



**NATIONAL
CONVERSATION**

**NOTTINGHAM
REPORT
JUNE 2017**

CONTEXT

The National Conversation on Immigration visited Nottingham, a local authority of 325,000 people lying within the larger Nottingham urban area which spans three local authorities (Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire) and has a population of 667,000. The area's traditional industries included coal-mining, lace-making and other textiles, steel, cigarette and cycle manufacturing. Its 'big three' employers were Player's, Boots the Chemists and Raleigh. Bicycle manufacturing in Nottingham (and the UK) ended in 2002 when Raleigh moved production to the Far East and closed its factory.

While there has been recent job growth, unemployment in Nottingham (7.6%) is significantly above the regional and national average (4.8%)¹. At £448 per week the median gross weekly wages for Nottingham's residents are also below the regional and national average (£541) and 37% of the city's children are living in poverty², one of the highest rates of child poverty outside London. The relative deprivation of the city is evident from walking around, with the city centre seeing little recent development.

Like most big urban areas, Nottingham has a long history of immigration. In the 1950s and early 1960s, Nottingham was a good place to find work, and there was significant migration from the Caribbean to the city. Over 250,000 Polish nationals, many of them ex-servicemen arrived in the UK during and after the Second World War many of them settled in Nottingham. More recently, in the 1990s, refugees have arrived in the city. Today it is estimated that about 6,000 refugees live in Nottingham 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 two universities in Nottingham and between them they are educating nearly 11,000 international students each year. Although unemployment is higher than the national average, Nottingham has also seen the arrival of significant numbers of EU migrants who have come to work. Estimates from the Census and Annual Population Survey suggest that nearly 8% of Nottingham's population has been born outside the UK in a city where 25% of residents has been born abroad.

WHAT WE DID

A stakeholder meeting was held with nine representatives from civil society organisations and one of the city's universities. They were asked questions about attitudes to migration in the local area, and the future policy approaches they wanted to see in relation to EU migration and non-EU migration. Questions also probed the changes that would be needed to achieve a consensus on immigration. The stakeholder group was also asked about the impact of migration in the local area and about integration issues that had arisen.

Later, a citizens' panel was held with six members of the public recruited to represent a range of views on immigration, with the very sceptical and very pro-migration filtered out through a pre-interview screening question. This citizens' panel was different from most of the previous panels as we specifically recruited young people aged between 16 and 25 years. We did this as we wanted to examine in greater detail young people's views about immigration and integration. All previous citizens' panels have included participants with a mix of ages, the under 25s have only been present in ones and twos in these discussions. In order to give a stronger voice to young people, we decided to hold two panels that specifically recruited participants between 16 and 25, the Nottingham meeting being the first of these discussions.

All panel members came from Nottingham. Half of the group had attended university, although all of them had lived at home or studied at a local university. All, but one of the panel was now working in semi-skilled or routine jobs and further demographic information about the panel is given at the end of this report. Basing our conversation on a discussion guide, the panel was asked questions about their views on the impact of immigration on the UK and their local area, EU and non-EU migration flows and on their opinions about integration. The citizens' panel also looked at securing a consensus, with participants asked about what needs to change in order to gain their trust and broad support for how the Government handles immigration and integration.

KEY FINDINGS

Attitudes to immigration

The citizens' panel were asked 'on a scale of 1-10 do you feel that immigration has had a positive or negative impact on the UK, nationally and in your local community'. The average score for the panel was 6.5, with a range from 5 to 8, a score that is higher than most panels, although not the highest average score to date.

The discussion that followed showed that this panel 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.

"If you think about it economically, they kind of, it gives us access to a worldwide market. It gives us access to skills, and cultures, culture aspect as well, food, society, culture. It encourages society to grow" (Citizens' panel participant).

This is not to say that this group had no concerns about immigration. Migration was explicitly linked with terrorism at times in the discussion. Panel members felt strongly that migrants must be making a contribution to British society. Participants also wanted increased criminal vetting of would-be migrants and were concerned about the lack of control of EU migration.

We asked this panel if young people had different attitudes to migration than older generations, including their family members. Unanimously, participants felt that this was the case. The panel felt that they had grown up with friends and acquaintances from different ethnic groups, whereas their parents' generation had not. This exposure meant that migrants and migration was seen as a normal part of everyday life in Nottingham, rather than something that was unusual or threatening. The panel also felt that there was now much less tolerance of prejudiced attitudes to migrants or minority ethnic groups; this was another difference between younger people and older generations. One participant said that there was a "cultural age gap" between themselves and the older generation in respect to how they viewed immigration and ethnic diversity.

"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).

The panel then discussed the extent to which it was easy to discuss immigration with their family and friends, and the

differences between an open and non-prejudiced discussion and one that was not. Most of the panel talked about immigration and integration with family and friends, mostly when these issues were in the news. The London and Manchester terrorist attacks and the EU referendum were news events that resulted in family discussions about migration, not all of which were amicable. Panel members talked about heated political arguments within their families about immigration and related issues, particularly during the EU referendum campaign.

Participants had clear ideas about what made a decent and non-prejudiced debate. They felt that how discussions were conducted was important and that participants should listen to each other's opinions and have a discussion that was informed by facts. The panel felt that different national or ethnic groups should not be stereotyped. One participant felt that any discussions that called for the repatriation of migrants crossed the boundary between decency and racism.

“Don't clump all people together as one group. Don't assume people from the same country are all the same” (Citizens' panel participant).

EU migration

The panel was asked about the changes they would like to see the Government make after the UK leaves the EU. Some panel members wanted criminal record checks made on future EU migrants. (Concerns about a lack of vetting were raised a number of times in the discussion).

There was a consensus that in future EU migrants who come to the UK must be able to support themselves and ideally should be coming to work. The view that migrants should contribute to society was felt to be important to this panel, but there was a discussion about the difficulty of deciding who contributes. The panel then voted on the options for dealing with EU migration after Brexit, with two people wanting to keep reciprocal free movement as it is, and the remainder of the group wanting to treat all migrants the same, whatever their national origins. Those who wanted the latter option justified saw their choice as being 'fair', and felt that giving preference to some national groups over others was not fair treatment.

Non-EU Migration

The panel felt that migration from outside the EU was generally better controlled than from within the EU. There was a consensus that international students brought benefits to the UK. Participants had some original views about family migration, saying that increasing the numbers allowed into the UK would reduce the money leaving the UK through remittance payments.

Asylum seekers and refugees

The panel was asked if there was anything that would like to see changed in relation to asylum-seekers and refugees. Participants largely felt that the UK should take as many refugees as it could, and were much more supportive of refugee protection than most panels. But they felt that more effort should be made to help refugees integrate. One panel member suggested that Syrian refugees should be admitted to the UK to fill job vacancies.

“I think if they aren’t too great with English we should help them because it will help them integrate in society better, work better and be more involved” (Citizens’ panel participant).

There was then a discussion about how refugees were portrayed in the media and viewed by wider society. There was a consensus that much media coverage of refugees was negative. As a group, refugees were associated with social ills such as terrorism. The panel felt that politicians had a role in changing attitudes and promoting a society that was more welcoming to refugees and migrants. If a message of welcome was articulated by political leaders, society would be more likely to follow by example.

“We need to be as welcoming as possible and that the Government has to lead that. I think if politicians led we would follow” (Citizens’ panel participant).

Border control

Concerns about border control and security were raised at different points in the discussion, with the panel having many of the same views about security, crime and border control as the mixed age panels. Participants were then asked about their perceptions of the effectiveness of border controls, with the view that Australia and Canada had more secure borders.

Participants were then given a case study of H, an undocumented migrant from Nigeria who had remained in the UK after overstaying his visa. They were asked to decide how the British Government should approach his case. There was a consensus that H should be allowed to stay, although the panel wanted decisions about the future of undocumented migrants to be judged on a case-by-case basis. Participants took a pragmatic approach to the case of H, arguing that allowing him to stay would prevent public funds being spent on care for his mother.

“I think we should probably let him stay. He’s been here for a number of years and throughout those years he’s persistently worked and it shows a willingness to earn money. If he’s given a visa it will be a good contribution to society. And he has no family in Nigeria he has nothing there and it would be pretty pointless him going back to nothing. And his mum needs a carer so it would be pretty unfair if the person she was relying on was sent abroad” (Citizens’ panel participant).

Numbers

The group voted on whether they wanted different types of migration to be increased, reduced or remain about the same. The panel was broadly split between those who felt comfortable with the numbers of different groups to be increased and those who were happy for numbers to stay about the same. Just one participant voted to reduce the numbers of low-skilled workers from the EU and of asylum-seekers and refugees. There was a consensus in the panel that as long as there were enough jobs for British citizens, it was acceptable for levels of migration to remain the same or to be increased.

“As I said, I feel like the numbers at the moment are alright. I think if the jobs are there, the numbers can be increased. But of course if the jobs are not there it’s pointless, because if they aren’t able to work it’s not helpful for them and it’s not helpful for us” (Citizens’ panel participant).

Half of the panel had heard of the net migration target, but no-one knew what it comprised. There was then a discussion about whether targets or quotas were helpful in managing migration. The panel discussed whether it would be helpful to set a quota for fruit pickers, for example. Significantly, this panel opposed quotas for low-skilled jobs because they thought it would reinforce prejudices about certain types of low-skilled work as employment that was only acceptable for migrant workers to undertake.

“I think it’s difficult though because whilst we would like to fill jobs with British citizens, I think a lot of British citizens think there are jobs for immigrants, and of course that’s prejudice and stereotypes. But there are sections of society who see it as an immigrant job and are less inclined to apply themselves” (Citizens’ panel participant).

Impact of migration

Overall, this 16-24 panel had far fewer concerns about the negative impacts of migration on public services and housing. The likely reason for this is that this age group are not heavy users of public services.

While new migrants have tended to cluster in certain parts of Nottingham such as Hyson Green and Radford where there is much affordable private rental accommodation. Both Hyson Green and Radford also have large student populations. There were few concerns about change or neighbourhood decline in these areas, which were seen as lively multicultural areas that were strongly associated with student life.

Integration

This panel had a different perspective to integration, compared with many other panels. The group equated integration with

friendless and neighbourliness in specific areas. Nottingham was seen as friendly city where different sectors of society generally got on well with each other. Nottingham was compared favourable to other places such as London which were seen as less friendly.

“I think as a whole Nottingham is pretty good, we are quite a bit more friendly than other places. We’re all quite well mixed.... in London, most people are quite to themselves, they don’t say hello or excuse me or anything” (Citizens’ panel participant).

Some of the assertions about integration were challenged by other panel members in a lively discussion. While community relations were felt to be good in most parts of Nottingham, some panel members felt that new migrants tended to stay in certain parts of the city – Hyson Green and Radford were mentioned again. While migrants were felt to be well-integrated in these specific areas, they were sometimes not well-integrated into the overall life of the city.

“I think they feel they’re integrated in what they think is their Nottingham community but that isn’t really the whole Nottingham community” (Citizens’ panel participant).

There was a consensus that when it came to integration the host community had responsibilities, as well as new arrivals. The panel agreed that migrants needed to speak English so as to integrate, but may need help to do this, for example, from colleges to who need to organise classes. The conversation then moved on to talk about language and social segregation, in particular the extent to which it was normal and natural for migrants to socialise with peers from their own linguistic or ethnic group.

- *“They tend to speak in their own language. I personally find that a bit frustrating, they could be talking about you.”*
- *“I’ve lived in Spain myself, I could speak Spanish, but there was nothing more relieving than speaking to someone in your native tongue. You don’t feel you can truly relax, akin with yourself, until you can kind of talk with someone. It isn’t a presumption to assume they’re talking about you and they could be saying something nice about you, they could be saying ‘oh look at that nice gentleman.’ We make this negative connotation, that they are saying something bad, they probably aren’t”* (Exchange between two panel members)

The panel was asked about changes that would make Nottingham a more integrated society. While they felt that there were opportunities for social mixing between young people from different backgrounds at school, their education did not equip them to understand the growth of diverse societies. In particular, they felt that their religious education could have been much

better.

“You’re just taught about Christianity, then it is ‘let’s have half a class on Islam and Buddhism’. We never really got taught about the beliefs of religions, just that oh they pray there, not really the beliefs of the religion” (Citizens’ panel participant).

Do young people see immigration and integration differently?

We convened this panel to see whether young people speak differently about immigration and the conversation suggests that this group clearly did, a trend that is also supported in analysis of polling data³. The group saw that the benefits of immigration outweighed any disadvantage and in this respect their views differed from many of the mixed-age panel.

There was no discussion of pressures on public services, and no negative anecdotes were given on how immigration had adversely affected themselves or people they knew. This may in part have been reflective of their age and current lack of interaction with public services.

Participants themselves 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. Both immigration and the EU referendum had been an area of conflict and division within some of our panel participants’ families.

Although the group were distinct from previous panels in their attitude towards immigrants, the group shared concerns with other panels around security. All members of the group wanted increased checking and criminal vetting on those entering the country. As with all panels, they wanted politicians to be truthful, but this was particularly felt in relation to Brexit, and the mistruths they believe they were told.

“I feel there should be legal prosecution for politicians who lie about things and misinformation, because its fraud essentially. At the minute there is nothing they can do to make me trust them. There’s nothing to say they won’t go back in a month and say we never said this or that when obviously they did..... You never know if they’re bending the truth or if it’s an outright lie” (Citizens’ panel participant).

Regaining trust in the immigration system

Participants were asked about the changes they would like to see brought in to enable greater confidence in the immigration system. Although this group believed that migration had largely brought benefits to the UK, many of their demands were similar to the mixed-age panels. They felt that migrants who come to the

UK need to be making a contribution. They wanted:

- More checks on those who were coming to the UK
- Greater transparency and more truth from politicians, including admissions of failure.

CONCLUSIONS

This was a small group and we should be cautious of drawing conclusions, but consistent with other research is shows some differences in attitudes to migration among the under 25s, compared with mixed-age citizens' panels. In particular the panel felt that the benefits of migration outweigh any disadvantages and see both cultural and economic benefits. Despite these more positive attitudes, some of the concerns that this panel had were similar to mixed-age groups, as were the changes they wanted to see made to restore trust in the immigration system. This panel wanted greater vetting of migrants and systems in place to make sure they were making a contribution to society. Political mistrust and the desire for greater transparency was also a common demand across all ages.

Appendix

List of stakeholder organisations

Aramathea Trust

BEGIN

Mojatu

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum

Nottingham Trent University

Demographics of citizens' panels

Gender	Age	Occupation	Ethnicity
Female	23 years	Catering supervisor – C2	White British
Female	16 years	Plasterer – C2	White British
Female	19 years	Kitchen assistant - D	Mixed heritage
Male	19 years	Insurance administrator – C1	White British
Male	17 years	Local government administrator – C1	White British
Male	18 years	Student	White British

Case study used in voting packs

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 and 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.

How should the UK government treat H? Should he be given five years legal leave to remain if the Home Office cannot get the Nigerian Government to take him back

Endnotes

- 1 Annual Population Survey, 2016.
- 2 After housing costs, data in Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) (2016) Child Poverty Map of the UK, London: CPAG.
- 3 Duffy, B. and Frere-Smith, T. (2014) Perception and Reality: Public Attitudes to Immigration, London: Ipsos MORI

About

The National Conversation on Immigration is a project run by British future and HOPE not hate.

British Future

British Future is an independent, non-partisan thinktank 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.

The logo for British Future, featuring the words "British Future..." in a blue sans-serif font, with "Future..." on a second line. The text is enclosed in a thin blue border.

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.

The logo for HOPE not hate, featuring the word "HOPE" in a bold, black, sans-serif font, centered within a yellow horizontal bar. Below the bar, the word "HATE" is partially visible in a similar font.

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 a part in building a society that celebrates rather than scapegoats our differences.