

## British Social Attitudes 2013: Attitudes to immigration

### British Social Attitudes 2013

NatCen Social Research's British Social Attitudes survey has been conducted annually since 1983. Since then around 90,000 people have taken part in the survey. The 2013 survey consisted of 3,244 interviews with a representative, random sample of adults in Britain.

This document explores three questions from British Social Attitudes 2013.

#### 1. Attitudes to immigration

*Do you think the number of immigrants to Britain nowadays should be increased a lot, increased a little, remain the same as it is, reduced a little or reduced a lot?*

More than three-quarters of the public (77%) want to see a reduction in immigration into Britain and public views of the level of immigration are significantly more negative than in 2011. However, this year's reading is at a similar level to 2008 and we can see that the public's attitude to immigration into Britain has remained broadly consistent over the past decade.

Only a very small minority (4%) say that immigration should be increased and this has remained consistently low since we first asked the question 18 years ago.

**Table 1 Views on level of immigration**

|   | 1995        | 2003       | 2008        | 2011        | 2013        |
|---|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Immigration to Britain should...</b> | %           | %          | %           | %           | %           |
| ... be increased a lot                  | 1           | 2          | 2           | 1           | 2           |
| ... be increased a little               | 3           | 4          | 2           | 2           | 2           |
| ... remain the same as it is            | 27          | 16         | 17          | 18          | 17          |
| ... be reduced a little                 | 24          | 23         | 23          | 24          | 21          |
| ... be reduced a lot                    | 39          | 49         | 55          | 51          | 56          |
| Don't know                              | 6           | 7          | 1           | 1           | 1           |
| <i>Unweighted base</i>                  | <i>1058</i> | <i>873</i> | <i>2236</i> | <i>3311</i> | <i>3243</i> |

**Table 2 Views on level of immigration, by demographics**

|   |   | Immigration to Britain should ... |                     |                |                         |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------------------|
|   |   | ... be increased                  | ... remain the same | ... be reduced | <i>Unweighted bases</i> |
| <b>Sex</b>                                  |   |                                   |                     |                |                         |
| Men   | % | 5                                 | 17                  | 77             | 1452                    |
| Women                                       | % | 4                                 | 18                  | 77             | 1792                    |
| <b>Age</b>                                  |   |                                   |                     |                |                         |
| 18-24                                       | % | 3                                 | 25                  | 71             | 237                     |
| 25-34                                       | % | 6                                 | 25                  | 67             | 457                     |
| 35-44                                       | % | 4                                 | 19                  | 75             | 554                     |
| 45-54                                       | % | 4                                 | 17                  | 77             | 541                     |
| 55-64                                       | % | 4                                 | 13                  | 81             | 533                     |
| 65-97                                       | % | 3                                 | 9                   | 87             | 917                     |
| <b>Education</b>                            |   |                                   |                     |                |                         |
| Degree                                      | % | 8                                 | 32                  | 57             | 694                     |
| Higher educ/a-level                         | % | 2                                 | 17                  | 80             | 824                     |
| O level/GCSE/CSE                            | % | 3                                 | 11                  | 85             | 715                     |
| No qual                                     | % | 5                                 | 9                   | 85             | 690                     |
| <b>Household income (quartiles)</b>         |   |                                   |                     |                |                         |
| Q1 (lowest income quartile)                 | % | 4                                 | 14                  | 81             | 783                     |
| Q2  | % | 3                                 | 17                  | 78             | 626                     |
| Q3  | % | 4                                 | 14                  | 81             | 567                     |
| Q4 (highest income quartile)                | % | 5                                 | 24                  | 70             | 627                     |
| <b>Occupational class</b>                   |   |                                   |                     |                |                         |
| Managerial & professional occups            | % | 5                                 | 23                  | 70             | 1165                    |
| Intermediate occupations                    | % | 3                                 | 14                  | 82             | 479                     |
| Employers in small org; own account workers | % | 3                                 | 13                  | 83             | 287                     |
| Lower supervisory & technical occupations   | % | 1                                 | 11                  | 88             | 277                     |
| Semi-routine & routine occupations          | % | 5                                 | 15                  | 79             | 903                     |
| <b>Migrant heritage</b>                     |   |                                   |                     |                |                         |
| Respondent and parents born in GB           | % | 3                                 | 14                  | 82             | 2643                    |
| 1st/2nd gen migrant                         | % | 8                                 | 31                  | 60             | 596                     |
| <b>Party Identification</b>                 |   |                                   |                     |                |                         |
| Conservative                                | % | 3                                 | 10                  | 86             | 818                     |
| Labour                                      | % | 5                                 | 23                  | 71             | 1052                    |
| Liberal Democrat                            | % | 5                                 | 30                  | 62             | 194                     |

|                |          |          |           |           |             |
|----------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Other*         | %        | 3        | 13        | 83        | 328         |
| None           | %        | 4        | 17        | 77        | 581         |
| <b>Country</b> |          |          |           |           |             |
| England        | %        | 4        | 17        | 78        | 2799        |
| Scotland       | %        | 2        | 25        | 69        | 272         |
| Wales          | %        | 4        | 10        | 86        | 173         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>%</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>77</b> | <b>3244</b> |

\*Those identifying with a party other than main 3 - including Plaid Cymru, SSP, Ukip, Green Party etc

## 2. Impact on the economy

*On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is extremely bad and 10 is extremely good, would you say it is generally bad or good for Britain's economy that migrants come to Britain from other countries?*

Asked whether they think immigration is good or bad for Britain's economy (by selecting a number between 0 and 10 when 0 is "extremely bad" and 10 is "extremely good") close to half (47%) indicate that they believe immigration is bad for the economy.

Interestingly, although there is very low support for increased immigration, close to a third (31%) do see immigration as being good for the economy. In addition, the number of people who selected an answer indicating that immigration is bad for the economy has fallen by five percentage points since 2011.

**Table 3 Views on the impact of immigration on Britain's economy, 2011 and 2013**

|                          | <b>2011</b> | <b>2013</b> |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Economic impact</b>   | %           | %           |
| Bad (1-4)                | 52          | 47          |
| Neither good nor bad (5) | 18          | 20          |
| Good (6-10)              | 29          | 31          |
| Don't know               | 1           | 1           |
| <i>Unweighted base</i>   | <i>3311</i> | <i>3244</i> |

Comparing whether people believe that immigration is good for the economy with their view on the level of immigration, we can see that more than half of people (54%) who see immigration as good for the economy also want to see immigration reduced. Thus, even people who may ordinarily be in favour of immigration seem to be concerned about current levels.

**Table 4 Views on the impact of migration on the economy**

|                                 | Economic impact |                          |             |             |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|
|                                 | Bad (1-4)       | Neither good nor bad (5) | Good (6-10) | All         |
| Immigration to Britain should.. | %               | %                        | %           | %           |
| ... be increased                | 3               | 3                        | 7           | 4           |
| ... remain the same             | 3               | 21                       | 37          | 17          |
| ... be reduced a little         | 12              | 28                       | 31          | 21          |
| ... be reduced a lot            | 82              | 46                       | 23          | 56          |
| Don't know                      | *               | 2                        | 2           | 1           |
| <i>Unweighted bases</i>         | <i>1591</i>     | <i>685</i>               | <i>924</i>  | <i>3243</i> |

**Table 5 Views on the impact of migration on the economy**

|   |   | Economic impact |                          |             |                         |
|---|---|-----------------|--------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
|   |   | Bad (0-4)       | Neither good nor bad (5) | Good (6-10) | <i>Unweighted bases</i> |
| <b>Sex</b>                                  |   |                 |                          |             |                         |
| Men   | % | 46              | 18                       | 35          | <i>1452</i>             |
| Women                                       | % | 48              | 23                       | 27          | <i>1792</i>             |
| <b>Age</b>                                  |   |                 |                          |             |                         |
| 18-24                                       | % | 40              | 19                       | 38          | <i>237</i>              |
| 25-34                                       | % | 41              | 20                       | 37          | <i>457</i>              |
| 35-44                                       | % | 43              | 18                       | 39          | <i>554</i>              |
| 45-54                                       | % | 51              | 21                       | 27          | <i>541</i>              |
| 55-64                                       | % | 52              | 17                       | 30          | <i>533</i>              |
| 65-97                                       | % | 52              | 26                       | 20          | <i>917</i>              |
| <b>Education</b>                            |   |                 |                          |             |                         |
| Degree                                      | % | 22              | 16                       | 60          | <i>694</i>              |
| Higher educ/a-level                         | % | 46              | 22                       | 31          | <i>824</i>              |
| O level/GCSE/CSE                            | % | 61              | 21                       | 17          | <i>715</i>              |
| No qual                                     | % | 61              | 21                       | 17          | <i>690</i>              |
| <b>Household income (quartiles)</b>         |   |                 |                          |             |                         |
| Q1 (lowest income quartile)                 | % | 53              | 22                       | 23          | <i>783</i>              |
| Q2  | % | 52              | 23                       | 24          | <i>626</i>              |
| Q3  | % | 49              | 19                       | 31          | <i>567</i>              |
| Q4 (highest income quartile)                | % | 35              | 16                       | 48          | <i>627</i>              |
| <b>Occupational class</b>                   |   |                 |                          |             |                         |
| Managerial & professional occupa            | % | 34              | 20                       | 45          | <i>1165</i>             |
| Intermediate occupations                    | % | 52              | 21                       | 26          | <i>479</i>              |
| Employers in small org; own account workers | % | 51              | 20                       | 27          | <i>287</i>              |
| Lower supervisory & technical occupations   | % | 59              | 24                       | 16          | <i>277</i>              |
| Semi-routine & routine                      | % | 55              | 21                       | 22          | <i>903</i>              |

|                                   |   |           |           |           |             |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| occupations                       |   |           |           |           |             |
| <b>Migrant heritage</b>           |   |           |           |           |             |
| Respondent and parents born in GB | % | 53        | 19        | 27        | 2643        |
| 1st/2nd gen migrant               | % | 26        | 25        | 48        | 596         |
| <b>Party Id</b>                   |   |           |           |           |             |
| Conservative                      | % | 49        | 20        | 30        | 818         |
| Labour                            | % | 40        | 22        | 36        | 1052        |
| Liberal Democrat                  | % | 29        | 19        | 52        | 194         |
| Other*                            | % | 60        | 17        | 22        | 328         |
| None                              | % | 55        | 19        | 24        | 581         |
| <b>Country</b>                    |   |           |           |           |             |
| England                           | % | 46        | 20        | 32        | 2799        |
| Scotland                          | % | 44        | 22        | 33        | 272         |
| Wales                             | % | 65        | 18        | 16        | 173         |
| <b>Total</b>                      |   |           |           |           |             |
|                                   | % | <b>47</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>31</b> | <b>3244</b> |

\*Those identifying with a party other than main 3 - including Plaid Cymru, SSP, Ukip, Green Party etc

### 3. Cultural impact

*And on a scale of 0 to 10, would you say that Britain's cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by migrants coming to live here from other countries?*

The percentage of people who feel that Britain's cultural life is undermined by migrants coming to live here (45%) is roughly the same as the percentage of people who believe migrants are bad for the economy (47%).

| <b>Britain's culture is...</b> | <b>2011</b> | <b>2013</b> |
|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
|                                | %           | %           |
| ...undermined (1-4)            | 47          | 45          |
| ... neither (5)                | 17          | 19          |
| ... enriched (6-10)            | 34          | 34          |
| Don't know                     | 1           | 1           |
| <i>Unweighted base</i>         | <i>3311</i> | <i>3244</i> |

As with the views of the economy, the majority of people (55%) who see Britain's cultural life as being enriched by migrants coming to live here from other countries still want to see a reduction in immigration.

**Table 7 Views on the impact of migration on culture**

|                                 | Cultural impact             |                                     |                            | All  |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|------|
|                                 | Culture is undermined (1-4) | Neither undermined nor enriched (5) | Culture is enriched (6-10) |      |
| Immigration to Britain should.. | %                           | %                                   | %                          | %    |
| ... be increased                | 2                           | 3                                   | 7                          | 4    |
| ... remain the same             | 4                           | 17                                  | 35                         | 17   |
| ... be reduced a little         | 13                          | 26                                  | 31                         | 21   |
| ... be reduced a lot            | 81                          | 53                                  | 25                         | 56   |
| Don't Know                      | *                           | *                                   | 3                          | 1    |
| <i>Unweighted bases</i>         | 1515                        | 639                                 | 1039                       | 3244 |

**Table 8 Views on the impact of migration on culture, by demographics**

|   |   | Cultural impact             |                                     |                            | <i>Unweighted bases</i> |
|---|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
|   |   | Culture is undermined (1-4) | Neither undermined nor enriched (5) | Culture is enriched (6-10) |                         |
| <b>Sex</b>                                  |   |                             |                                     |                            |                         |
| Men   | % | 45                          | 18                                  | 36                         | 1452                    |
| Women                                       | % | 45                          | 20                                  | 33                         | 1792                    |
| <b>Age</b>                                  |   |                             |                                     |                            |                         |
| 18-24                                       | % | 39                          | 22                                  | 37                         | 237                     |
| 25-34                                       | % | 36                          | 17                                  | 45                         | 457                     |
| 35-44                                       | % | 40                          | 18                                  | 42                         | 554                     |
| 45-54                                       | % | 50                          | 16                                  | 33                         | 541                     |
| 55-64                                       | % | 50                          | 18                                  | 30                         | 533                     |
| 65-97                                       | % | 53                          | 22                                  | 23                         | 917                     |
| <b>Education</b>                            |   |                             |                                     |                            |                         |
| Degree                                      | % | 22                          | 13                                  | 65                         | 694                     |
| Higher educ/a-level                         | % | 44                          | 19                                  | 36                         | 824                     |
| O level/GCSE/CSE                            | % | 59                          | 20                                  | 19                         | 715                     |
| No qual                                     | % | 56                          | 22                                  | 17                         | 690                     |
| <b>Household income (quartiles)</b>         |   |                             |                                     |                            |                         |
| Q1 (lowest income quartile)                 | % | 50                          | 22                                  | 27                         | 783                     |
| Q2  | % | 47                          | 22                                  | 29                         | 626                     |
| Q3  | % | 48                          | 17                                  | 34                         | 567                     |
| Q4 (highest income quartile)                | % | 36                          | 13                                  | 50                         | 627                     |
| <b>Occupational class</b>                   |   |                             |                                     |                            |                         |
| Managerial & professional occups            | % | 35                          | 17                                  | 48                         | 1165                    |
| Intermediate occupations                    | % | 47                          | 19                                  | 33                         | 479                     |
| Employers in small org; own account workers | % | 47                          | 23                                  | 28                         | 287                     |
| Lower supervisory & technical occupations   | % | 59                          | 17                                  | 22                         | 277                     |
| Semi-routine & routine                      | % | 54                          | 20                                  | 23                         | 903                     |

|                                   |          |           |           |           |             |
|-----------------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| occupations                       |          |           |           |           |             |
| <b>Migrant heritage</b>           |          |           |           |           |             |
| Respondent and parents born in GB | %        | 51        | 18        | 30        | 2643        |
| 1st/2nd gen migrant               | %        | 24        | 22        | 52        | 596         |
| <b>Party Id</b>                   |          |           |           |           |             |
| Conservative                      | %        | 52        | 20        | 28        | 818         |
| Labour                            | %        | 40        | 17        | 41        | 1052        |
| Liberal Democrat                  | %        | 20        | 17        | 63        | 194         |
| Other*                            | %        | 58        | 13        | 28        | 328         |
| None                              | %        | 48        | 23        | 26        | 581         |
| <b>Country</b>                    |          |           |           |           |             |
| England                           | %        | 44        | 19        | 35        | 2799        |
| Scotland                          | %        | 40        | 17        | 42        | 272         |
| Wales                             | %        | 68        | 15        | 16        | 173         |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>%</b> | <b>45</b> | <b>19</b> | <b>34</b> | <b>3244</b> |

\*Those identifying with a party other than main 3 - including Plaid Cymru, SSP, Ukip, Green Party etc

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