



# **NATIONAL CONVERSATION**

## **Toolkit for businesses:**

### **Host your own conversation**

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## Introduction

Over the last 15 years immigration has grown significantly as an issue of public concern in the UK – the leave vote in the referendum was a manifestation of these concerns. Brexit will require many changes to immigration policy, but there has been little debate about the nature of policy reforms. Advocates for policy change now have a window of opportunity to set out constructive alternatives to current immigration policy. But the salience of immigration as an issue of public concern means that reforms cannot be won without engaging people in the debate about these changes and securing public support for them.

The National Conversation aims to find out what the public think about, how we make immigration work for employers, workers and local communities. HOPE not hate and British Future are working alongside the Home Affairs Committee, to extend the public engagement in their year-long inquiry on the future direction of immigration policy. We want to find out whether there is common ground in the debate for immigrant policies on which we can agree.

The opinions of business and public service employers are critical in these conversations, as they risk being affected by changes to immigration policy – whether it is what happens after free movement or policy affecting non-EU work and student migration. We have been given a platform take your thoughts and suggestions to key decision makers to shape the UK's future immigration policy. That's why we're asking you to host your own conversation on immigration.

We have developed this toolkit to help you have an open conversation that leads to constructive conclusions and return this information to us. We want to tap into your ideas on immigration and feed them back to decision makers.

You can hold a conversation within your company, with staff, managers, other businesses and partners, wherever you feel you can build a constructive conversation. This pack contains everything you need to host a national conversation and to make sure politicians and the media are listening.

We have also developed a pack for members of the public, civil society groups and young people which you can access [here](#).

This is your chance to influence policy on one of the most important subjects in the UK. Make sure you get heard.

### This pack includes

- Instructions for hosting a conversation
- A discussion guide for your conversation
- Getting your conversation heard; how to feedback your conversation into the National investigation
- Spreading your message; how to talk to others, politicians and the media about immigration

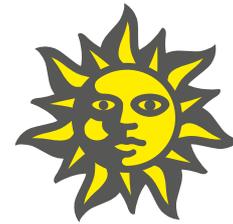
## About the National Conversation on Immigration

HOPE not hate have been working to challenge divisions in communities for over ten years. They know how divisive immigration as a subject has been and how the current debate has made room for hate, and believe it is time to reclaim the debate. British Future knows that people have concerns about immigration – they've spent the last five years asking the public about it. There are certain to be changes to immigration policy after Brexit – their interest is finding out in detail what people think they should be, and feeding that back to decision-makers.

Together British Future and HOPE not hate are working to widen public engagement on the National Conversation on Immigration. We are running a national online survey, are polling across the social spectrum, and are visiting sixty towns and cities across all 12 regions and nations of the UK to talk to a representative group of local people and gather a broad range of opinions. In every town or city that we visit, we will also be holding meetings with local stakeholders such as business and community organisations. Your conversations will sit alongside this evidence.

Our questions have been screened by panels of experts on all sides of the political spectrum, and have been tested on citizen's panels.

The findings from your conversation will be presented to the Home Affairs Committee's inquiry on immigration, which will be presented to the Government in 2018. This is the biggest effort to listen to the public's views on immigration ever undertaken, and this pack offers you the chance to get involved.



**HOPE**  
not hate

**British**  
**Future...**



## Hosting your conversation

A lot of us hold strong views on migration, and talking about immigration can often be a polarising and emotive topic. But in order to make our conversations constructive, we need to make sure that the tone remains positive and neutral so that everyone gets heard fairly, and we can identify space for common ground and draw out ideas for solutions that work for all of us.

Your conversation needs to be framed in the right way in order to facilitate an open, objective and constructive discussion.

### 1. Invitations

The ideal size for a conversation is around 5 to 10 people.

It is up to you who you choose to invite to your own conversation. These could be people from your across different sections of your organisation, people who share the same ideas as you, or people with different attitudes towards immigration.

### 2. Facilitation

A constructive conversation on immigration needs to be managed so everyone can be heard.

The first job in hosting your conversation is deciding who should facilitate the discussion. Facilitators act as chairs and are responsible for ensuring that the conversation remains non-partisan and that everyone gets time and space to present their views. Some questions will raise more debate than others and it is up to the facilitator to focus on certain aspects or move the conversation on.

The facilitator should not offer their opinion but should open up the conversation. They can offer a series of prompts outlined in the discussion guides which should be used to steer the conversation so that it is not dominated by any one side or individual.

### 3. Keeping your conversation objective

It is the facilitator's role to make sure that the conversation is not dominated by one or two individuals but an open environment is created where people feel free to share their opinions.

It is important that the facilitator ensures the debate doesn't become too one-sided. It is important to acknowledge everyone's opinion as valid and encourage others to do the same, to prevent conflict as much as possible.

### 4. Recording the conversation

To make sure your conversation can be heard, you will need to find a way of recording what has been said. This may be through taking notes during the session, or through taking pictures or video recordings which can be used on social media.

### 5. Summarising and establishing next steps

As you come to the end of your conversation, it may be useful to recap over ideas and themes which have emerged from the discussion.

We have included a framework for recording your findings at the end of this toolkit so that we can include this information in our investigation for the Home Affairs Committee. This will be useful in approaching politicians and the media with your thoughts.

You might want to invite participants to join the next steps moving forward, as your thoughts can be directly shared with politicians and local media.

## The Discussion

This discussion guide offers a template for hosting your own conversation, lasting just over an hour. This is not a straight Q and A, but is designed to lead your conversation and start debate.

It is up to you how much you choose to follow it. You may all share concerns about one particular issue and wish to centre your conversation around this, or spend more time discussing local issues. You may wish to cover a broad range of questions, or you may pick one or two that you want to unpack.

Your conversation is not about shaping others' opinions within the group but about listening to everyone's opinion to find areas of agreement and constructive suggestions. You should also take a note of areas where people disagree. Questions in section 6 might be most useful for driving constructive outcomes. And there is room to record these in your pack.

### 10 minutes 1. Introduction & warm up

- Brief introductions
- Do you currently employ/ work alongside migrants? In what type of roles and positions? Where do your workers come from – EU or outside the EU?
- What have been the positive and negative impacts that migration has had on your business? How have managed negative impacts?

### 15 minutes 2. Recruitment

- Has your ability to recruit workers changed over the last five years? Ten years?
- How have you tried to fill vacancies?
- Have immigration rules affected your approach to recruitment?
- Do you have programmes in place to train local workers?
- What should employers do if they want local communities to support their recruitment of migrant workers?

### 15 minutes 3. EU Migration

It is likely that there will be major changes to the rules governing freedom of movement for EU nationals after Brexit. There are a number of options that the Government might pursue which include quotas or emergency brakes, regional visas or using non-EU systems for EU migrations, for example, an expanded Tier 2 system.

- What approach would you like to see the Government take towards EU migration after Brexit?
- And EU workers who are here – how should the Government treat them?

### 10 minutes 4. Migration from outside the EU

- Have concerns or problems with non-EU work, student, family or refugee migration been raised locally?
- Are there any changes you would want to see around non-EU work or student migration?



## The Discussion (continued)

### 15 minutes 5. Integration and Community Relations

- In your work-place and local community, do migrant workers and local citizens generally get on well together?
- What steps should be taken to manage the impact of migration in communities? Should employers have some responsibilities for dealing with pressures on housing caused by immigration?
- Should businesses and play a role in encouraging integration and good community relations? Would your business be willing to take a bigger role in promoting good community relations?

### 5 minutes 6. Conclude

- Do you feel that the Government can put in place an immigration policy that meets the needs of your business, while having the trust and support of the public? What would need to change to get there?
- Is there anything else we haven't covered? Are there issues we haven't addressed?
- Wrap up on points of agreement from the conversation.
- As a group, decide on the one or two things you found that you generally agreed on, and some things that as a group, you would want to suggest to the government for its review of immigration policy after we leave the European union

## Getting your conversation heard

For your conversation to feed into the Home Affairs Select Committee’s investigation on immigration, we need you to summarise it using this framework.

This is just a template. A version of this form is online at [www.nationalconversation.uk](http://www.nationalconversation.uk) where you can submit your responses

We are most interested to hear about the points you agreed on, as well as any constructive suggestions you want to make to the government.

Date:	Location of conversation:
Who we are:	
<b>General views on immigration</b> Please summarise a few points you agreed on, both positive and negative:	
<b>Some concerns we shared:</b> Any concerns you may have about the impact of immigration and the effects of immigration controls	
<b>Some points of agreement on local impacts and integration:</b> What did the group share about the local effects of immigration?	
<b>Some points of agreement on refugees:</b> What did the group share about refugees in your local area?	
<b>Some points of agreement about EU migrants:</b> What did the group share about EU migrants in your local area?	
<b>If there were one or two things your group would want to suggest to the government, what would it be?</b>	

## Sharing your conversation

Once you've had your conversation, it's important that what you say gets heard. We need to show that there is room for consensus when it comes to immigration.

If you summarise your conversation using the framework in this pack, make sure you submit this to us online at **[www.nationalconversation.uk](http://www.nationalconversation.uk)** so that we can pass your thoughts and suggestions on to the home affairs committee in their investigation.

But there are a number of other ways to get yourself heard, by reaching out to other members of the public, politicians and the press.

### Social Media

Social media is one of the easiest, quickest and most popular ways to get yourself heard. It is not a magic solution for getting yourself across, but if used effectively, it can be a powerful tool in getting your conversation heard.

- Make sure your posts stay positive, constructive and sensitive. Immigration is an emotive subject and people will hold views different to your own.
- You may wish to use social media to directly communicate with specific people, for example, by tweeting directly at your MP or local media
- Take pictures and videos of your conversation to attract attention. You might wish to add quotes- but make sure you get permission from participants before using these
- Use the Hashtag #conversationonimmigration to connect your conversation with others around the country

### Tell your MP what you think

Members of Parliament are your elected representatives in parliament. They have a duty to reflect your views and concerns, as failing to act on these can have political or economic consequences. Contacting your MP is a great way to raise an issue with them so that they can carry your views to a decision making level.

You could summarise your conversation and present it to your local MP. Remember, you will get a better response if you are careful to use non-emotive language and show your report has come from a broad coalition of groups. You should also provide your full address as MPs act on behalf of their constituents.

You can get in touch with your MP in a number of ways- by sending letters, signing petitions, sending emails, making phone calls to their office and or arranging a face-to-face meetings.

All MPs can be contacted at: House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA and emails can be sent via TheyWorkForYou at [www.theyworkforyou.com](http://www.theyworkforyou.com).

If you don't know who your local MP is, you can find out here: [www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/](http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/) .

### Get heard in your local media

You might want to share your group's conversation with local media to get a greater audience for your thoughts. The best way to do this is to contact them directly, and you might want to do this with a press release. But there are a few things you need to bear in mind:

- Get in touch at the right time. Contacting media too early means they forget about it. And too late means they will have already moved on.
- Create a story- how did your group get together? Who were its members? Why did you decide this was important? How did you come to common conclusions together?
- Offering the local angle or case in your conversation will be more appealing to local media
- Have pictures and quotes from your conversation ready
- Be creative- how can you make an interesting story? How will what you're saying make people think?