



Opinion Poll Results on Immigration

Public opinion is firmly behind the government's efforts to reduce net migration. The public recognise the benefits of controlled immigration especially in particular fields but, for many years, have shown strong opposition to mass immigration and have long wished to see net migration reduced to more sensible levels. Below is a summary of public opinion poll results on immigration and its impacts on the economy and society arranged under the following headings:

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1. On Concern about Immigration ...

The 2014 British Social Attitudes Survey asked respondents what caused the most division both in their local area and nationally. 41% of respondents (the highest number) cited tension between immigrants and people born in Britain as the biggest problem in their local vicinity. 57% said tension between immigrants and people born in Britain caused the most division nationally.

(NatCen British Social Attitudes Survey, 2014, URL: <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/our-research/research/british-social-attitudes/>)

A February 2014 poll conducted by YouGov for Channel 5 found that 65% of respondents were worried about the level of immigration to the UK, while 31% were not worried and 4% didn't know.

(YouGov, February 2014 for Channel 5, URL: http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/88q0g7tq8f/YG-Archive-140211-Channel5-Immigration.pdf)

Asked whether immigration from Western Europe had a positive effect on the UK 39% thought that it had. This contrasts with only 22% who thought that immigration from Eastern Europe was positive. 70% thought that immigration rules governing migration from Europe weren't strict enough, while 73% thought immigration rules from outside the EU weren't tough enough.

(YouGov for The Sunday Times, February 2013, http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/22ok7iz5ea/YG-Archive-Pol-Sunday-Times-results-15-170213.pdf)

(YouGov for Progress, October 2012, URL: http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/e486jk8w3t/121004-progress-results.pdf)

In July 2014, Immigration and Asylum was the number one issue of concern for respondents of the YouGov's Issues poll. 54% of respondents said that immigration and asylum was the 'most important issue facing the country at this time.' (YouGov, July 2014, URL: http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/vmn03qncsm/YG-Archive-Pol-Sun-results-080714.pdf)

Immigration has topped the monthly Ipsos MORI 'Issues Index' poll in every month since June 2014 (for the first time since April 2008). In October 2014, 40% of respondents named it as one of the most important issues facing Britain.

(Ipsos MORI, October 2014, URL: <https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3468/EconomistIpsos-MORI-October-2014-Issues-Index.aspx>)

Immigration is also top of YouGov's November 2014 'Most Important Issues facing the country at this time' poll. 55% of respondents named it as one of the three most important issues facing Britain. It has consistently topped the poll since May 2014.

(YouGov, November 2014, URL: [https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/y1xjqcn5yg/YG-Archives-Pol-Trackers-Issues\(2\)-Most-important-issues-111114.pdf](https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/y1xjqcn5yg/YG-Archives-Pol-Trackers-Issues(2)-Most-important-issues-111114.pdf))

2. On Preferred Levels of Immigration...

According to the 2014 British Social Attitudes Survey, 77% of people want to see immigration reduced, with 56% wanting to see it reduced 'a lot' and an additional 21% wanting to see it reduced 'a little'.

(British Social Attitudes Survey 2014, URL: <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/our-research/research/british-social-attitudes/>)

3. On Government Policy...

A November 2014 poll by YouGov asked respondents what they thought the highest priority should be for the government elected in May 2015. The highest number of respondents, 25%, said reducing the number of immigrants to Britain.

(YouGov poll, November 2014: https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/x9ql7xxq1z/InternalResults_141104_next_government_policy_priorities-Website.pdf)

A January 2014 poll by YouGov for The Sunday Times found that 76% of respondents supported placing a ban on immigrants to Britain receiving any benefits until they had lived in Britain for at least two years, while 15% opposed the policy and 9% didn't know.

The same poll found that 62% of respondents supported a ban on immigrants to Britain receiving any benefits until they had lived in the UK for at least five years. 26% opposed it and 13% didn't know.

The same poll asked whether respondents supported David Cameron's pledge to reduce net immigration into Britain from hundreds of thousands to the tens of thousands. 78% of respondents supported the policy, while 10% opposed it and 12% didn't know.

However, just 15% of respondents thought it would be likely for the PM to implement the policy by the next election. 77% thought it was unlikely it would be implemented by the next election and 8% didn't know.

(YouGov for The Sunday Times, January 2014, URL: http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/9zzdddu0no/YG-Archive-Pol-Sunday-Times-results-140110.pdf)

76% of respondents agreed that Ed Miliband is right to accept that the last Labour Government made major mistakes on immigration.

(ComRes for The Independent on Sunday, August 2013, http://www.comres.co.uk/polls/SM_IoS_Political_Poll_August_2013.pdf, page 70.)

The government has a clear immigration policy of reducing net migration from the hundreds of thousands to the tens of thousands by the end of this Parliament. There is a high level of support for this policy, including from Liberal Democrat voters.

78% support the government's aim to reduce net migration to the tens of thousands, including 70% of those who voted Liberal Democrat in the 2010 General Election.

(YouGov for The Sunday Times, January 2012, URL: http://cdn.yougov.com/cumulus_uploads/document/d51j2t3jzl/YG-Archives-Pol-ST-results-06-080112.pdf)

4. On Population and Overcrowding...

A May 2014 poll by YouGov for Population Matters found that 62% of respondents wanted to see the UK population decrease and 22% wanted it to stay the same. Just 11% wanted to see the population increase.

(YouGov for Population Matters, May 2014, URL: <http://www.populationmatters.org/making-case/opinion-polls/>)

79% of people in England believe that England is overcrowded, 37% saying it is very crowded. 85% of Londoners think that England is overcrowded. 76% are concerned that the population will increase to 70 million in 16 years and 69% support a net migration level of 40,000 per year to keep the population below 70 million

(Ipsos Mori for Migration Watch UK, November 2011, URL: <http://migrationwatchuk.com/excel/yougov-071111.xls>)
85% feel slightly or very worried at the projected rise in population to 70 million

(YouGov for Migration Watch UK, January 2010, URL: http://www.yougov.co.uk/extranets/ygarchives/content/pdf/MigrationWatch-marginal_Jan10.pdf)

5. Positive aspects

The British Attitudes Survey found in 2013 that 40% of respondents thought that immigrants had improved British society by bringing new ideas and cultures, compared to 33% in 2003.

(NatCen British Social Attitudes Survey, 2014, URL: <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/our-research/research/british-social-attitudes/>)

53% of respondents thought that a variety of cultures and backgrounds had strengthened the UK.

(YouGov for Lord Ashcroft Polls, April 2013 <http://lordashcrofthpolls.com/2013/04/45-years-on-do-ethnic-minorities-remember-rivers-of-blood/>)

There are also a number of specific fields in which the contribution of immigrants is widely appreciated but none of them require large scale immigration.

68%	believe that immigration has had a positive effect on	food and restaurants;	8% negative
47%	" " " "	Entrepreneurs, start ups;	11% negative
38%	" " " "	Premier League football;	13% negative
36%	" " " "	Film and music;	7% negative
32%	" " " "	Art and literature;	6% negative
25%	" " " "	TV, radio and press;	14% negative

(IPSOS MORI for British Future December 2011, URL: <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/Assets/Docs/Polls/state-of-the-nation-2011-british-future-topline.pdf>)

The massive increase in foreign immigration since 1997, totalling over 4 million has had a very substantial impact on public opinion as the following polls indicate.

6. On the General Impact...

The 2014 British Social Attitudes Survey showed that 47% of respondents thought that immigration had had a bad or very bad impact on the British economy. 20% thought its impact was neither good nor bad and 31% thought it had had a good or very good impact on the economy.

According to the same poll, 45% of respondents thought that immigration had either undermined or strongly

undermined the UK culturally. 19% thought it had neither enriched nor undermined the UK culturally. 35% thought that it had either enriched or strongly enriched the UK culturally.

(British Social Attitudes Survey, 2014, URL: <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/our-research/research/british-social-attitudes/>)

A February 2014 poll by YouGov for Channel 5 found that 44% of respondents thought most immigrants didn't contribute positively to Britain's way of life, while 39% thought that they did.

(YouGov for Channel 5, URL: http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/88q0g7tq8f/YG-Archive-140211-Channel5-Immigration.pdf)

58% of respondents disagreed that it was a good thing that people from the rest of the EU are encouraged to come and work in the UK.

(ComRes for the Independent on Sunday, August 2013, http://www.comres.co.uk/polls/SM_IoS_Political_Poll_August_2013.pdf, page 78.)

22% believe that a majority of immigrants contribute positively to Britain, 21% think that around half do and 42% think only a minority do.

(YouGov March 2013, http://cdn.yougov.com/cumulus_uploads/document/6ermykkegf/YG-Archive-Pol-Sunday-Times-results-08-100313.pdf)

68% believe that immigration has a negative effect on Britain

(YouGov for The Sunday Times, January 2012, URL: http://cdn.yougov.com/cumulus_uploads/document/d51j2t3jzl/YG-Archives-Pol-ST-results-06-080112.pdf)

7. On the Impact on Public Services...

A February 2014 poll by YouGov for Channel 5 asked respondents whether people coming to live and work in the UK should be allowed access to public services. 10% of respondents thought they should be allowed access immediately, 25% thought that they should have to wait a few months before being allowed access, 59% thought that they should have to wait at least a year, 6% didn't know.

(YouGov for Channel 5, URL: http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/88q0g7tq8f/YG-Archive-140211-Channel5-Immigration.pdf)

69% believe that immigration has had a negative impact on the availability of housing

(Ipsos Mori for British Future, December 2011, URL: <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/Assets/Docs/Polls/state-of-the-nation-2011-british-future-topline.pdf>.)

76% believe that immigration has placed too much pressure on public services including health, transport and education

(Ipsos Global Advisor Poll, August 2011, URL: <http://www.slideshare.net/IpsosMORI/ipsos-global-dvisor-22-attitudes-to-immigration-july-2011>)

8. On the Impact on Jobs...

A February 2014 poll YouGov conducted for Channel 5 found that 67% of respondents thought that employers should give priority to British people when recruiting for jobs. 20% of people thought that employers should not give priority

to British people and 12% didn't know.

(YouGov for Channel 5, URL: http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/88q0g7tq8f/YG-Archive-140211-Channel5-Immigration.pdf)

67% of respondents agreed that British firms should be able to give British citizens priority over other EU citizens when hiring new workers, even if this means the UK would have to leave the EU.

(ComRes for The Independent on Sunday, August 2013, http://www.comres.co.uk/polls/SM_IoS_Political_Poll_August_2013.pdf, page 66.)

19% of respondents thought immigration was good for the British economy, while 57% thought it was bad.

(YouGov for the The Sunday Times, June 2013, http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/rj6l6hgo07/YG-Archive-Pol-Sunday-Times-results-310513.pdf, p.7)

40% of Asian community believe that immigrants had put their jobs at risk and 47% of Asians believe that immigrants have made it harder to get a fair wage for what they did

(Searchlight, February 2011, <http://www.fearandhope.org.uk/project-report/>)

65% believe that migrant workers are "undercutting British workers in terms of pay and taking our jobs as a result"

(YouGov for Juniper TV, January 2008, URL: http://cdn.yougov.com/today_uk_import/YG-Archives-pol-juniper-Immigration-080407.pdf)

9. On Integration of Migrants...

The 2014 British Social Attitudes Survey found that 95% of respondents thought that it was either very important or fairly important that migrants had an ability to speak English in order to become 'truly British'.

(British Social Attitudes Survey, 2014, URL: <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/our-research/research/british-social-attitudes/>)

A February 2014 poll by YouGov conducted for Channel 5 asked respondents what they thought the most important requirements for living in Britain were.

60% said being able to speak English, while 43% said being willing to work hard and pay taxes, 36% said respect for the law, 28% said respecting British culture and customs, 15% said tolerance of others

(YouGov for Channel 5, URL: http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/88q0g7tq8f/YG-Archive-140211-Channel5-Immigration.pdf)

Only 43% said that they would rather live in an area where most people are from the same ethnic background. 59% feel that the biggest obstacle to being British is 'not speaking English', 9% felt that being from an ethnic minority stops people from being British, while 11% felt that having foreign born parents was a barrier to being British.

(IPSOS Mori, <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/2924/Two-in-five-Britons-dont-know-when-St-Georges-Day-is.aspx>)

93% believe that immigrants coming to live permanently in the UK should be required to learn English

(YouGov for The Sunday Times, April 2011, URL: http://cdn.yougov.com/today_uk_import/yg-archives-pol-st-results-05-170411.pdf)

10. On Illegals...

The 2014 British Social Attitudes Survey found that 82% thought that Britain should 'take stronger measures to exclude illegal immigrants'

(British Social Attitudes Survey, 2014, URL: <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/our-research/research/british-social-attitudes/>)

A September 2013 YouGov poll found that most respondents were more concerned about illegal, rather than legal migration. When asked which concerned them more, legal or illegal immigration, 60% said illegal immigration, while 26% said legal migration was the bigger problem.

(YouGov, URL: http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/77htn95wyh/YouGov-Survey-Migration-Matters-130904.pdf)

11. On Community Cohesion...

55% agreed that immigration had had an impact on their local area.

(YouGov for Migration Watch UK, October 2014, URL: <http://news.migrationwatch.org.uk/2014/10/the-local-impact-of-immigration-.html>)

Ethnic minority voters agreed that immigration was the second biggest issue facing the UK, but placed it a distant second after the economy with 6% citing it as the most important issue against the 56% that chose the economy.

(Lord Ashcroft Polls, April 2013, <http://lordashcrofthpolls.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Ethnic-minority-survey-April-2013-full-tables.pdf>),

57% of respondents thought tension between immigrants and people born in Britain was the biggest problem facing Britain. 41% of people said that tension between immigrants and people born in Britain was the biggest problem facing their local area.

(IPSOS Mori for British Future, November 2012, http://www.ipsos-mori.com/Assets/Docs/Polls/BritishFuture_2013_topline.PDF)

35% thought that the UK had become more tolerant in the last decade, while 43% thought that it had become less tolerant.

(YouGov for the Sunday Times, December 2012, http://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/w0hvkijpjj/YG-Archive-Pol-Sunday-Times-results-14-161212.pdf, p.4)

Only 12% believe that immigration has changed their local community for the better. Approximately 12% of the population are non-UK born.

(Searchlight, February 2011, <http://www.fearandhope.org.uk/project-report/themes>, and Annual Population Survey, April 2010 to March 2011, Table 1.1, URL: www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-235204)

