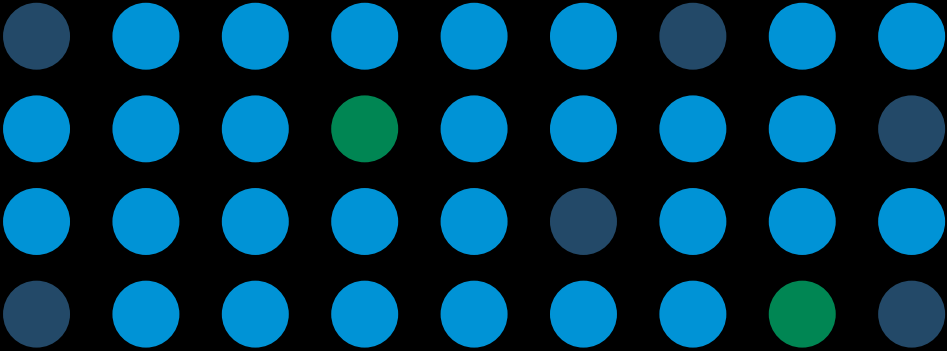




Ryan Shorthouse  
and David Kirkby



# A balanced centre-right agenda on immigration

*Understanding how Conservative voters  
think about immigration*

# **A BALANCED CENTRE-RIGHT AGENDA ON IMMIGRATION**

Understanding how Conservative  
voters think about immigration

Ryan Shorthouse and David Kirkby



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Survation conducted the polling for this report and we would like to thank their team for their care and attention to detail. Damian Lyons Lowe, Patrick Brione and Katy Owen provided vital assistance with the design of the questions. Special thanks to Patrick Brione for his help at the analysis stage.

The polling included an online survey of 1,052 British adults and was conducted between September 12<sup>th</sup> and September 16<sup>th</sup> 2014. A booster sample of 2,064 respondents, again surveyed online, was undertaken between September 12<sup>th</sup> and September 30<sup>th</sup> 2014.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Immigration is now consistently ranked in polling as the general public's 'most important issue', often above the economy.<sup>1</sup> A majority of the public believes that the number of immigrants coming to the UK is too high and that immigration is more of a problem than an opportunity, much higher than in most other developed countries.<sup>2</sup>

However, most of the public do have a nuanced view of immigration: for example, 61% of the public agree that "immigration brings both pressures and economic benefits, so we should control it and choose the immigration that's in Britain's best economic interests".<sup>3</sup>

The evidence of the impact of immigration is still developing, but overall it supports the idea that immigration is largely economically beneficial to the UK, but bringing challenges. On the whole, immigration boosts the national economy,<sup>4</sup> the wages of native workers (excluding those in the bottom quintile in the short-term)<sup>5</sup> and new

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1. Scott Blinder, *UK public opinion toward immigration: overall attitudes and level of concern*, <http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/migobs/Public%20Opinionoverall%20Attitudes%20and%20Level%20of%20Concern.pdf> (2014).

2. The German Marshall Fund, *Transatlantic trends: immigration*, [http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2012/09/Trends\\_2014\\_complete.pdf](http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2012/09/Trends_2014_complete.pdf) (2014).

3. Sunder Katwala, Steve Ballinger and Matthew Rhodes, *How to talk about immigration* (London: British Future, 2014), 12.

4. Migration Advisory Committee, *Analysis of the impacts of migration*, [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/257235/analysis-of-the-impacts.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/257235/analysis-of-the-impacts.pdf) (2012).

5. Christian Dustmann, Tommaso Frattini and Ian Preston, *The effect of immigration along the distribution of wages* (London: Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration, 2008).

business growth.<sup>6</sup> The OECD has found that immigration has a net fiscal benefit.<sup>7</sup> However, immigration can have a negative impact on wages towards the lower end of the income scale, as well as exacerbating congestion pressures on transport, housing and other public services.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the benefits of immigration, mainstream political parties have proposed tougher action on immigration in recent years. The Conservative Party now proposes to clampdown on EU migration and the out-of-work and in-work benefits migrants can receive. Early in 2014, the Conservative Minister for Immigration and Security delivered a high-profile speech to the think tank Demos blaming a “wealthy metropolitan elite” for pushing for mass immigration at the expense of “ordinary, hard-working people”.<sup>9</sup>

But this tougher approach has not succeeded in convincing the public of the government’s handling of immigration. In fact, the Conservative Party is guilty of fixating in recent years on trying to appease a minority of voters who are attracted to UKIP’s prominent position on immigration, which is heavily negative about the impact of immigration, and wants to see net migration substantially reduced.

If managed correctly, immigration is both economically and culturally enriching. So it is necessary for the centre-right – represented mainly by the Conservative Party – to shape a more positive and compelling vision on immigration, and to construct a competent and fair immigration system that would capture the benefits, manage the challenges and reassure the public. This would serve the national interest.

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6. Centre for Entrepreneurs and DueDil, *Migrant entrepreneurs: building our businesses, creating our jobs*, [http://www.creatingourjobs.org/data/Migrant EntrepreneursWEB.pdf](http://www.creatingourjobs.org/data/Migrant%20EntrepreneursWEB.pdf) (2014).

7. OECD, “Is migration good for the economy?”, <http://www.oecd.org/migration/mig/OECD%20Migration%20Policy%20Debates%20Numero%202.pdf> (2014).

8. Migration Advisory Committee, *Analysis of the impacts of migration*, [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/257235/analysis-of-the-impacts.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/257235/analysis-of-the-impacts.pdf) (2012).

9. James Brokenshire, “Speech to Demos”, [http://www.demos.co.uk/files/JamesBrokenshire SpeechoDemos.pdf](http://www.demos.co.uk/files/JamesBrokenshire%20SpeechoDemos.pdf) (2014).



## A new centre-right approach on immigration

Over the past year, Bright Blue has been undertaking a project to devise a balanced centre-right agenda on immigration. To successfully do this, we have needed to identify the views of those on the centre-right on immigration.

We understand someone to be on the centre-right if they are Conservative Party representatives, influencers, members or voters (including prospective or former voters). These parameters may exclude those with centre-right opinions who never vote for or associate with the Conservative Party, but we believe the parameters are sufficient to accurately capture centre-right opinion.

Broadly, there are two main types of people on the centre-right of British politics: first, expert opinion formers and decision makers. Second, centre-right voters.

We have established the views of expert opinion formers and decision makers on the centre-right through three roundtable discussions.

We have established the views on immigration of voters on the centre-right in two ways. First, by hosting a fringe event at the 2014 Conservative Party Conference to better understand the opinions of Conservative Party members. Second, and most importantly, through public polling of Conservative or prospective Conservative voters, who we deem to be most representative of centre-right voters. This polling is the focus of this publication.

## Focus of this research

In this report, we identify the key views held by Conservative voters ('Conservatives') and different voters in the 'Conservative universe'<sup>10</sup> (for example, possible or former voters for the Conservative Party) on

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10. This term was created by Lord Ashcroft in his 'Project Blueprint' polling series. See Chapter Two for further details.

immigration. Together, these two groups broadly form the centre-right vote in British politics.

In addition, we will be able to show how these views vary in strength and prominence among Conservatives. This will enable decision makers and opinion formers to develop a richer understanding of variation in Conservative thinking about immigration according to different socio-demographic characteristics such as age, ethnicity and socioeconomic group.

The report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter Two** explains in detail the methodology employed for the public polling we conducted;
- **Chapter Three** explores the priorities and policies different Conservatives want from our immigration system;
- **Chapter Four** shows the type of immigrants different Conservatives would let into the UK, and the type of immigrants different Conservatives want more of;
- **Chapter Five** illustrates the impact of immigration, according to different Conservatives;
- **Chapter Six** unearths the type and quality of experiences different Conservatives have with immigrants they know;
- **Chapter Seven** concludes with the main themes on centre-right thinking on immigration that emerge from all our polling of different Conservatives.

## Chapter 2: Methodology

This report aims to unearth the views of centre-right voters on immigration. This chapter describes the polling methods we employed to achieve our objective.

### Centre-right voters

We understand centre-right voters as being primarily represented by those intending to vote for the Conservative Party at the 2015 General Election, who we call ‘Conservatives’.

We also understand centre-right voters to include those who the pollster Lord Ashcroft has described as being in the ‘Conservative universe’.<sup>11</sup> Lord Ashcroft has created a typology of four groups within the ‘Conservative universe’:

- **Conservative ‘loyalists’:** Those who voted Conservative in the 2010 General Election and intend to do so again at the 2015 General Election.
- **Conservative ‘defectors’:** Those who voted Conservative in the 2010 General Election, but do not intend to vote Conservative at the 2015 General Election.

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11. Lord Ashcroft, *Project blueprint: phase 5*, <http://lordashcroftpolls.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/LORD-ASHCROFT-POLLS-Project-Blueprint-Phase-5.pdf> (2014).

- **Conservative ‘joiners’:** Those who did not vote Conservative at the 2010 General Election, but who intend to do so at the 2015 General Election.
- **Conservative ‘considerers’:** Those who did not vote Conservative at the 2010 General Election and do not intend to vote Conservative at the 2015 General Election, but who would consider voting Conservative in the future.

Together, these groups broadly form the centre-right vote in British politics.

We identify centre-right voters in relation to the Conservative Party. Of course, it is possible for voters for other political parties to hold views which would be typically regarded as ‘centre-right’. In turn, it is possible for Conservative voters to hold positions which would not typically be regarded as ‘centre-right’. Nevertheless, overall, we are confident that the views of the centre-right are accurately captured by those voters in the ‘Conservative universe’.

Crucially, we take those intending to vote Conservative in 2015 (‘Conservatives’) to be of particular significance and shall focus upon this group of respondents when exploring how centre-right voters view immigration.

## Polling of Conservatives

Polling was undertaken by Survation in two phases. The first phase, conducted between September 12<sup>th</sup> and September 16<sup>th</sup> 2014 consisted of 1,052 British adult respondents, interviewed online. Results were weighted by Office of National Statistics (ONS) data to be nationally representative of age, sex, region, household income, education and the 2010 General Election results.

The second phase of polling was undertaken between September 12<sup>th</sup> and September 30<sup>th</sup>. This was a booster sample that added to the nationally representative poll 2,064 respondents who were either

Conservative loyalists, joiners, considerers or defectors. They were interviewed online. From this booster, we were able to increase those intending to vote Conservative at the 2015 General Election to 1,307 respondents.

The two phases of polling enabled us to analyse voters' perceptions in three ways. First, we were able to compare how the views of Conservatives differs from non-Conservatives e.g. Labour or UKIP voters.

Second, by substantially increasing the pool of respondents intending to vote Conservative, the booster sample enabled us to investigate how Conservatives differ in their immigration views. We were able to investigate how among those intending to vote Conservative, socio-demographic characteristics such as age, socioeconomic group, ethnicity, as well as personal experience of immigrants, impacted upon views of immigration. This variation amongst Conservative voters will be discussed throughout this report.

In order to determine respondents' personal experience of immigrants, they were asked to select one of two options: "I know well personally one or more immigrants to the UK" or "I do not know well personally any immigrants to the UK". Depending on their response to this question, respondents were categorised as either knowing immigrants well or not knowing immigrants well.

In addition to the standard socio-demographic cross breaks, we also wanted to capture some of the ideological distinctions which commonly differentiate Conservative voters and identify whether they have a bearing upon views of immigration. Therefore, we categorised respondents on the basis of their social conservatism and their economic conservatism. Questions were asked to identify whether respondents were economic conservatives or economic statist: economic conservatives were those respondents that opted for less state intervention and regulation across a range of markets. Questions were also asked about whether respondents were social conservatives

or social liberals: social conservatives were those respondents who supported action to protect and preserve various social and moral norms. Of course, from these questions, it is possible to be both an economic and a social conservative, and these segmentations were not designed to be mutually exclusive. Nevertheless, while it was possible for respondents to be classed as both social and economic conservatives, questions were designed to try and determine whether respondents were more influenced by economic conservatism or social conservatism, thereby reducing the overlap of the sets. For the full list of questions and metrics used to determine these typological groups among Conservative voters, see Annex 2.

Third, by using the Lord Ashcroft ‘Conservative universe’ – yielding significant samples of Conservative loyalists, defectors, joiners and considerers – the booster poll allowed us to investigate whether these political distinctions have a bearing upon views of immigration. This enables us to capture the full breadth of centre-right voter opinion on immigration. But it also enables us to assess the political choices facing the Conservative Party in the run up to the General Election. The Conservative Party cannot rely on the votes of loyalists (who, according to Lord Ashcroft’s latest analysis, represent 22% of all voters) to win an overall majority at the next election. The Conservative Party therefore needs to attract a coalition of voters that also draws from joiners (who, according to recent analysis, represent 9% of the electorate), considerers (2% of the electorate) and defectors (10% of the electorate). But the attitudes of these different groups are very different, as the results from our polling will show. Indeed, two thirds of current considerers and joiners voted for the Liberal Democrats in the 2010 General Election, and another quarter voted for Labour. Meanwhile, the vast majority (73%) of defectors now report that they intend to vote UKIP. The remaining defectors, however, mostly say they will vote

Labour.<sup>12</sup> The Conservative Party faces a difficult challenge of attracting sufficient support from this broad group of voters to secure a majority at the General Election.

All the cross breaks used to observe differences in the views of respondents are detailed in Box 2.1 below.

**Box 2.1 Complete polling cross breaks**

- Age
- Gender
- Region
- Ethnicity
- Socioeconomic group
- Knowing immigrants well
- Employment status
- Family status
- Parent
- Grandparent
- 2010 General Election voting record
- 2015 General Election voting intention
- Social conservatism
- Economic conservatism
- Conservative loyalists, defectors, joiners or considerers

Our judgment was that “Don’t know” answers should be removed from our analysis and presentation of the polling. Thus, reported answers refer to a sample of respondents that gave a relevant answer. However, the removal of “Don’t know” responses from our analysis means that the findings are not completely representative of views across Britain.

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12. Ibid.

## Chapter 3: **Improving the immigration system**

This chapter examines, first, what different Conservatives and voters in the Conservative universe want from an ideal immigration system. Second, what Conservatives believe counts as an integrated immigrant. And, third, the specific policies Conservatives would like to be introduced to improve the effectiveness of the immigration system.

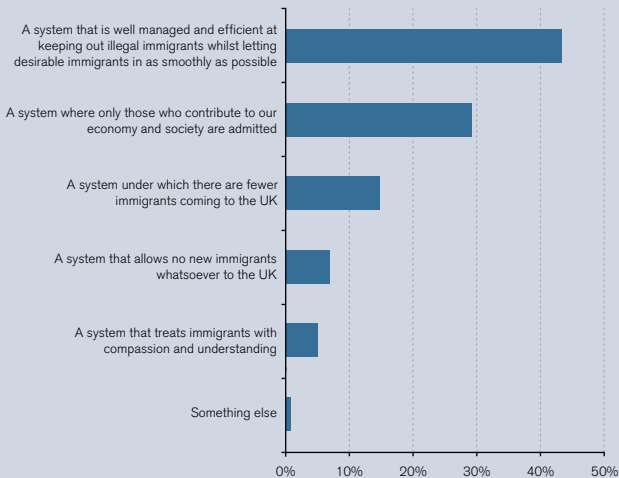
### **The main aims of our immigration system**

Conservatives want an immigration system that is well managed, first and foremost. This is more important to Conservatives than having fewer immigrants. As Chart 3.1 shows, nearly half of Conservatives say that an ideal immigration system is one that is well managed and keeps out illegal immigrants. Only 15% of Conservatives report that an ideal immigration system is one with fewer immigrants, and only 7% of Conservatives say it is a system where there are no new immigrants coming to the UK.

In fact, the proportion of Conservatives that believe an ideal immigration system is one that includes only those who contribute (29%) is higher than the proportion of Conservatives that want fewer or no immigrants. These results imply that, when it comes to immigration, competence and contribution are more important to Conservatives than the current cap, which aims to restrict the number of immigrants.



**Chart 3.1 The prime characteristic of an ideal immigration system, according to Conservatives**



*Base: 1307 Conservative voters, minus those who responded 'Don't know'*

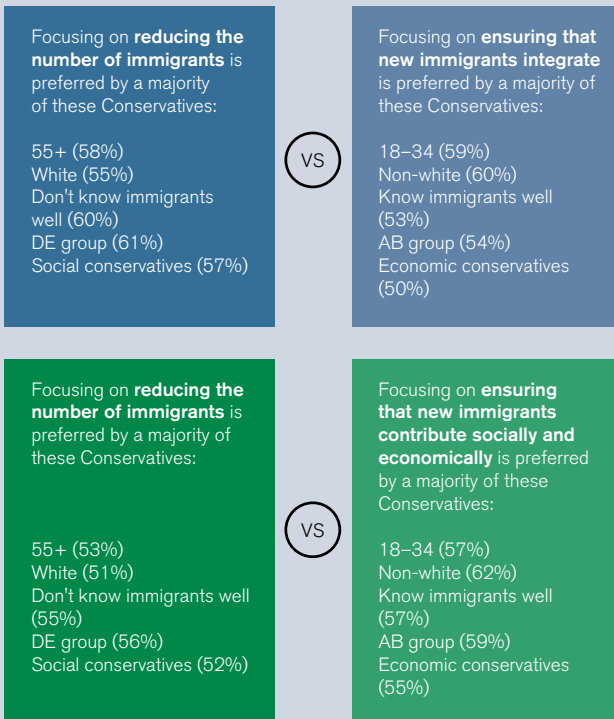
Conservatives differ from other voters in two ways. First, compared to UKIP supporters, they are less focused on wanting an immigration system that has lower numbers. For instance, 25% of UKIP voters primarily want an immigration system with fewer immigrants compared to 15% of Conservatives. Furthermore, while only 7% of Conservatives want no new immigrants at all, 17% of UKIP voters support this. Second, Conservative voters are less likely (5%) than Labour voters (23%) to primarily want an immigration system that treats immigrants with compassion and understanding.

We tested how important getting the overall numbers of immigrants down was to Conservatives compared to other aims of the immigration system such as getting the kinds of immigrants who contribute substantially to our economy and society, or making sure that immigrants are integrating into British society. The most revealing

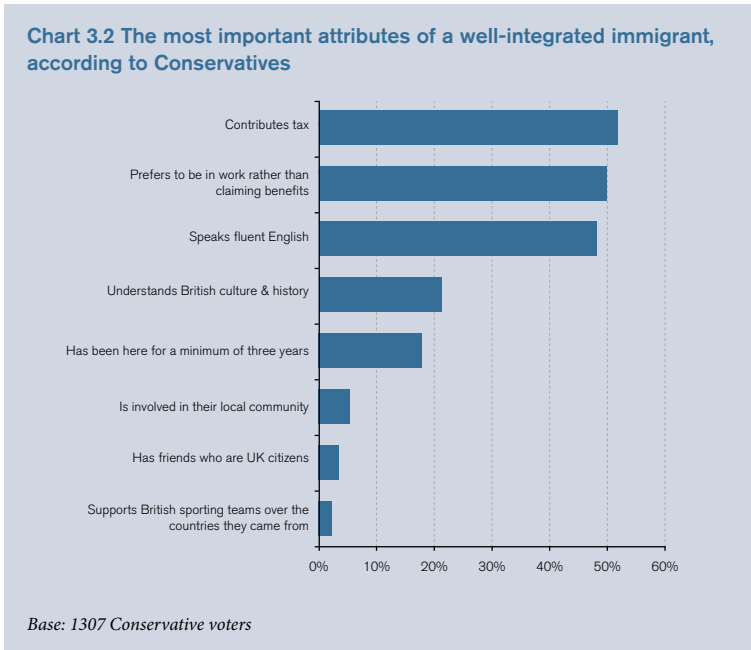
results from this were how different socio-demographic characteristics alter the priorities for Conservatives on immigration.

Figure 3.1 shows that those Conservatives who are younger, are an ethnic minority, live in London, are economic conservatives and know immigrants well are less likely to prioritise lower numbers against other priorities from the immigration system. Subsequent chapters will reveal that these same socio-demographic characteristics, to differing extents, also make Conservatives more welcoming of, and positive about the contribution of, different immigrants.

**Figure 3.1 The importance of reducing the number of immigrants compared to other public policy priorities, according to different groups of Conservatives**



Clearly, ensuring immigrants are well integrated in British society is a key public policy aim for Conservatives, particularly for Conservatives who are younger, richer, from an ethnic minority background and who know immigrants well. Chart 3.2 shows what Conservatives believe to be important in demonstrating that immigrants are integrated.



The above chart models responses to a question asking respondents to rank each possible attribute of a well-integrated immigrant from 1 (very important) to 10 (not important), and the chart illustrates the proportion of respondents which ranked each factor as either 1 or 2. It shows that Conservatives consider the following to be most important when it comes to what an immigrant should be doing to be sufficiently integrated:

- Contributes tax (52%)
- Wants to work (50%)
- Speaks fluent English (48%)

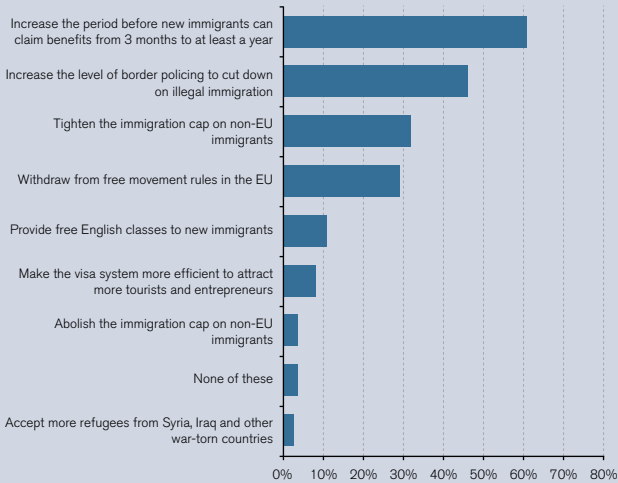
Contribution is an important theme here: in particular, working and paying tax shows that an immigrant is contributing to the British economy. Being involved in the local community or supporting British sports teams is not really important. What does this mean for the ‘Tebbit Test’? This was a phrase coined in 1990 after Conservative politician Norman Tebbit argued that immigrants who did not support the English cricket team above the team of their country of origin were not sufficiently integrated. Our polling suggests this is not really important for Conservatives.

These three attributes are also the most important for those intending to vote for other political parties in the 2015 General Election. Though voters may disagree on other aspects of immigration such as the importance of reducing numbers or who to let in, there is a consensus on what is needed to create a more integrated society.

### **What policies do Conservatives want government to introduce?**

Chart 3.3 indicates that the most popular policy (respondents were asked to select two) is extending the time before immigrants can claim benefits, with 61% of Conservatives reporting this. The second most popular policy is more border policing, which 46% of Conservatives chose. The next popular policies, which a minority of Conservatives chose, relate to restricting numbers: 32% want to tighten the cap on non-EU migrants and 29% want to withdraw from the EU free movement of workers rules.

**Chart 3.3 Policy priorities to improve the immigration system, according to Conservatives**



Base: 1307 Conservative voters

Lowering numbers is more important to UKIP voters. Thirty seven percent of UKIP voters want to withdraw from the EU free movement of workers rules. Meanwhile, younger Conservatives aged 18–34 are particularly less likely to want to withdraw from EU free movement of workers rules, with only 18% wanting this.

In November 2014, the Prime Minister, David Cameron, delivered a keynote speech on immigration. He declared that he would be looking to work with EU partners to restrict the time before EU migrants can claim in-work benefits and social housing in the UK to four years.<sup>13</sup> This built on earlier promises to restrict EU migrants’ access to out-of-work benefits. Nonetheless, he also committed the UK to respecting EU free movement of workers rules, which is a fundamental principle

13. BBC, “David Cameron urges EU support for migration plans”, *BBC*, 28 November, 2014.

of EU membership because it is enshrined in Article 45 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. Our polling, which was conducted before this speech, suggests that the Prime Minister was right to prioritise restricting benefits over free movement of workers rules. This approach by the Prime Minister is overwhelmingly supported among Conservatives.

Most of the general public, especially Conservatives, conceive of fairness as suitably rewarding those who have contributed: commonly referred to as ‘something for something’.<sup>14</sup> This chapter has revealed that, although Conservatives believe that lowering the number of migrants is important, it seems to be a less important public policy aim than ensuring the UK gets immigrants who will contribute. Hence the overwhelming support for restricting access to benefits over withdrawing from EU free movement of worker rules, alongside the popularity of keeping out illegal immigrants. The lesson here is that Conservatives want an immigration debate that focuses more on fairness than figures.

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14. Ryan Shorthouse and David Kirkby, *Give and take* (London: Bright Blue, 2014).

## Chapter 4: **Who should we let into the UK?**

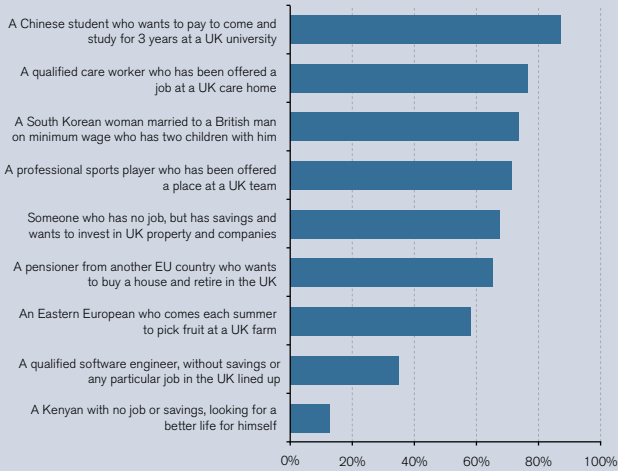
In this Chapter, we explore the views of different Conservatives and voters within the Conservative universe on whether particular types of individuals should be allowed to immigrate into the UK.

### **Which immigrants Conservatives would let into the UK**

Chart 4.1 illustrates the proportion of Conservative voters who believe particular types of individuals should be let in. We have deliberately chosen example individuals that have a wide range of circumstances and countries of origin. The examples include the main migration categories: workers, students and family members. Asylum applicants are discussed separately later in this chapter.

In all but two examples, a majority of Conservatives support letting these different types of individuals into the UK.

**Chart 4.1 The proportion of Conservatives who would allow particular types of individuals to come into the UK**



*Base: 1307 Conservative voters*

The most popular type of immigrant for Conservatives is an international student: 87% of Conservatives would admit a Chinese student who wants to pay to come and study for three years at a UK university. The least popular type of immigrant for Conservatives is an individual with no job or savings: only 13% of Conservatives would admit a man from Kenya with no job and no savings who is looking for a better life for himself.

Before 2010, the Conservative Party promised to introduce a cap on net migration with the aim of reducing net migration to “tens of thousands each year, not hundreds of thousands”. This cap only applies to non-EEA (European Economic Area) migrants, since membership of the EU includes adhering to the principle of free movement of workers. All the examples of individuals given in Chart 4.1, excluding the EU pensioner and the EU seasonal fruit picker (which attract the support of most Conservatives anyway), could fall under the government’s



immigration cap. This means that their numbers will be restricted. However, in most of the cases, a majority of Conservatives would let such people into the UK.

For instance, 74% of Conservatives would admit a South Korean woman who is married to a British man and has two children with him, where he works full time on the minimum wage. However, under rules introduced by this Government in 2012, this individual would not be allowed into the UK. A British citizen has to earn a minimum income of £18,600 a year to enable their spouse to live in the UK. If they have children, this minimum income rises to £22,400. A full-time salary on the minimum wage is below these minimum income thresholds. In fact, the Migration Observatory has found that 46% of workers in England – especially outside London and the South-East – would not meet this minimum threshold.<sup>15</sup>

The results in Chart 4.1 reflect to some extent the conclusion of Chapter three that Conservatives tend to be more concerned with admitting people who will contribute, not reducing numbers per se. There are many ways that people can make a contribution, including working and caring. A majority would admit a qualified care worker who has been offered a job working in a care home for the elderly in the UK (77%), a pensioner from another EU country who has a moderate pension and wants to buy a house and retire in the UK (65%), someone who has no job, but has several million pounds in savings and wants to buy property in the UK and shares in UK companies (67%) and a temporary migrant worker from Eastern Europe who comes each summer to work on a farm in the UK picking fruit (65%), all of whom are seen to have contributed or will contribute.

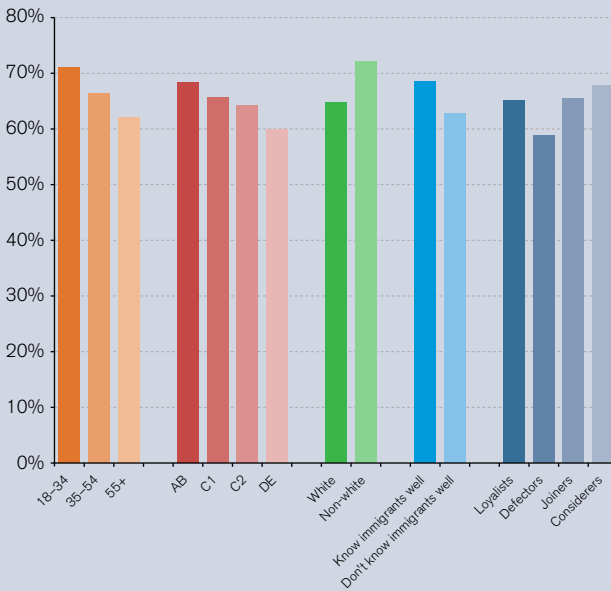
Certain types of Conservatives are more likely to be welcoming of particular types of immigrants being let into the UK. Charts 4.2 and 4.3

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15. APPG on Migration, *Report of the inquiry into new family migration rules*, [http://www.appgimmigration.org.uk/sites/default/files/APPG\\_family\\_migration\\_inquiry\\_report-Jun-2013.pdf](http://www.appgimmigration.org.uk/sites/default/files/APPG_family_migration_inquiry_report-Jun-2013.pdf) (2013).

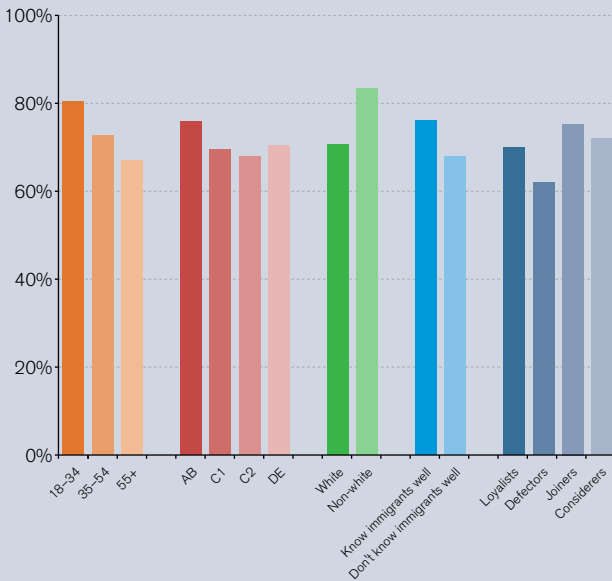
show for different example immigrants, the proportion of certain socio-demographic groups of Conservatives who would let them into the UK. Conservatives who are younger, wealthier, an ethnic minority and who know immigrants well are consistently more likely to be welcoming.

**Chart 4.2** The proportion of Conservatives who would allow a pensioner from another EU country who has a moderate pension and wants to buy a house and retire in the UK to come into the UK, by different socio-demographic characteristics and groups of the Conservative universe



Base: 1307 Conservative voters and 2502 respondents from the Conservative universe

**Chart 4.3 The proportion of respondents who would allow a professional sports player who has been offered a chance to play with a sports club in the UK to come into the UK, by different socio-demographic characteristics and groups of the Conservative universe**



*Base: 1307 Conservative voters and 2502 respondents from the Conservative universe*

Looking at different types of voters in the Conservative universe, Charts 4.2 and 4.3 clearly show that the joiners and considerers are more likely to be welcoming of different types of migrants than defectors. Generally, loyalists are closer to these joiners and considerers than defectors in how welcoming they are of different types of migrants.

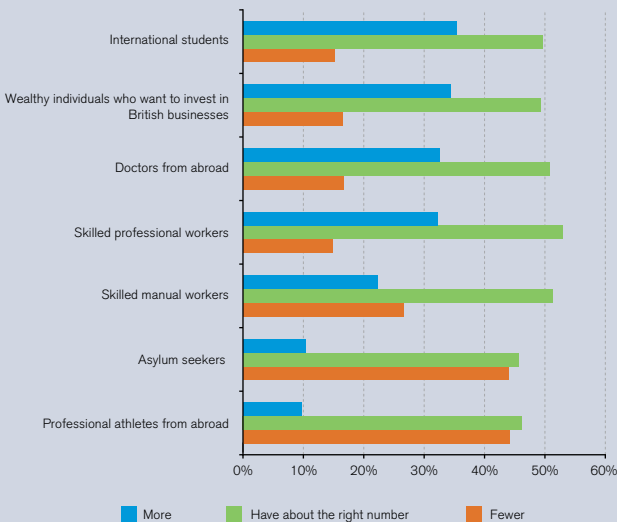
It is interesting that defectors, who are largely attracted to UKIP's agenda on immigration and are evidently the least welcoming of different types of migrants, are still very supportive of admitting international students and spouses of British citizens working full-time on the minimum wage. For both types of migrants, a majority of defectors say

they would admit them: 83% would admit the international student and 74% the spouse of a British citizen on the minimum wage.

## Whether Conservatives want more or less of particular types of immigrants

We also asked Conservatives whether they want more or less of particular types of immigrants in the UK. As Chart 4.4 demonstrates, for all the different types of migrants, a majority of Conservatives do not want to see their numbers reduced. For example, only 17% want fewer doctors working in the NHS; 27% want fewer skilled manual workers; and 15% want fewer skilled professional workers. Crucially, however, these migrants would be affected by the immigration cap that seeks to reduce the number of these migrants coming into the UK.

**Chart 4.4 The proportion of Conservatives who want more or fewer of different types of immigrants in the UK**



*Base: 1307 Conservative voters*

This reflects other polling that has been conducted by YouGov which shows a majority of the British public are not in favour of reducing the number of highly-skilled migrants, people wanting to invest in Britain, or those wanting to study at our universities.<sup>16</sup> Nonetheless, in this YouGov polling, 72% of the public did say they want to see a reduction in people with low education, few skills and who are looking for work. This secondary evidence suggests that most people are not concerned with reducing the number of immigrants generally, but only those that they perceive will not sufficiently contribute to British society.

International students are the most popular type of immigrant, with only 15% of Conservatives reporting that they want fewer of them. This finding reflects the results from Chart 4.1 of this report and is substantiated by a recent survey from Universities UK and British Future that found that two thirds of Conservative voters are opposed to reducing student numbers.<sup>17</sup>

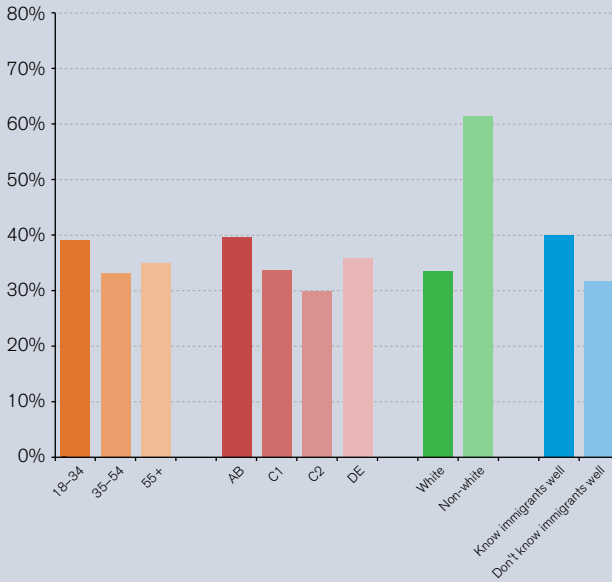
There are again certain types of Conservatives who are consistently more likely to be welcoming of different immigrants. Conservatives who are younger, wealthier, from an ethnic minority background and who know immigrants well consistently want more of different types of migrants. Chart 4.5, for instance, shows the support different types of Conservatives have for admitting more international students.

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16. Political Betting, "The polling data on immigration is perhaps more nuanced than many think", <http://www1.politicalbetting.com/index.php/archives/2014/12/21/the-polling-data-on-immigration-is-a-lot-more-nuanced-than-many-opponents-seem-to-think/#vanilla-comments> (2014).

17. British Future and Universities UK, *International students and the UK immigration debate*, <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Documents/2014/InternationalStudentsImmigrationDebate.pdf> (2014).

**Chart 4.5 The proportion of Conservatives who want more international students in the UK, by different socio-demographic characteristics of Conservatives**

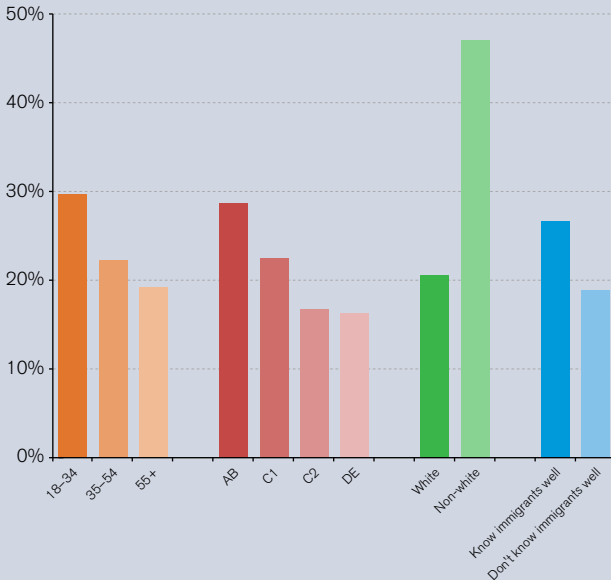


*Base: 1307 Conservative voters*

The above chart shows that 39% of Conservatives aged 18–34 actually want more international students compared to 35% of those aged 55 or above. Equally, 40% of Conservatives from the highest socioeconomic group (AB) want more international students compared to 36% from the lowest socioeconomic group (DE). Next, 61% of Conservatives from an ethnic minority background want more international students compared to 34% of white Conservatives. Finally, 40% of Conservatives who know immigrants well want more international students compared to 32% of those who do not know immigrants well.

These findings are echoed for other types of migrants. Chart 4.6 reveals the support different types of Conservatives have for admitting more skilled manual workers such as plumbers and electricians.

**Chart 4.6 The proportion of Conservatives who want more skilled manual workers in the UK, by different socio-demographic characteristics of Conservatives**



Base: 1307 Conservative voters

The above chart shows that 30% of Conservatives aged 18–34 actually want more skilled manual workers compared to 19% of those aged 55 or above. Twenty nine percent of Conservatives from the highest socioeconomic group (AB) want more skilled manual workers compared to 16% from the lowest socioeconomic group (DE). Forty seven percent of Conservatives from an ethnic minority background want more skilled manual workers compared to 21% of white

Conservatives. Finally, 27% of Conservatives who know immigrants well want more skilled manual workers compared to 19% of those who do not know immigrants well.

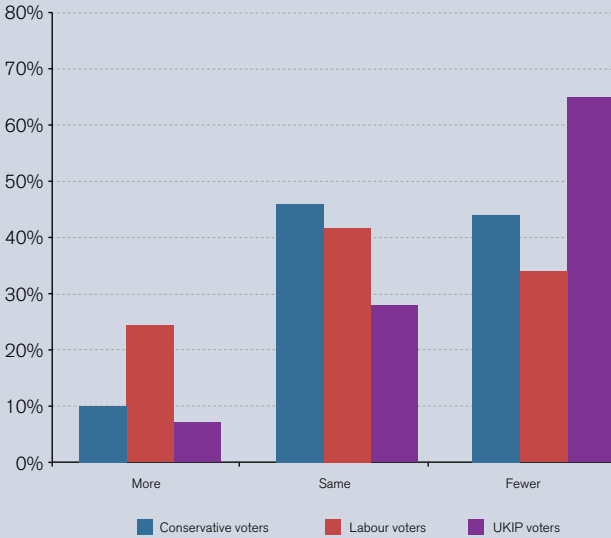
### **Which asylum applicants Conservatives would admit into the UK**

We also examined Conservative views on asylum seekers. The principles which are used to determine whether asylum seekers should be admitted are likely to be somewhat different from other migrants; need, for example, is likely to be much more important – as opposed to contribution – as a basis for determining whether an individual should be allowed into the UK. Certainly, when we asked Conservatives whether refugees should be prioritised on the basis of need rather than a shared history Britain has with the refugee's country of origin, a majority (57%) of Conservatives said need was a more compelling basis.

Chart 4.7 shows the proportion of Conservatives who want more (10%), the same (46%) or fewer (44%) asylum seekers from war-torn countries. Labour voters, by contrast, are much more likely to want more of these types of asylum seekers (24%).



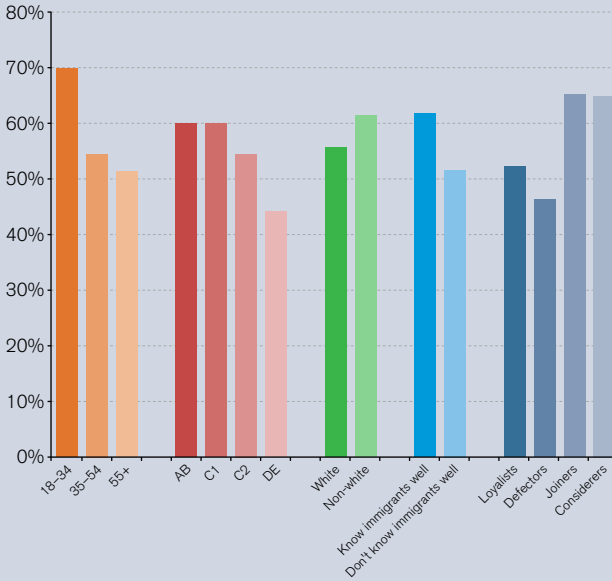
**Chart 4.7 The proportion of respondents who want to see more, the same or fewer asylum seekers from war-torn countries coming into the UK, by voting intention**



*Base: 1307 Conservative voters, 242 Labour voters and 184 UKIP voters*

Mirroring earlier results, we find that certain socio-demographic characteristics make Conservatives more likely to say they do not want a reduction in asylum seekers: being younger (70%), from an ethnic minority background (61%) and knowing immigrants well (62%). Equally, in the Conservative universe, joiners (65%) and considerers (65%) are more likely than defectors (46%) to report that they do not want to see a reduction in asylum seekers from war-torn countries. These results are displayed in Chart 4.8 below.

**Chart 4.8 The proportion of respondents who do not want to reduce asylum seekers from war-torn countries coming into the UK, by different socio-demographic characteristics of Conservatives and by different groups of the Conservative universe**

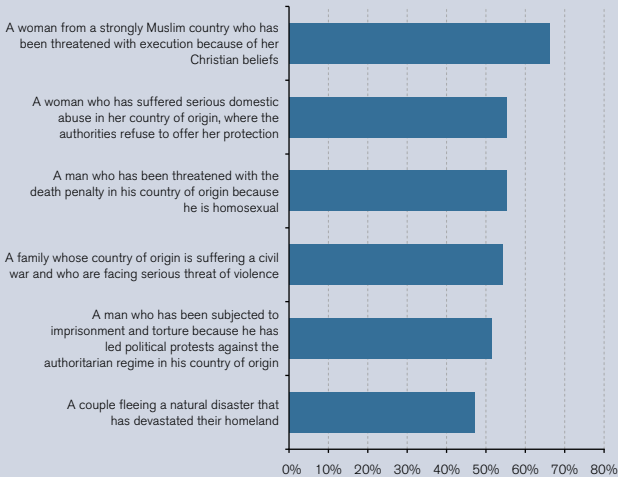


*Base: 1307 Conservative voters and 2502 respondents from the Conservative universe*

We also asked Conservatives about whether certain types of asylum applicants should be admitted into the UK. As Chart 4.9 demonstrates, in all cases but one (a couple fleeing a natural disaster that has devastated their homeland), a majority of Conservatives said they should be admitted. For instance, 55% of Conservatives said that a woman who has suffered serious domestic abuse in her country of origin, where the authorities refuse to offer her protection, should be admitted; 55% said a man who has been threatened with the death penalty in his country of origin because he is homosexual should be;

and 66% said a woman from a strongly Muslim country who has been threatened with execution because of her Christian beliefs should be.

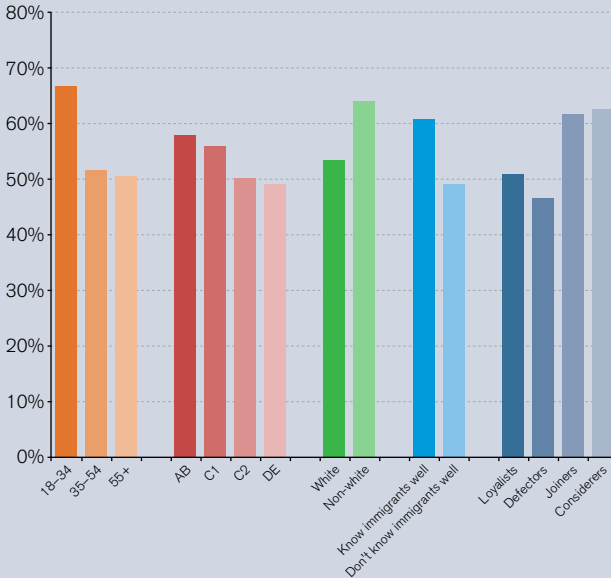
**Chart 4.9 The proportion of Conservatives who would allow particular asylum seekers to come into the UK**



*Base: 1307 Conservative voters*

There are certain socio-demographic characteristics that make Conservatives more welcoming of different types of asylum seekers. They are the same characteristics that were reported in Charts 4.2, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6 and 4.8. They were also reported in Figure 3.1. Again, being a Conservative who is younger, richer, from an ethnic minority background, and and who knows immigrants well makes you consistently more likely to be welcoming of different types of asylum seekers. An example of these results is shown in Chart 4.10 below.

**Chart 4.10 The proportion of respondents who would allow a family whose country of origin is suffering a civil war and who are facing serious threat of violence to come into the UK, by different socio-demographic characteristics of Conservatives and different groups of the Conservative universe**



Base: 1307 Conservative voters and 2502 respondents from the Conservative universe

Unsurprisingly, in the Conservative universe, joiners and considerers are consistently more likely to be welcoming than defectors of different types of asylum seekers.

#### Box 4.1 The choices facing the Conservative Party

These results present the Conservative Party with two major choices on how it positions itself on immigration. First, in the **short-term** with the 2015 General Election fast approaching, the Conservative Party could choose tougher and more restrictive immigration policies, which could appeal to the Conservative defectors to UKIP. But the risk is that such an approach jars with the more welcoming stance that the crucial joiners and considerers, and probably some defectors as well as loyalists, palpably have on immigration.

Second, in the **long-term**, the Conservative Party has to choose a stance on immigration that either aligns with the views of its older and white supporters, who don't know immigrants well, or fits with its younger and more ethnically diverse supporters, who know immigrants well. Undoubtedly, because of demographic changes, this latter group is going to represent a bigger part of the Conservative support base in the future.

Chapter three established that Conservatives believe that getting immigrants who will contribute to the UK is a more important public policy aim than lowering overall numbers. Indeed, in this chapter we found that when Conservatives were asked about particular types of migrants, including asylum applicants, the majority were in favour of admitting them. Likewise, a majority of Conservatives were opposed to reducing the number of most immigrants, especially those who are deemed to contribute most, such as international students. Particular types of Conservatives – younger, richer, an ethnic minority, know immigrants well – were more likely to be welcoming of different types of immigrants. Those Conservatives defecting (mostly to UKIP) stood out as the least welcoming of immigrants.

It seems that the Conservative Party would be more in tune with its supporters, especially those who will represent a growing part of its support base in the future, if its determination of who should be allowed to migrate into the UK was based on the merit of individual cases rather than indiscriminately reducing overall numbers.

## Chapter 5: **The impact of immigration**

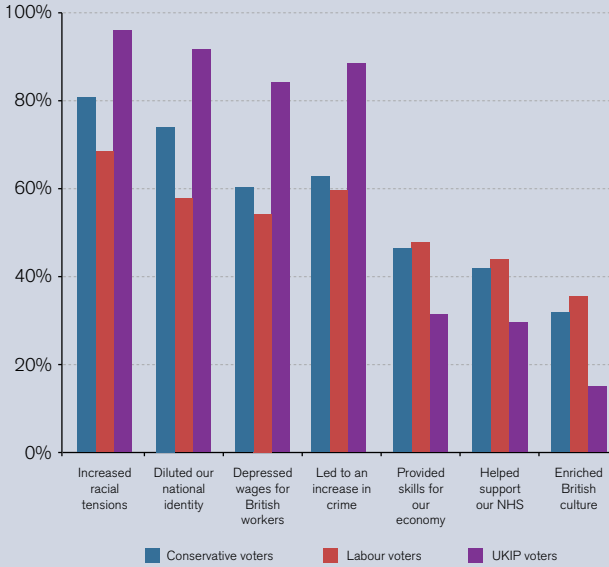
This chapter examines how different Conservatives and voters within the Conservative universe view the impact of immigration on Britain generally, both economically and culturally.

### **The impact of immigration**

Chart 5.1 signifies that, generally, Conservatives have negative views of the perceived impact of immigration on Britain. A majority of Conservatives strongly or somewhat agreed (we will report these together as net agreement) with all of the proposed negative impacts, which were chosen because they are commonly cited in public debate. So, 74% agreed that immigration has diluted our national identity; 60% agreed that it has depressed the wages of British workers; 81% agreed that it has increased racial tensions; and 63% agreed that it has increased crime.

Meanwhile, only 46% agreed that immigration has provided skills for the economy. In fact, our results show that nearly a quarter of Conservatives disagreed that immigration has provided skills for the economy. Additionally, only 32% of Conservatives agreed that immigration has enriched British culture; 39% disagreed with this. Finally, only 42% agreed that immigration has helped to support the NHS.

**Chart 5.1 Agreement with commonly perceived impacts of immigration, by voting intention**



*Base: 1307 Conservative voters, 242 Labour voters and 185 UKIP voters, minus those who responded 'Don't know'*

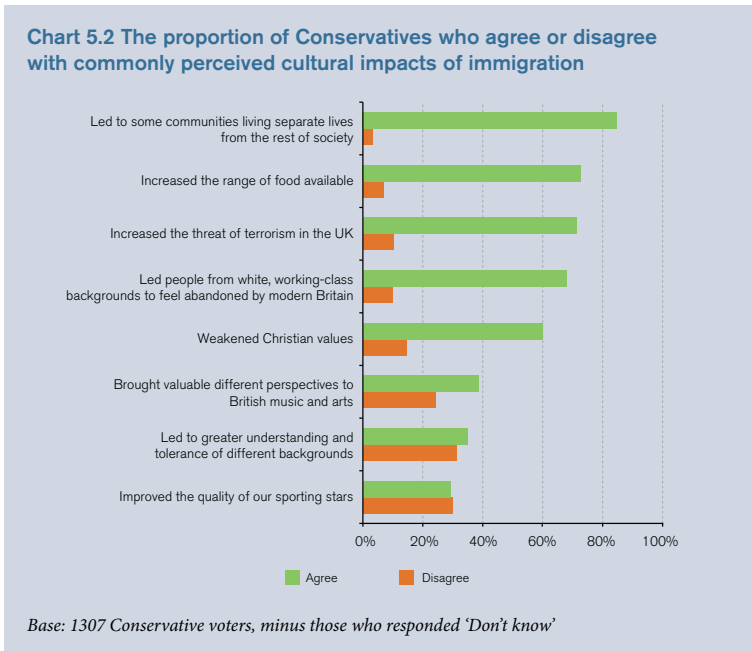
What is interesting is that Conservatives generally sit between Labour voters and those intending to vote UKIP at the next General Election in their views on the impact of immigration. On the whole, they are more negative about the impact of immigration than Labour voters, but less negative than those intending to vote UKIP.

## The cultural impact of immigration

Our polling suggests that Conservatives are most concerned about the cultural impact of immigration, anxious about its effect on our culture, race relations, crime rates and national identity. We wanted to dig deeper into unearthing Conservatives' perception of the cultural



impact of immigration. Chart 5.2 shows that Conservatives have negative views of the cultural impact immigration has had on Britain.



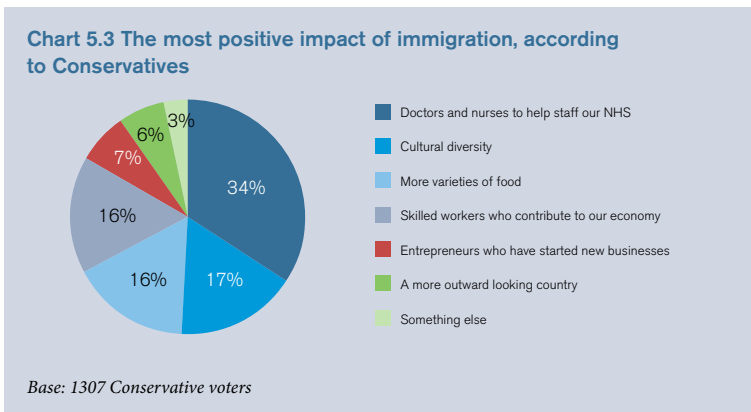
Strikingly, a majority of Conservatives believe immigration has increased the threat of terrorism (71%), weakened Christian values (60%) and led to an abandonment of the white-working class (68%). Only a minority of Conservatives believe immigration has increased understanding and tolerance (35%), the quality of our music and arts (39%) and the quality of sports stars (29%). Seventy three percent of Conservatives do think that immigration has increased the range of food available, however.

Of all the perceived impacts of immigration, Conservatives feel most strongly that it has led to communities living separate lives (85%). We established in Chapter three that Conservatives believe

an important policy aim for our immigration system is ensuring immigrants integrate well into British society. This is especially the case for Conservatives that are – for instance – younger, wealthier and from an ethnic minority background. In Chapter six, we explore in detail the views and experiences of Conservatives on whether immigrants really are poorly integrated, as the polling in Chart 5.2 indicates.

### Any positives?

We pushed Conservatives to offer their views on commonly perceived positive impacts of immigration. Chart 5.3 shows that, when pushed, Conservatives are more likely to say that the biggest benefit of immigration has been the doctors and nurses that work in our health system, with 34% of Conservatives opting for this.

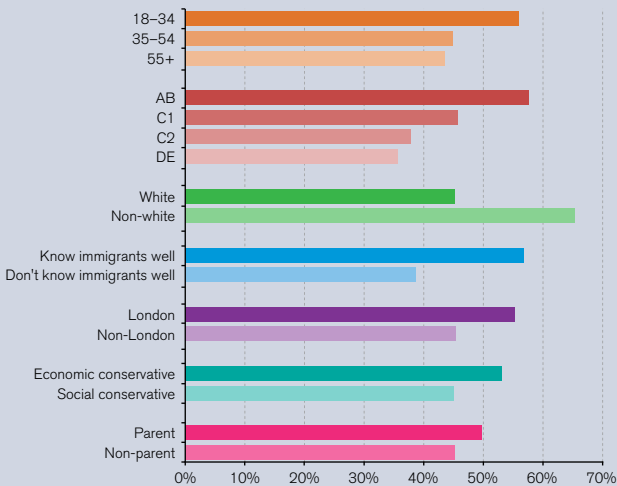


### Variance according to socio-demographic characteristics and voting behaviour

We showed in Chapters three and four that certain socio-demographic characteristics make Conservatives less fixated on reducing immigration and more welcoming of different types of immigrants. Predictably, those same socio-demographic characteristics also make Conservatives more

positive about the impact of immigration on Britain. Conservatives who are younger, richer, from an ethnic minority background, and who know immigrants well are consistently more likely to be positive about the economic and cultural impact of immigration. Chart 5.4 exemplifies the views of different types of Conservatives on whether immigration has provided more skills for the economy.

**Chart 5.4 Proportion of Conservatives agreeing that immigration has provided skills for the economy, by different socio-demographic characteristics of Conservatives**



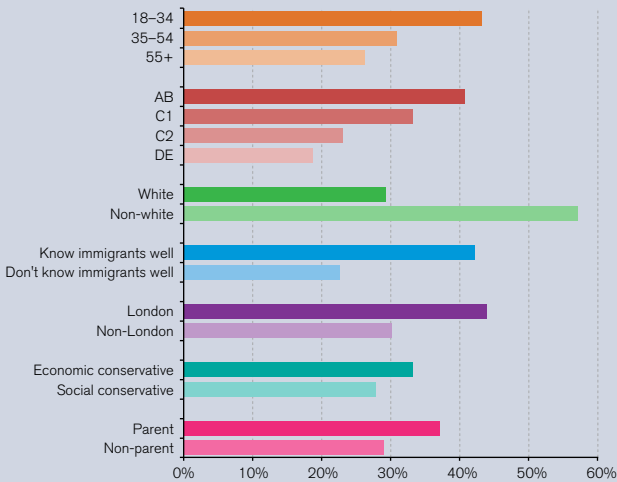
*Base: 1307 Conservative voters, minus those who responded 'Don't know'*

The above chart shows that a majority (56%) of Conservatives aged 18-34 believe that immigration has provided skills for the economy, compared to a minority (44%) of those aged 55 or above. Equally, a majority (58%) of Conservatives from the highest socioeconomic group (AB) agreed that immigration has provided skills for the economy compared to a minority (36%) of Conservatives from the lowest socioeconomic group (DE). Sixty five percent of Conservatives

from an ethnic minority background agreed compared to 45% of white Conservatives. Finally, 57% of Conservatives who know migrants well agreed compared to 39% of those who don't know migrants well.

Chart 5.5 below explores the perceived cultural impact of immigration. The results are similar to the results for perceptions of economic impact. Forty four percent of Conservatives aged 18–34 agreed that immigration has enriched British culture, compared to only 27% of those aged 55 or above. Forty two percent of Conservatives from the highest socioeconomic group (AB) agreed that immigration has enriched British culture compared to only 19% of Conservatives from the lowest socioeconomic group (DE). Fifty nine percent of Conservatives from an ethnic minority background agreed compared to 30% of white Conservatives. Finally, 43% of Conservatives who know migrants well agreed, compared to 23% of those who don't know migrants well.

**Chart 5.5 Agreement of Conservatives on whether immigration has enriched British culture, by different socio-demographic characteristics of Conservatives**



*Base: 1307 Conservative voters, minus those who responded 'Don't know'*

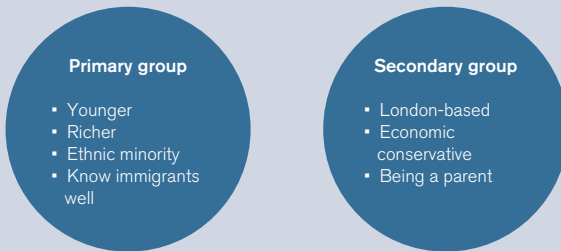
The results in Charts 5.4 and 5.5 also indicate that there are other socio-demographic characteristics that influence to some extent how Conservatives view the impact of immigration. Conservatives who live in London are slightly more likely to be positive about the economic and cultural impact of immigration. For instance, 45% of Conservatives who live in London believe that immigration has enriched British culture, much higher than Conservatives in other regions. Similarly, 53% of economic conservatives say immigration has provided skills for the economy as opposed to 45% of social conservatives. Conservatives who are parents are more likely to be positive about the cultural impact than non-parents: 38% versus 30%.

### Box 5.1 The importance of different socio-demographic characteristics in shaping Conservative views on immigration

As Chapters three, four and five have disclosed, there are certain socio-demographic characteristics that are consistently associated with more welcoming and positive views of immigration: namely, being young, richer, an ethnic minority and knowing migrants.

Other characteristics such as being London-based, an economic conservative and a parent are sometimes associated with more welcoming or positive views, but not consistently.

Essentially, we can divide these socio-demographic characteristics into two groups: a prime group, which includes characteristics that are consistently associated with more welcoming and positive views, and a secondary group, which includes characteristics that are sometimes associated with more welcoming and positive views.

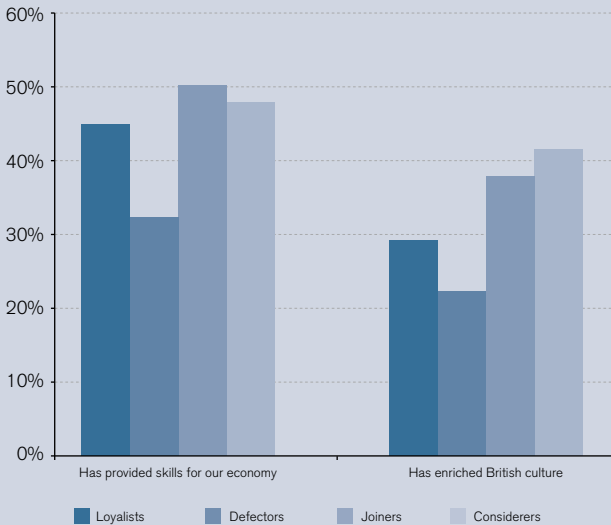


Though Conservatives with certain socio-demographic characteristics are more likely to be positive about the cultural impact of immigration, overall it seems these Conservative groups still tend to believe that immigration has had a negative effect on Britain's culture. Looking at younger Conservatives aged 18–34, it is still the case that 58% believe it has diluted our national identity; a significant minority (41%) believe it has increased crime; 67% believe it has increased racial tensions; 53% believe it has increased the threat of terrorism; and

nearly half (48%) believe it has led to the abandonment of the white working-class.

Analysing the views of the impact of immigration by different voters in the Conservative universe reveals a typical trend: the joiners and considerers are much more likely to be positive about the impact of immigration than defectors. Chart 5.6 illustrates the views of different voters within the Conservative universe on the different commonly cited impacts of immigration.

**Chart 5.6 Agreement with commonly perceived impacts of immigration, by different groups within the Conservative universe**



*Base: 2502 respondents from the Conservative universe, minus those who responded 'Don't know'*

It is worth highlighting that Conservative loyalists are more similar to joiners and considerers than Conservative defectors in their views on the impact of immigration. Though all voters are generally negative about the impact of immigration, it is clear that loyalists, joiners and considerers are more likely to be positive about the impact.

## A balanced agenda

The task for the Conservative Party is to achieve balance in the way it discusses the impact of immigration, talking about the positives as well as highlighting the challenges it brings. This balance is needed to enable the Conservative Party to speak to defectors and the joiners and considerers it needs to command a majority at the General Election.

In his recent speech on immigration in late November 2014, the Prime Minister began by talking about the benefits of immigration, listing the contribution different immigrant communities have made to Britain and concluding that “we are Great Britain because of immigration, not in spite of it”.<sup>18</sup> He then went on to talk about the pressures immigration brings, on our welfare system, social housing and public services. This balanced messaging is critical for the Conservative Party to sustain a broad coalition of voters within the Conservative universe.

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18. The Spectator, “David Cameron’s immigration speech: full text”, *The Spectator*, 28 November, 2014.



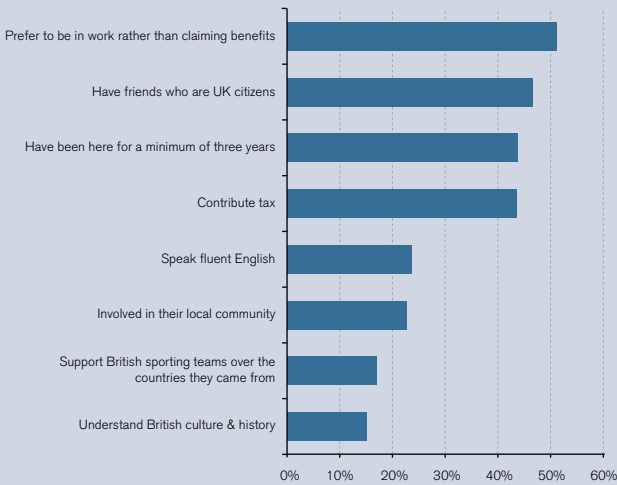
## Chapter 6: **Personal experience with immigrants**

In this chapter, we explore how different Conservatives and voters within the Conservative universe interact with immigrants, and the quality of the different experiences they have. This will enable us to compare Conservatives' negative views of the impact of immigration, which was established in Chapter five, with their views on their actual experiences with immigrants.

### **What do Conservatives think most immigrants in the UK do?**

Chapter three revealed that ensuring immigrants are integrating into British society is important for Conservatives. There was particular enthusiasm for ensuring immigrants spoke fluent English, wanted to work and contributed tax, with a consensus emerging between all voters of the importance of these activities. When Conservatives are asked if immigrants in the UK do these activities, alongside other activities, for nearly all of them a majority of Conservatives say it is not true for most immigrants. This is illustrated in Chart 6.1 below.

**Chart 6.1 What most immigrants do in the UK, according to Conservatives**

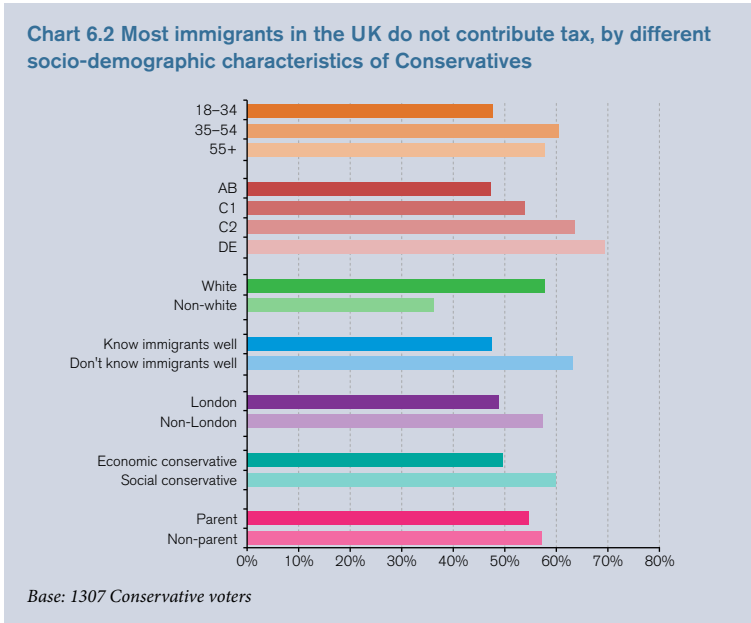


*Base: 1307 Conservative voters*

Seventy six percent of Conservatives say it is not true for most immigrants in the UK that they speak fluent English. Fifty seven percent of Conservatives say it is not true for most immigrants in the UK that they contribute tax. In fact, of all the activities cited, only preferring to work to being on benefits has the support of a majority of Conservatives: but only just, with 49% saying it is not true for most immigrants in the UK.

Similar to findings in previous chapters, certain socio-demographic characteristics make Conservatives more positive about what immigrants in the UK do: namely, the prime group of characteristics identified in Box 5.1 of being younger, richer, from an ethnic minority background and knowing immigrants well. In fact, even the secondary group of characteristics identified in Box 5.1 play a role to some extent in varying the views of Conservatives. Chart 6.2, for example,

shows how Conservatives' views towards whether immigrants in the UK contribute tax varies according to different socio-demographic characteristics.



## What do Conservatives think immigrants do in their local community?

Though some types of Conservatives are more positive about what immigrants do, it is still the case that a substantial number of these types of Conservatives, and Conservatives generally, are doubtful that immigrants in the UK are doing what they deem to be important for being a fully integrated British citizen.

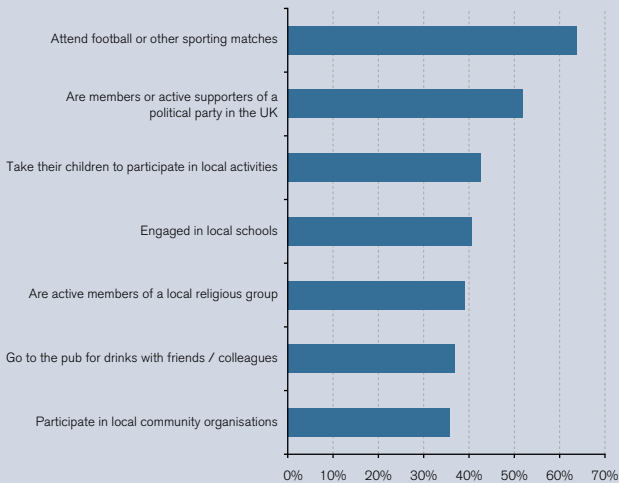
Could it be the case that Conservatives are more positive about the participation of immigrants in their local communities? This hypothesis was tested by focusing only on the answers of those Conservatives who

know immigrants well, a group determined through a methodology described in detail in Chapter two. The question we asked was, “Thinking only about immigrants you know well personally, which of the following things do they do in your local community?”, therefore moving Conservative respondents’ perceptions away from immigrants in the UK generally to those they know in their local community.

Chart 6.3 illustrates that Conservatives are indeed much more positive about the participation of immigrants they know in their local community. A firm majority (72%) of those who know immigrants well say that immigrants definitely or to some extent (which we reported as net agreement that immigrants are participating) participate in local community organisations; a firm majority (74%) say that immigrants go to the pub; 86% say that immigrants take their children to local activities; and 79% say that immigrants are active members of a local religious group.

The results stand in stark contrast to the results of Chart 5.2, which showed an overwhelming majority of Conservatives (82%) believed that the impact of immigration had been communities living separate lives. They also stand in stark contrast to Chart 6.1 which shows under a quarter of Conservatives believe most immigrants in the UK are involved in their local community.

**Chart 6.3 What personally known immigrants do definitely or to some extent in their local community, according to Conservatives**



*Base: 419 Conservative voters, minus those who responded 'Don't know'*

What is notable is that the results on what immigrants who are known do in their local area are, in most cases, positive and similar for Conservatives with different socio-demographic characteristics and different voters from the Conservative universe. Seventy three percent of white Conservatives who know immigrants well say that immigrants participate in local community organisations, similar to the 70% of Conservatives from an ethnic minority background. Seventy six percent of poorer Conservatives who know immigrants well say immigrants they know go to the pub, similarly high to the 77% of richer Conservatives who say they do. Eighty four percent of those aged 55 or above who know immigrants well say immigrants they know are

active members of a local religious group compared to 77% of those aged 18–34 who say they are.

#### Box 6.1 The importance of knowing migrants

There is considerable academic evidence showing that increased contact with migrants weakens anti-immigration sentiment. The results from our polling confirm this. Knowing migrants well is a primary socio-demographic characteristic, as explained in Box 5.1, that makes Conservatives less likely to focus on reducing immigration numbers. They are also more likely to be welcoming of different types of immigrants and positive about the impact of immigration. As this chapter has shown, they are also more likely to be positive about what immigrants do. If politicians and policymakers are looking to improve attitudes towards the immigration system and immigrants, they should seek to find ways of enabling non-immigrants and immigrants to increase interaction and develop relationships with one another.

Actually, even 74% of defectors who know immigrants well say that immigrants they know take their children to local activities, compared to 76% of joiners and 79% of considerers. Seventy one percent of defectors who know immigrants well say immigrants they know are active members of a local religious group, in contrast to 79% of considerers and 76% of joiners. So, even though defectors are slightly less likely to be positive about the local participation of immigrants they know, they are still overwhelmingly likely to agree that immigrants they know participate in different activities in their local area.

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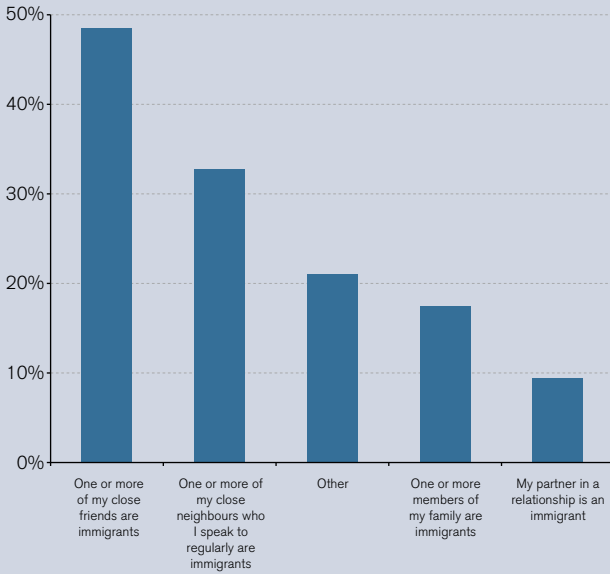
19. Sunder Katwala et al, *How to talk about immigration*, 37.

## The type of relationships Conservatives have with immigrants

Considering that interaction is so important for making perceptions of immigrants and the immigration system more positive, we wanted to explore the type and quality of relationships Conservatives have with immigrants. As explained in Chapter two, one question was asked to identify whether respondents knew one or more immigrants well, which enabled comparisons of the views of Conservatives on different aspects of immigration in the UK, which were reported in earlier chapters. But the following sections enable us to dig deeper into the types of experiences Conservatives have on an everyday basis. This will show us if there is a difference between broadly negative perceptions of immigration generally, and the everyday experiences Conservatives have with immigrants.

Chart 6.4 shows that, of Conservatives who know immigrants well, half have close friends who are immigrants, nearly one in ten are in a relationship with an immigrant, nearly one in five have a family member who is an immigrant, and a third have close neighbours who they regularly talk to who are immigrants.

**Chart 6.4 The type of relationship Conservatives who know immigrants well have with immigrants**

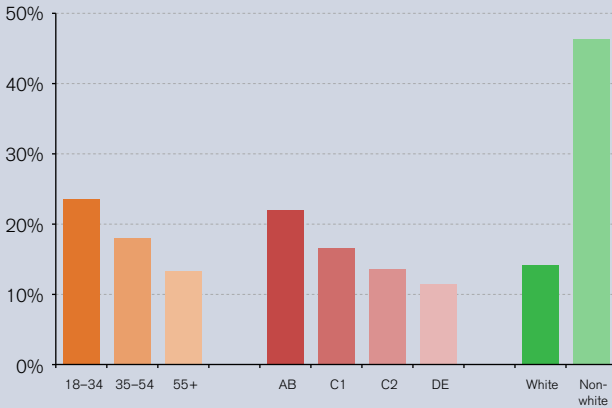


*Base: 537 Conservative voters*

Conservatives who know immigrants well and who are younger, richer and from an ethnic minority background are more likely to say that they have immigrants who are close friends or have a family member who is an immigrant. This is depicted in Chart 6.5 and Chart 6.6.

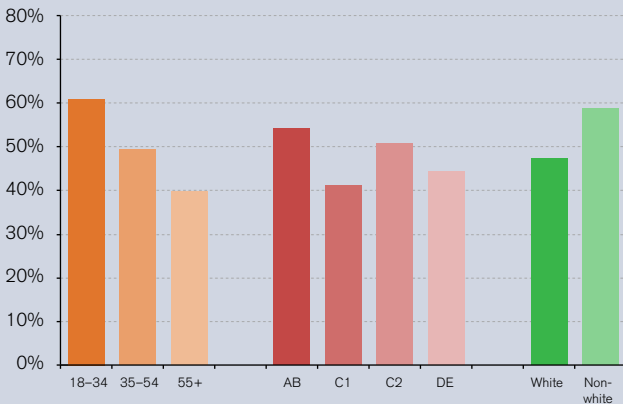


**Chart 6.5** The proportion of Conservatives who know immigrants well who have one or more immigrants as family members, according to different socio-demographic characteristics of Conservatives



Base: 537 Conservative voters

**Chart 6.6** The proportion of Conservatives who know immigrants well who have one or more close friends who are immigrants, according to different socio-demographic characteristics of Conservatives



Base: 537 Conservative voters

### Box 6.2 Cosmopolitans vs. communitarians

In 2014, The Economist published an article claiming that the real dividing line in Britain was between the attitudes of communitarians – who are more likely to be older, socially conservative, poorer and live in rural or suburban areas – and cosmopolitans – who are more likely to be younger, socially liberal, richer and live in urban areas. One of the main dividing issues between these groups is immigration, with the former more sceptical about immigration than the latter.

Our polling reflected this division: younger and richer, and sometimes London-based, Conservatives were more welcoming of different immigrants, more positive about the impact of immigration, and more positive about what immigrants do. This chapter has also shown that, compared to other Conservatives who know immigrants well, they are more likely to have friends, family members and partners who are immigrants.

The Conservative Party has to find a way of engaging both its more communitarian and cosmopolitan supporters. But the socio-demographic characteristics of those who are more positive about immigration – being younger, from an ethnic minority background, living in an urban area – are going to represent a bigger proportion of the electorate in the decades ahead.

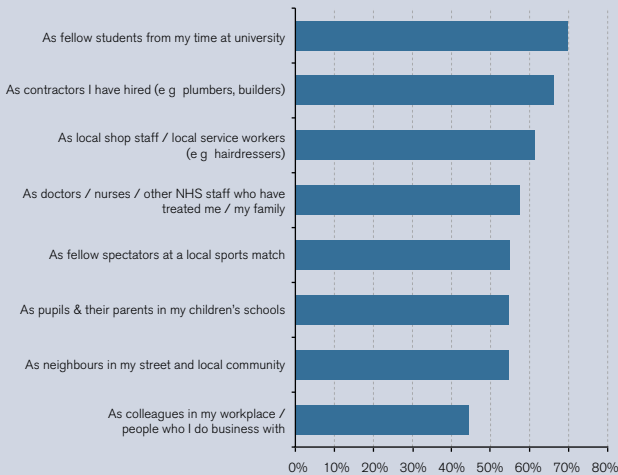
## The quality of interactions Conservatives have with immigrants

As well as examining the types of relationships Conservatives have with immigrants, we also explored the quality of their interactions with immigrants. Our polling revealed that Conservatives are more likely to interact with immigrants when they are staff in a local shop (63% of Conservative reported they interacted with these people) and

nurses and doctors in the NHS (69% of Conservative reported they interacted with these people). About half of all Conservatives say that immigrants are colleagues in the workplace or people they do business with, and two in five Conservatives say they have neighbours who are immigrants.

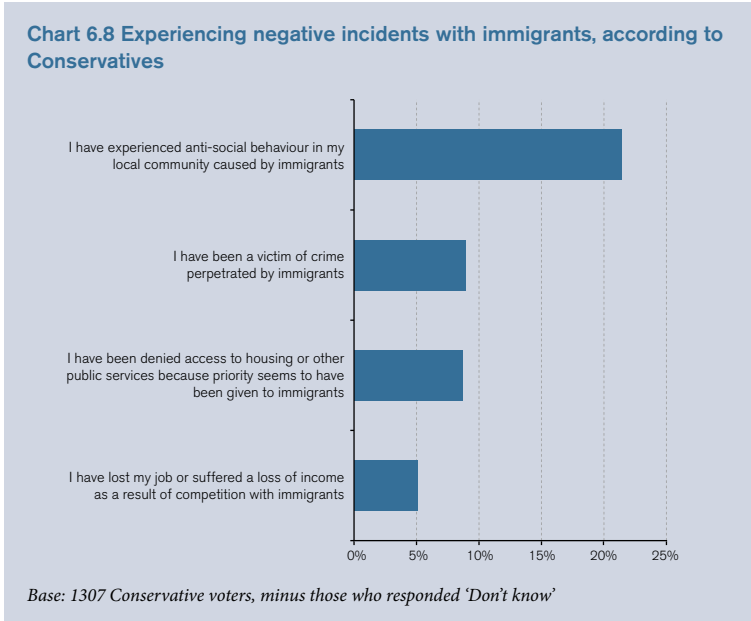
Chart 6.7 shows that in all scenarios other than at work or with immigrants they do business with, Conservatives report that they have a strongly or somewhat positive (which we report as net positive) experience of immigrants. But only 7% of Conservatives say that they have a strongly or somewhat negative experience with immigrants they work or do business with; nearly half say it is neither positive nor negative. University is by far the most positive environment for when Conservatives mix with immigrants, with 70% of Conservatives saying it was a positive experience when they interacted with their fellow students from their time at university.

**Chart 6.7 Proportion of different interactions with immigrants regarded as positive by Conservatives**



Base: 1307 Conservative voters

Finally, we asked Conservatives if they had experienced any negative incidents with immigrants. For all negative incidents, an overwhelming majority of Conservatives had not experienced them. This is illustrated in Chart 6.8 below.



Only 9% of Conservatives said they had been a victim of a crime by an immigrant. This contrasts with the earlier finding in Chart 5.1, which showed that 63% of Conservatives thought immigration had increased crime. In fact, younger Conservatives were more likely than older Conservatives to report that they had been a victim of crime by an immigrant: 15% of 18–34 year olds said they had been a victim compared to 7% of those aged 55 or above. However, as we have shown, younger Conservatives are significantly less likely than older Conservatives to say immigration has led to an increase in crime.

Only 41% of 18–34 year olds think it has led to an increase in crime compared to 71% of those aged 55 or above.

Similarly, only a small minority (5%) of Conservatives said they had lost their job or seen a drop in their income as a result of competition with immigrants. In fact, our polling showed that 91% of Conservatives from the lowest socioeconomic group (DE) said that they had not lost their job or seen a drop in their income as a result of competition with immigrants.

Do any Conservatives believe they have been denied access to housing or other public services because priority seems to have been given to immigrants? Only 9% of Conservatives believed this. Eighty five percent of those from the lowest socioeconomic group (DE) said they had not experienced being denied access to housing or other public services because of immigrants.

### **A positive story on integration**

This chapter has shown that, once Conservatives are asked about their personal experiences with immigrants, they become much more positive about immigrants' participation in local community life and the experiences they have had with immigrants. They may not think it of immigrants generally, but Conservatives do believe that immigrants they know are 'contributing' culturally. This indicates that there is a 'perception gap' between Conservative views of immigrants generally and the immigrants they know and have experienced. Conservatives are much more negative about the effect of immigration generally, but much more positive about its effect on their lives and in their local communities.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

The aim of this report was to unearth the views of Conservatives towards immigration to help inform our year-long project of shaping a balanced policy agenda on immigration for the centre-right of British politics.

We found that Conservatives do indeed have distinctive views on immigration, especially in contrast to those intending to vote Labour and UKIP. Our report examined what Conservative views are on: the ideal aims and policies on immigration; which types of migrants should be let in; the impact of immigration; and their own experiences of migrants.

The report revealed six main findings:

- **Conservatives want an immigration system where competence and contribution are prioritised.**

Conservatives primarily want an immigration system that is well managed, keeping out illegal immigrants, and ensures only those who ‘contribute’ come into the UK. These public policy aims are more important to them than restricting the number of immigrants. In contrast, UKIP supporters are much more concerned about restricting the overall number of immigrants. Labour supporters, meanwhile, put stronger emphasis on making sure immigrants are treated with compassion.

- **The most important policy relating to immigration for Conservatives is restricting migrants' access to benefits.**

This is more significant than tightening the immigration cap on non-EU migrants or withdrawing from the EU principle of free movement of workers, which are more important to UKIP supporters.

- **Conservatives do not want to see a reduction in the number of 'contributing' immigrants to the UK.**

This includes international students in particular, but also skilled professional and skilled manual workers. Whether it is a qualified care worker, a seasonal fruit picker from the EU, a pensioner from the EU or the spouse of a British citizen on the minimum wage, most Conservatives would let these migrants in. Moreover, Conservatives are more welcoming of these different types of migrants who have or will contribute than UKIP supporters.

- **Most Conservatives generally have a negative view of the overall impact of immigration, which contrasts with the positive views they have of their experiences with immigrants they know.**

Most Conservatives felt that immigration has had a negative impact on British culture. In particular, there was strong agreement that it had led to communities living separate lives. Most Conservatives were also sceptical of immigration having any positive economic impact on skills or wages. However, when asked about immigrants they know or have had experience of, Conservatives overwhelmingly agreed that immigrants participate in and contribute to their local community (for example, in schools, in religious organisations or going to the pub), and that the personal interactions they have had with immigrants were positive. Very few Conservatives say they have experienced crime by immigrants, lost a job or seen a fall in their wages because of

immigration, or been denied access to housing or other public services because of immigration.

- **Certain socio-demographic characteristics make Conservatives consistently more likely to be positive about immigration in the UK, presenting the Conservative Party and the centre-right with a long-term choice about how it approaches immigration**

This report has identified four prime socio-demographic characteristics that make Conservatives consistently less focused on reducing the number of immigrants, more welcoming of different types of immigrants including asylum seekers, more positive about the impact of immigration, more positive about what immigrants do, and more likely to have friends or family members who are immigrants. These socio-demographic characteristics are: being younger, more affluent, from an ethnic minority background, and knowing migrants well. There are a set of secondary socio-demographic characteristics – for example, being a parent or London-based – which also alter Conservative views as described above, but only sometimes. Social changes mean that most of these prime social groups will be a more important part of the centre-right's support base in the years ahead. The Conservative Party, and the centre-right generally, therefore has an important decision to make on whether it better reflects the more positive outlook of these social groups on immigration in the decades ahead.

- **The centre-right encompasses a wide range of voters with differing views on immigration, and the Conservative Party faces a short-term choice about how it approaches immigration to win the General Election.**

This report has explained that, in the Conservative universe, there are four broad categories of voters: loyalists, defectors, joiners and considerers. In contrast to defectors (largely to UKIP),



joiners and considerers are consistently less focused on reducing the number of immigrants, more welcoming of different types of immigrants including asylum seekers, more positive about the impact of immigration, more positive about what immigrants do, and more likely to have friends or family members who are immigrants. In most cases, loyalists are more similar to the joiners and considerers than defectors. Therefore, the Conservative Party faces an immediate decision in advance of the upcoming General Election. It needs more than the votes of the loyalists to win. Does it try to appeal to the more positive joiners and considerers, who are more aligned with the views of its loyalists, or does it try to appeal to the more negative defectors?

This report has demonstrated the distinctiveness of Conservative views on immigration, which can help provide the underlying principles for a more balanced centre-right policy agenda on immigration. Certainly, the Conservative Party does not need to pursue mimicry (of UKIP) or muteness (on immigration). Conservatives have a reasonable and clear position: they want an immigration system that is fairer and welcoming of contributors. They are not against immigration per se, but against what they perceive as unfair immigration. In essence, they want to build a contributory-based immigration system.

## Annex 1: **POLLING QUESTIONS**

### **1) What type of person do you most often think of when you hear the word ‘immigrant’?**

- An asylum seeker
- An Eastern European migrant worker
- A student coming to study in the UK
- A partner / family member of someone already in the UK coming to live with them
- Someone who has come to the UK and opened a local shop or business
- An unemployed person coming to the UK to claim benefits

### **2) Which of the following statements is most accurate?**

- I know well personally one or more immigrants to the UK
- I do not know well personally any immigrants to the UK

[For those who know well]

### **3) How do you know well immigrants to the UK?**

[tick all that apply]

- One or more of my close friends are immigrants
- My partner in a relationship is an immigrant
- One or more members of my family are immigrants

- One or more of my close neighbours who I speak to regularly are immigrants
- Other [please state]

**4) In which of the following situations, if any, have you personally experienced interactions with immigrants to the UK?**

[Have experienced / Have not experienced / Not sure]

- As colleagues in my workplace/ people who I do business with
- As doctors / nurses / other NHS staff who have treated me / my family
- As local shop staff / local service workers (e.g. hairdressers)
- As contractors I have hired (e.g. plumbers, builders)
- As neighbours in my street and local community
- As fellow students from my time at university
- As pupils & their parents in my children's schools
- As fellow spectators at a local sports match

[For each selected]

**5) Please describe , on average, each of the types of experiences you have had with immigrants to the UK as 'positive' or 'negative' experiences.**

- Strongly positive
- Somewhat positive
- Neither positive nor negative
- Somewhat negative
- Strongly negative

**6) Which of the following situations, if any, have you personally experienced?**

[Have experienced / Have not experienced / Not sure]

- I have been a victim of crime perpetrated by immigrants
- I have lost my job or suffered a loss of income as a result of competition with immigrants
- I have been denied access to housing or other public services because priority seems to have been given to immigrants
- I have experienced anti-social behaviour in my local community caused by immigrants

**7) Imagine the following potential immigrants wanting to come to the UK. In each case, please select whether you think they should be allowed to immigrate to the UK, or not.**

- ‘Someone who is a highly qualified software engineer wanting to work in the UK, but who has no savings and does not have a specific job lined up in the UK in advance’
- ‘Someone who has no job, but has several million pounds in savings and wants to buy property in the UK and shares in UK companies’
- ‘A professional sports player who has been offered a chance to play with a sports club in the UK’
- ‘A pensioner from another EU country who has a moderate pension and wants to buy a house and retire in the UK’
- ‘A temporary migrant worker from Eastern Europe who comes each summer to work on a farm in the UK picking fruit’
- ‘A qualified care worker who has been offered a job working in a care home for the elderly in the UK’
- ‘A man from Kenya with no job and no savings who is looking for a better life for themselves’

- 'A South Korean woman who is married to a British man and has two children with him, where he works full time on the minimum wage'
- 'A Chinese student who wants to pay to come and study for 3 years at a UK university'

**8) The UK is currently signed up to the UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, which obliges the UK to protect refugees on its territory and to avoid returning them to their country of origin if they have a 'well-founded fear' for their life or freedom.**

**Which of the following statements is closest to your opinion?**

- The UK should remain signed up to this convention as we should be proud of our historic practice of taking in refugees from other countries
- The UK should withdraw from this convention as we should not have to provide asylum for large numbers of refugees from abroad
- Don't know

**9) Imagine the following refugees who are seeking asylum in the UK. In each case, please select whether you think they should be granted asylum in the UK, or not.**

- 'A woman who has suffered serious domestic abuse in her country of origin, where the authorities refuse to offer her protection'
- 'A man who has been threatened with the death penalty in his country of origin because he is homosexual'
- 'A family whose country of origin is suffering a civil war and who are facing serious threat of violence'
- 'A woman from a strongly Muslim country who has been threatened with execution because of her Christian beliefs'

- 'A man who has been subjected to imprisonment and torture because he has led political protests against the authoritarian regime in his country of origin'
- 'A couple fleeing a natural disaster that has devastated their homeland'

**10) How should we prioritise which refugees to admit to the UK?**

- Prioritise those from countries we have a historic link with e.g. Commonwealth countries
- Prioritise those whose situation is most severe regardless of country
- Don't know

**11) How important do you think each of the following factors is in determining when an immigrant can be considered a fully-integrated UK citizen?**

[Rank from most important to least important factor]

- Speaks fluent English
- Contributes tax
- Understands British culture & history
- Has friends who are UK citizens
- Is involved in their local community
- Has been here for a minimum of three years
- Supports British sporting teams over the countries they came from
- Prefers to be in work rather than claiming benefits

**12) Which of the following do you think is or is not true for most immigrants currently in the UK?**

- Speaks fluent English
- Contributes tax
- Understands British culture & history
- Has friends who are UK citizens
- Is involved in their local community
- Has been here for a minimum of three years
- Supports British sporting teams over the countries they came from
- Prefers to be in work rather than claiming benefits

[For those who know immigrants well personally]

**13) Thinking only about immigrants you know well personally, which of the following things do they do in your local community?**

[Yes, they definitely do / Some of them / to an extent / No, not at all / Don't know]

- Attend football or other sporting matches
- Are active members of a local religious group
- Are members or active supporters of a political party in the UK
- Go to the pub for drinks with friends / colleagues
- Participate in local community organisations
- Engaged in local schools
- Take their children to participate in local activities

**14) In terms of the impact immigration has had on Britain over recent decades, how much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?**

[Strongly agree / Somewhat agree / Neither agree nor disagree / Somewhat disagree / Strongly disagree / Don't know]

- Immigration has provided skills for our economy
- Immigration has diluted our national identity
- Immigration has depressed wages for British workers
- Immigration has enriched British culture
- Immigration has led to an increase in crime
- Immigration has helped support our NHS
- Immigration has increased racial tensions

**15) What do you think the impact of immigration has been on British culture?**

[Strongly agree / Somewhat agree / Neither agree nor disagree / Somewhat disagree / Strongly disagree / Don't know]

- It has increased the range of food available
- It has improved the quality of our sporting stars
- It has increased the threat of terrorism in the UK
- It has led to some communities living separate lives from the rest of society
- It has weakened Christian values
- It has led people from white, working-class backgrounds to feel abandoned by modern Britain
- It has led to greater understanding and tolerance of different backgrounds
- It has brought valuable different perspectives to British music and arts



**16) If you had to pick one benefit that immigrants have brought to the UK over recent decades what would it be?**

- More varieties of food
- Cultural diversity
- Entrepreneurs who have started new businesses
- Skilled workers to contribute to our economy
- A more outward looking country with connections around the world
- Doctors and nurses to help staff our NHS
- Something else (please state)

**17) Which of the following statements is closest to your opinion?**

- The government should focus on getting the overall number of immigrants down, even if that makes it harder to get the kinds of immigrants who contribute substantially to our economy and society
- The government should focus on getting the kind of immigrants who contribute substantially to our economy and society, even if that makes it harder to get the overall number of immigrants down
- Don't know

**18) Which of the following statements is closest to your opinion?**

- The government should focus on getting the overall number of immigrants down, before worrying about whether immigrants that do come to the UK are integrating into British society
- The government should focus on making sure that immigrants that do come to the UK are integrating into British society, before worrying about getting the overall number of immigrants down

**19) If you could make two changes to government policy on immigration, what would they be?**

- Withdraw from free movement of workers rules in the EU
- Tighten the immigration cap on immigrants from outside the EU
- Increase the period before new immigrants can claim benefits from 3 months to at least a year
- Increase the level of border policing to cut down on illegal immigration
- Accept more refugees from Syria, Iraq and other war-torn countries
- Make the visa system for tourists and entrepreneurs more efficient to encourage them to come to the UK
- Abolish the immigration cap on immigrants from outside the EU
- Provide free English classes to all new immigrants to the UK
- None of these

**20) What would be the main characteristic of an ideal immigration system?**

- A system under which there were fewer immigrants coming to the UK
- A system where only those who contribute to our economy and society are admitted
- A system that is well managed and efficient at keeping out illegal immigrants whilst letting desirable immigrants in as smoothly as possible
- A system that treats immigrants with compassion and understanding
- A system that allows no new immigrants whatsoever to the UK

- Something else
- Don't know

**21) Which of the following types of immigrants do you think the UK should accept more of and which do you think we should accept fewer of?**

[Should accept more of/ Have about the right number/  
Should accept fewer of]

- Students from abroad wanting to pay to study at UK higher education institutions
- Doctors from abroad to work in the NHS
- Skilled manual workers (e.g. plumbers, electricians)
- Skilled professional workers (e.g. lawyers, engineers)
- Wealthy individuals who wish to live in the UK and invest in UK businesses
- Professional athletes from abroad such as Premiership footballers who want to play for UK clubs
- Asylum seekers fleeing war-torn regions or persecution from oppressive regimes

**22) Which of the following types of immigrants do you think the UK should accept more of and which do you think we should accept fewer of?**

[Should accept more of/ Have about the right number/  
Should accept fewer of]

- Immigrants from Western Europe
- Immigrants from Eastern Europe
- Immigrants from Commonwealth countries
- Immigrants from English speaking countries
- Immigrants from the rest of the world

**23) What do you think of the Conservative Party's record on immigration since 2010?**

- They have done well
- They have done badly
- They have done neither well nor badly
- Don't know

[If badly]

**24) What is the main reason why you think the Conservative Party have done badly on the issue of immigration?**

- They made a promise about reducing the levels of immigration which they knew they could not keep
- They have not done enough in terms of reducing the overall levels of immigration
- They have imposed a cap on immigration which is counter-productive and hurts our economy
- They have presided over incompetence and failure in the management of the existing immigration system, letting in significant numbers of illegal immigrants.
- Some other reason (please state)

**25) Do you think the Conservative Party's immigration policies are putting off ethnic minority voters from voting Conservative?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

[If yes]

**26) Which of the following statements is closest to your opinion?**

- The Conservative Party should change its immigration policies to do more to reach out to ethnic / religious minorities
- The Conservative Party should not change its immigration policies to reach out to ethnic / religious minorities
- Don't know

**27) Which of the following parties do you think have the best policies on immigration?**

- Conservative Party
- Labour Party
- Liberal Democrat Party
- UKIP
- Don't know

## Annex 2:

# QUESTIONS AND METRICS USED FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONSERVATIVE CLASSIFICATION

*From responses to the questions below, we create 2 derived variables:*

*S from -4 to +4 (count as 'Social conservative' if  $S > 1$ )*

*E from -4 to +4 (count as 'Economic conservative' if  $E > 1$ )*

### **1) What do you think is the best family environment for children to grow up in?**

- With a mother and father living together in the same household [+1 S]
- It doesn't matter who the family are as long as they are loving [-1 S]
- No opinion

### **2) Which of the following statements is closest to your opinion?**

- It is generally better for everyone if the man is the main income earner outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family [+1 S]
- It is generally better if men and women both work and share the task of taking care of the home and family [-1 S]
- No opinion

**3) Which of the following statements is closest to your opinion?**

- The government should not regulate businesses and should leave them to get on with trading [+1 E]
- The government should regulate businesses to prevent them exploiting their employees and customers [-1 E]
- No opinion

**4) Which of the following statements is closest to your opinion?**

- The government should impose strict rules on landlords to protect tenants from poor quality dwellings [-1 E]
- The government should not interfere in the rental market and should leave landlords to operate freely [+1 E]
- No opinion

**5) To what extent do you think that commercial advertising aimed at children under 12 should be regulated?**

- Should be freely allowed for all legal products [+1 E, -1 S]
- Should be banned for harmful things like unhealthy foods [-1 E, +1 S]
- No opinion

**6) To what extent do you think that the internet should be regulated?**

- There should be strict restrictions on pornography and other harmful materials to protect children and uphold social values [+1 S, -1 E]
- Not at all, free flow of information and free speech must be preserved [-1 S, +1 E]
- No opinion

Immigration is now one of the most important issues the public are concerned about. This is despite tougher measures from the current Government to cap and clampdown on immigration. At this crucial juncture, it is imperative that the centre-right develops a balanced agenda on immigration that allows the UK to benefit from the immigration it needs while addressing the challenges it brings. Bright Blue is currently undertaking a year-long project to do exactly that.

This report is the first of several from this project. It demonstrates the distinctiveness of the views of Conservative voters on immigration, which can help provide the underlying principles for a more balanced centre-right policy agenda on immigration. Conservatives have a reasonable and clear position: they want an immigration system that is fairer and welcoming of contributors. They are not against immigration per se, but against what they perceive as unfair immigration. In essence, they want to build a contributory-based immigration system.



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