



**Discussion Brief Number 8/2012
Immigration**

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Question 1

Do immigration statistics matter? Is the Government right to aim to reduce net immigration from the hundreds of thousands to the tens of thousands? Please explain your reasoning.

Yes, they do. They're necessary for planning services and housing, and for national insurance. Gross immigration is an important figure as immigrants have different needs to those who have left. Statistics should make clear how much EU and non-EU migration there is.

We agree with the aim of the government to reduce net immigration as stated.

Question 2

If immigrants make a net fiscal contribution to the economy is it still important to limit their numbers?

Observations:
 Why is there unemployment in the UK when we need immigrants to work in eg the hospitality industry, agriculture? We suspect the benefit system is at fault, and support the government's initiatives to reform welfare.
 We doubt that immigrants make a net fiscal contribution to the economy. For example do the figures take into account that many of them send their wages home?

Factors supporting immigration: may make some industries viable in the UK, eg areas of agriculture, other labour intensive industries.

Factors overriding net fiscal contribution: UK govt has a responsibility to UK citizens over other nationals; immigration affects some groups in our society disproportionately – low paid, low skilled workers. It is immoral and dangerous for the government to allow this group to be left behind and so become dependent on welfare payments and disaffected.



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Question 3

What are the key contributions (positive and negative) that immigration has made to your community?

POSITIVE

We're a rural area and benefit from low-level immigration. Immigrants are particularly active in retail and in providing restaurants, but also staff local nursing homes and hospitals.

NEGATIVE

There are few negatives here.

Question 4

What are the key contributions (positive and negative) that immigration has made to your workplace?

POSITIVE

Not applicable

NEGATIVE

Not applicable.

Question 5

What kinds of immigrants do we want and who should we definitely keep out?



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WANT

People to meet any immediate UK skills shortage.
Genuine students.
People who are financially self-supporting.

DEFINITELY KEEP OUT

Criminals – there need to be better checks, particularly from less developed EU countries.
People who oppose our way of life.
People who are dependent on the state – with the exception of genuine asylum seekers.

Question 6

How should we encourage new and existing immigrants to integrate into British society?

They should be able to speak and read English – resources should be directed to this end for existing immigrants. Group felt that it will be difficult to get to some existing immigrants who don't speak English, especially women. There may need to be some compulsion, or an active attempt to get to them.
We should avoid ghetto-isation and immigrant mono-culturalism, including through the setting up of religious schools. Some support for an end to religious education in the state sector, across the board.
We should develop the idea of British values, and the group supports citizenship ceremonies.

Question 7

How can we ensure that our immigration policy maximizes any potential economic input of migrants?

Immigrants must be in work, or should be obliged to leave. Any benefits received should be in proportion not only to the length of stay, but also to the amount of work done previously.
We should be more selective.
We should ensure that training is available, paid for by the individual.

Question 8

How can the Government help public services plan for immigration?

Accurate statistics.
Proper control of immigration.



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Other comments:

Is it realistic to think we can ever control economic migration?
We noted the success of the UK in integrating immigrants and compared the situation in London to parts of the USA.
We applaud the government for taking seriously the public's concern about immigration.
We should re-negotiate our position in the EU so that we regain control of immigration.
We should consider why immigrants see the UK as an attractive place. If part of this is the perception that the benefits system is generous we ensure that it is not, and that this is widely known. We should align our benefits for immigrants to the EU average.

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