



NATIONAL CONVERSATION

Civil Society Toolkit:

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 are common ground immigrant policies on which we can agree.

The opinions of civil society will be critical in these debates as they provide crucial links between government and the communities they represent- but are sometimes left out of policy making processes. 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 organisation, with beneficiaries, volunteers, or other stakeholders, 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 businesses, young people and members of the public 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

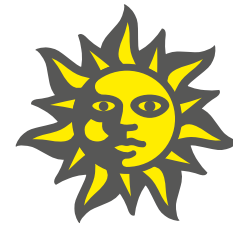
About the National Conversation on Immigration

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 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.

- Brief introductions

10 minutes 1. Attitudes to immigration in your local area

- Most of you are working in this area. I wanted to ask you about how you feel public opinion sits in this area? How do people view the benefits of migration in this area?
- Are there issues or events that have caused conflict or tensions?
- What Government interventions or policy changes would be useful to deal with these issues, and to build greater public support for immigration?
- How can the Government and other organisations better manage the local impact of migration?

15 minutes 2. EU Immigration

- Are there particular challenges in this area concerning EU migration?
- What approach would you like to see the Government take towards EU migration? How might you get more of the public onside?
- What would the Government need to do in its post-Brexit immigration plan to support your organisation's objectives?

15 minutes 3. Non-EU migration

- Have concerns or problems with non-EU work, student or family migration been raised locally?
- Are there any changes you would want to see around non-EU work, student or family migration? Is there support for these changes in the local area?

15 minutes 4. Refugees

- How are asylum and refugee issues seen locally? Is there support for taking more Syrian refugees?
- If you had the chance to change one thing about how the UK treats asylum-seekers and refugees, what would that be?
- How should we work to get political and public support for these changes?



The Discussion (continued)

15 minutes 5. Integration

- What are the big integration issues in your area? (if any)
- How do you think the Government (including the devolved parliaments), local authorities, colleges, employers, as well as migrants and longer settled residents should better work together to help new arrivals to become successful members of society? What changes do you want to see?
- How should we encourage the integration of migrants who might stay in an area for a short-time, for example, international students – either because they return home or move on?
- What can we learn from the integration of previous groups of arrivals – for example, those who arrived from south Asia in the 1950s and 1960s?
 - Are there initiatives or good practice to promote integration in your local areas that you think should be shared or replicated more widely across the UK?

10 minutes 6. What would you do?

- What policy changes would the Government have to make, to gain your trust and support in its approach to migration?
- Are there any further recommendations you would like to make to the Government?

5 minutes 7. Conclude

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

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** 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.

If you don't know who your local MP is, you can find out here: 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?