squalid conditions	57%	26%	10%	2%	1%	3%
If businesses employ lots of migrant workers they should be required to take more responsibility for integration, such as making sure there are English language classes and enough housing	34%	40%	16%	4%	2%	5%
The Government should provide English lessons for those that need them	31%	34%	17%	8%	6%	3%
Schools should make sure that pupils get the opportunity to meet children from different backgrounds	29%	37%	23%	5%	2%	4%

22. Please say which statement in each of these pairs you most agree with, even if you don't agree with either entirely:

Statement A: 'Having a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures is part of British culture'	60%
Statement B: 'Having a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures has undermined British culture'	40%

Statement A: 'How well I do in life is first and foremost down to me'	76%
Statement B: 'How well I do in life is primarily decided by forces outside of my control'	24%

Statement A: 'I am pessimistic about the future'	46%
Statement B: 'I am optimistic about the future'	54%

Statement A: 'My local community is peaceful and friendly'	81%
Statement B: 'There is tension between different groups of people in my community'	19%

Open survey – questions, responses and analysis

The open survey was hosted online (at www.nationalconversation.org.uk) between February 2017 and July 2018. There were 9,327 responses in total, although not everyone answered all the questions. A summary of the questions asked, responses given and analysis of responses to the open questions, is given below.

MIGRATION IN THE UK

1. On a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK? (1 is "very negative", 10 is "very positive").

Open survey responses

N=9,231

Score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
%	31%	9%	8%	3%	3%	1%	4%	10%	9%	23%
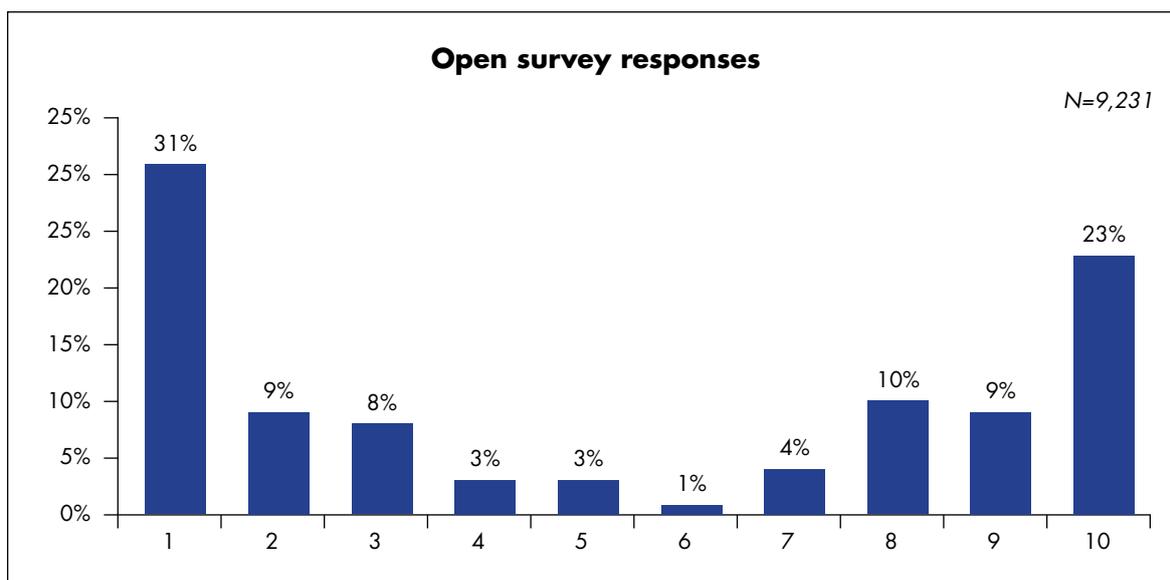
2. In a couple of sentences, could you explain why you gave this score? [open question – see analysis below].

3. What do you think the impacts of immigration have been on the UK and local communities? For each of the following statements, please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No response
Migrant workers fill job vacancies which cannot be filled by local people	17%	24%	11%	21%	25%	2%
Immigration enriches our culture and make the UK a more interesting place to live	35%	12%	6%	13%	33%	1%
Migrants brings new and useful skills to the UK	26%	20%	11%	17%	25%	1%
The arrival of low-skilled migrant workers creates competition for British citizens in the same jobs	29%	23%	18%	17%	12%	1%
Migration puts pressure on public services and housing	50%	12%	10%	17%	10%	1%
Too often, migrants don't integrate and follow British customs	46%	10%	14%	20%	9%	1%

4. For each of the following groups, please tell us whether you would prefer the number of people coming to live in the UK to be increased, reduced, or remain about the same.

(High skilled workers may be employed in positions such as doctors, teachers or engineers. Low skilled workers may be employed in jobs like factory work, fruit picking or cleaning).

	Increased	Remain about the same	Reduced
High skilled workers from the EU	35%	46%	19%
Low-skilled workers from the EU	11%	37%	52%
Seasonal workers employed in farms, food factories and hotels	16%	50%	34%
High-skilled workers from outside the EU	33%	41%	26%
Non-British immediate family members (e.g. spouses, children under 18)	22%	30%	24%
Overseas students coming to UK universities	31%	55%	24%

5. The Government is committed to reducing net migration to the tens of thousands. Net migration is the number of all immigrants entering the UK in a given time period (migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees, family members, foreign students), minus the numbers of emigrants leaving in the same period, this includes British citizens leaving and returning to the UK.

Please indicate which statement you agree with. [One option only].

The Government's priority should be to reduce the numbers of all types of migrants coming to the UK.	30%
The Government should have different targets and approaches for dealing with different kinds of immigration i.e. different for higher skilled and lower-skilled migrant workers, foreign students etc.	36%
Reducing migrant numbers should not be a priority of the Government	32%

MIGRATION, BUSINESS AND PUBLIC SERVICES

6. The UK relies on immigrant labour to support a range of different sectors, including public services. What do you think the government should do to support their needs?

For each of the following statements, please indicate if you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Businesses should be able to recruit the highly skilled workers they need	37%	36%	11%	8%	7%
NHS Trusts should be able to recruit health professionals from abroad to meet the needs for their services	27%	26%	11%	14%	11%
Even if employers can't find UK workers, they should not be able to take on migrant workers	12%	14%	14%	22%	37%
Businesses that employ migrants should be obliged to pay into a training fund that is used to develop skills in UK workers	30%	24%	20%	15%	9%
Short term and seasonal migration can fill gaps in our economy	23%	37%	15%	13%	11%
The care sector needs migrant labour to support our ageing population	26%	18%	13%	20%	22%
Restrictions on student migration will financially damage British universities	29%	21%	16%	17%	14%
The Government should put an annual cap on the number of highly-skilled migrants who want to fill job vacancies in the UK	18%	21%	15%	24%	21%
Without migrant labour, our agricultural sector would not survive	20%	19%	13%	21%	25%
Asylum-seekers should be allowed to work if they have been in the UK for six months and their case has not been decided by the Home Office	22%	26%	9%	11%	31%
Wage regulations should be enforced better, so migrant workers do not undercut British workers	53%	30%	10%	3%	3%

EU MIGRATION

7. The Government intends to change the free movement rules that govern immigration from the EU. These changes will form part of the Brexit negotiations where the UK will make a deal with the EU. A number of policy options are being considered, which are summarised below.

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following policies.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The Government should keep free movement rules for EU migrants in the UK and EU migrants living abroad after the UK leaves the EU	35%	11%	5%	11%	37%
The Government should allow visa-free movement between the UK and the EU for short term migration and vacations	39%	22%	7%	10%	21%
The Government should set an annual cap covering EU migrants in low-skilled jobs, but not for EU nationals in highly-skilled work	13%	21%	19%	24%	20%
The Government should apply the same restrictions on immigration for EU migrants and those coming from outside the EU	29%	22%	15%	17%	15%

MIGRATION FROM OUTSIDE THE EU

8. In recent years about half of immigration has come from outside the EU, with migrants arriving through work visa routes, as students, to join their family or as asylum-seekers and refugees. Please indicate if you agree or disagree with these policies.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The devolved governments in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales should have the powers to decide how many visas are issued for people who want to work in these parts of the UK.	23%	26%	13%	13%	24%
Non-British students who have gained post-graduate degrees (Master's degrees, PhDs etc) in the United Kingdom should be allowed to work in the UK for two years after their studies have finished	27%	35%	13%	10%	13%
UK citizens should be allowed to bring immediate family (spouse/partner, children under 18) to the UK irrespective of their income, as long as they can support them and provide housing.	32%	29%	9%	10%	19%
The UK should be prepared to take in more refugees directly from camps in war zones.	29%	14%	4%	7%	43%
The Government should increase the Home Office budget for border control, through taxation, for more effective systems to deal with undocumented migrants	38%	27%	17%	9%	6%

9. How long should migrants, excluding asylum seekers and refugees, have to work in the UK in order to be eligible to access benefits and social housing? [one option only]

12 months or less	15%
1-3 years	20%
3-5 years	14%
6-10 years	9%
Only UK citizens should be able to access benefits and social housing.	40%

LOCAL COMMUNITIES

10. What do you think migrants should do in order to integrate and become successful members of our society? Please indicate if you agree or disagree whether these are important.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Speak fluent English	47%	34%	11%	4%	1%
Observe British values (democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance)	62%	28%	6%	<1%	1%
Contribute to the economy and pay taxes	60%	30%	6%	<1%	<1%
Be active members of the community e.g. by volunteering	23%	23%	41%	8%	3%
Take up UK citizenship	24%	17%	34%	13%	10%
Attend an orientation course to find out about British customs and everyday life	36%	27%	23%	8%	5%

11. What should the Government do to help migrants integrate? Please indicate if you agree or disagree that these are important.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Give councils and the NHS more money to deal with the local impacts of migration.	27%	29%	14%	11%	17%
Take firm action against rogue landlords	60%	24%	9%	2%	4%
Ensure that migrant workers are not exploited by bad employers	50%	27%	12%	3%	6%
Provide English lessons for those that need them	38%	34%	10%	10%	16%
Offer careers advice and training for migrants who are unemployed or trapped in jobs for which they are over-qualified	23%	30%	16%	11%	17%
Make councils responsible for encouraging integration	18%	26%	25%	13%	15%
Make sure that school children get the opportunity to meet peers from different backgrounds	32%	24%	16%	9%	17%

12. What role should local people take to help integration and good community relations? Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Local communities need to take a firm line against hate crime and prejudice	44%	15%	14%	8%	17%
Local communities should reflect Britain as a tolerant and welcoming society	40%	18%	16%	9%	15%
Parents should encourage their children to learn about other cultures	39%	18%	15%	10%	16%
It takes effort from both UK citizens and new migrants to build integrated communities	37%	25%	10%	9%	16%

13. What single thing would improve integration and community relations in your local area? [Open – see analysis below].

14. Do you feel that supporting newcomers to become successful members of local communities is a government responsibility?

Yes (35%), No (43%), Not Sure (20%).

YOUR CHANCE TO INFLUENCE POLICY

15. What policy changes would the Government have to make, to gain your trust and support in its approach to migration. Please give your ideas in a couple of sentences. [Open – see analysis below].

16. Is there anything else you'd like to add or suggest? [Open – see analysis below]

KEY THEMES

We designed the survey in such a way that would allow respondents to freely express their views. An analysis of the open questions offers an insight into the issues that concern those with the strongest views on immigration, who are motivated to complete a survey online. Many of those who completed the open survey has some very detailed ideas about the policy changes they want made, more so than the citizens' panels.

As with the citizens panels we asked those who responded to the open survey "*On a scale of 1–10, do you feel that immigration had a positive or negative impact on the UK? (1 is "very negative", 10 is "very positive"*). Those who shared the most positive views on immigration, with an impact score of 10, tended to focus on the benefits of cultural diversity brought by immigration, with many referring to different foods and cuisines. Others stressed the economic contribution of migrants, or the skills that migrants bring, with an emphasis on migrants' contribution to the NHS. Others called for greater refugee protection, including some campaigners with specific policy asks.

Those who scored 8 or 9 voiced similar sentiments, though to a lesser extent. Responses also contained many economic arguments for migration and many made the case for better refugee protection. However, these responses also voiced some concerns about the impact of immigration on public services and contained demands for greater action to be taken against rogue landlords and employers. There were also some concerns about control, mentioning undocumented migration and criminal vetting, as well as integration, concerns which were more widely voiced among those scoring 7, who balanced the positive impacts with challenges of immigration.

"This country would be a worse place without immigrants, it is culturally more diverse and a far more interesting and vibrant place thanks to immigration. But uncontrolled immigration comes with so many problems, both for migrants and UK citizens, that I think it is now failing this country."

Survey respondent, impact score 7

Responses with an impact score of five or six reflected balanced views on immigration, with greatest concern attributed to the pace of EU migration and to a perceived lack of control, including security checks or vetting, entailed by free movement. However, many of these responses also contained stereotypes about Muslims, particularly that they did not integrate into wider society. This prejudice carried through the lower scores, becoming increasingly amplified. While there was often an acknowledgement, particularly among those scoring 3 or 4, that migrants contribute to Britain's economy and society, these responses were largely negative. These respondents were also most concerned about the impact of EU migration on the NHS, public services and local infrastructure.

"Whilst it is positive to have immigration, and strengthen our knowledge and skills base in the UK, we do not do enough to support our own citizens to improve their circumstances. As a country we do little to support integration and even to support those who settle in the UK either."

Survey respondent, impact score 4

The largest segment of our online respondents who scored 1 on our impact scale had the strongest opinions about immigration and integration. This group divided into two: rejectionists who wanted to stop all immigration and who often expressed strong anti-Muslim prejudices; and those who had tough views on immigration but nevertheless observed norms of decency in online commentary. There were strong concerns about control, and an emphasis on race as a determining factor, with some violent and aggressively prejudice comments. This was overlaid with distrust of politicians and the Government. Some contained very specific requests, but many demanded an end to all immigration, a view that was only shared by two people in the citizens' panels.

Those who filled in the open survey were a diverse group, particularly in relation to their political views. Many of the questions divided the respondents, often across EU referendum lines. Nevertheless, there were some issues where there was a consensus. A large majority of respondents believed that businesses should be able to recruit the highly-skilled workers that they need. The majority believed that migrants needed to observe the shared British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance, in order to integrate and become successful members of society. Respondents largely wanted firm action against rogue landlords and exploitative employers. There was majority support, too, for providing English classes for those that need them.

Additional panels

In addition to the main project we created a number of toolkits to encourage civil society, business groups and workplaces, colleges and universities, and interested members of the public to hold their own conversations about immigration. Some of those who undertook such 'local conversations' submitted their findings to us. We also held an open 'citizens panel' in Bristol as part of the Festival of Ideas and involved over 6,000 young people across the country through Votes for Schools.

MIGRANT VOICES

Detention Action and the children's charity Coram Children's Legal Centre both held a number of conversations, which broadened our reach to migrants. Detention Action ran two of its own citizens' panels with people who had experienced immigration enforcement in Glasgow (together with Scottish Detainee Visitors) and in Coventry (with the Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre). Coram held two citizens' panels with young migrants and refugees in London and Coventry through their Young Citizens' network.

Many of the themes in the Detention Action and Coram discussions were common to the main citizens' panels that we held around the UK. Contribution, control and fairness were all key themes, and participants drew on their own experiences to inform their views. While the Detention Action and Coram groups all saw the need for a controlled immigration system, their own experiences of immigration enforcement were overwhelmingly negative. In many cases, they felt that long delays had damaging effects on their own mental health and wellbeing, in a system they felt was *"cruel"*, *"slow"* and *"unfair"*.

In Coventry, London and Glasgow, participants shared concerns we had heard from stakeholders across the country, about inconsistent application of immigration rules, long waits for asylum decisions and a culture of disbelief among Home Office officials.

Participants who had been asylum-seekers spoke about the detrimental impact being unable to work had on their wellbeing, as they wanted to contribute and support themselves, but felt helpless and sometimes stigmatised by their reliance on the state. Those who had sought asylum felt grateful for sanctuary in the UK but their treatment made rebuilding their lives more difficult:

> *"I'm destitute, but I'm able to work. This system forces you to become what you don't want to be. I come here to work and all my siblings have status, but I'm the only one without it. What am I supposed to do?"*

In all the groups many people had direct experiences of discrimination and prejudice. Many felt that British media was biased, and a number of people recounted experiences where they had been targeted in public with verbal and even physical abuse. They felt much of this stemmed from misinformation and fear.

> *"I went to an interview and was told straightaway that this job wasn't suitable for me because I wore a hijab. We've had a lot of bad experiences, but still keep trying to improve ourselves."*

The groups felt it was possible to discuss people's fears about immigration in a way that is open but not discriminatory or prejudiced. Moreover, they felt it was important to have these conversations in order to address public anxieties and misconceptions.

> *"People who come to this country are not looking for benefits. Perhaps they need some small support initially, because we come with nothing, but we want to be independent and not to rely on benefits."*

As with all our conversations across the country, integration was a key theme in Coventry, Glasgow and London. Participants felt it was important that migrants and refugees could settle into their local communities and contribute, socially and economically. They saw integration as a two-way process of acceptance, understanding and tolerance. Similar to the citizens' panels across the country, participants in these panels felt that a good command of the English language was an essential element for integration. However, they did not feel there was enough support available to facilitate this.

"English is like the master key for integration."

VOTES FOR SCHOOLS

The project *Votes for Schools* took the National Conversation to over 200 schools across the UK, who debated immigration after Brexit in the week that Article 50 was triggered. The *Votes for Schools* project aims to engage children with democracy, invite them to challenge ideas and feel that their voice is valuable.

Using support material provided by Votes for Schools, students discussed future immigration policy and grappled with the trade-offs involved. They then cast their votes on the question: *Should British and European people be able to live and work in each other's countries?*

From 6,000 votes, 82% voted in favour of continuing migration for work between Britain and EU countries. Pupils felt the question was a complex one and balanced positives and challenges of immigration in the same way as the main National Conversation on Immigration citizens' panels.

"It's difficult. If I was a businessman I'd want to employ the best people and wouldn't care where they're from. But if I'm trying to get a job and don't get one because they employed someone from Spain instead, I'd be annoyed. If we stop employing EU citizens does that mean loads of footballers will have to go home?"

"I think you should be able to work in other countries, as long as you can speak their language."

"When I grow up, I want to have adventures in other countries."

THE FESTIVAL OF IDEAS

As part of the Festival of Ideas: Future Cities programme, the National Conversation on Immigration team spent two days in Bristol holding two open meetings. Although not typical of Bristol's residents, the events provided some important insights about integration in a city with many divides.

In both meetings there was a consensus that migration had bought prosperity, skills and cultural richness to Bristol. Participants felt that migration was a normal part of everyday life and that Bristol was a welcoming city. But a rapidly growing population was associated with challenges. We were told that more than a migration issue, *"integration is more about socio-economic disadvantage in this city"*, and that Bristol faced challenges in balancing the impacts of population change. In areas which had seen rapid population growth, resources and access to opportunities became more limited, particularly impacting poorer members of society who became increasingly marginalised. The panel in Bristol felt that that migration had different impacts on different neighbourhoods and that some areas faced decline.

We were told that there was a strong sense of local identity, which was particularly strong in some of the outer city estates of South Bristol. Some panel members felt that this was a result of little change over time in these "*close-knit communities*". Others felt that this was where hostility towards others emerged, and that meaningful contact others was central to making sure that people of different backgrounds get along well.

TRADE UNION VOICES

The Wolverhampton, Bilston and District Trades Union Council was another group that held its own conversation and provided us with a written report. They felt that the impact of immigration on the NHS had been hugely positive but were concerned about the tone of the media debate, which they felt encouraged prejudice. They also opposed an immigration system that privileged EU nationals over those from the rest of world.

This trade union group also felt that integration was important but were concerned that local authority budget cuts meant many community centres, where people could mix, had closed. They also felt that immigration had helped to fill unwanted homes and empty school places.

Notes and references

1   In most cases we have used EU national to refer to nationals of the European Economic Area (the EU, plus Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway, plus Swiss nationals), all of whom have free movement rights to each other's countries.
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40 Directive 2004/38/EC and the UK's Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2006 gave Swiss and EEA nationals the right to live in the UK and be termed a '*qualified person*' if they are if they are in employment, students, self-sufficient person or job-seekers although they lose the right to remain as a job-seeker after 91 days. Immediate family members of these four groups can also live in the UK as qualified persons.
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Acknowledgements

About British Future and HOPE not hate

The National Conversation on Immigration is a project run jointly by British Future and HOPE not hate.

BRITISH FUTURE

British Future is an independent, non-partisan think tank seeking to involve people in an open conversation which addresses people's hopes and fears about identity and integration, migration and opportunity, so that we feel confident about Britain's Future.

We want to ensure that we engage those who are anxious about cultural identity and economic opportunity in Britain today, as well as those who already feel confident about our society, so that we can together identify workable solutions to make Britain the country we want to live in.

HOPE NOT HATE

HOPE not hate uses research, education and public engagement to challenge mistrust and racism, and helps to build communities that are inclusive, celebrate shared identities and are resilient to hate.

Hate is often the consequence of a loss of hope and an articulation of despair, but given an alternative, especially one that understands and addresses their anger, most people will choose HOPE over hate.

Our job is to expose and undermine groups that preach hate, intolerance and division whilst uniting communities around what they have in common.

We aim to take part in building a society that celebrates rather than scapegoats our differences.