

Narratives at the local level

Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity

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British Future

Vision: A confident and inclusive Britain, fair and welcoming to all.

Engaging those who are anxious as well as those who are already confident about social change - on polarising issues of immigration and integration, identity and opportunity - to build majority confidence in a shared future.

Undertook the National Conversation on Immigration with Hope Not Hate in 60 Towns and cities.

- Understanding attitudes
- Strategic and messaging advice for public voices
- Proposals to rebuild confidence in migration and integration



Which audiences? Why?

Different audiences (segments) matter for different reasons

- but challenging to bridge them

- **Mobilise supporters** - to build coalitions for change
 - Press governments, MPs for action – on hate crime, discrimination/fairness.
 - To express solidarity with victims and mobilise responses.
 - Potential to lean into generational shifts, which might extend/deepen anti-prejudice norms over time.

- **Reach the centre** – to entrench social **norms**
Sustained anti-prejudice **social norms** must make sense to most people.

Securing broad **inter-ethnic and cross-class consensus**, of common ground between most ethnic minority respondents & majority of public overall could entrench our norms as 'settled' – can mitigate polarisation around competing grievances.

- **Target tougher, sceptical audiences** – to contain and reduce prejudice.
 - To reduce prejudice, anti-prejudice activity and messages will have to resonate with audiences from social groups with tough attitudes.
 - Aims may include shifting the perceptions of those with some prejudiced attitudes, and/or containing/isolating the most prejudiced core.

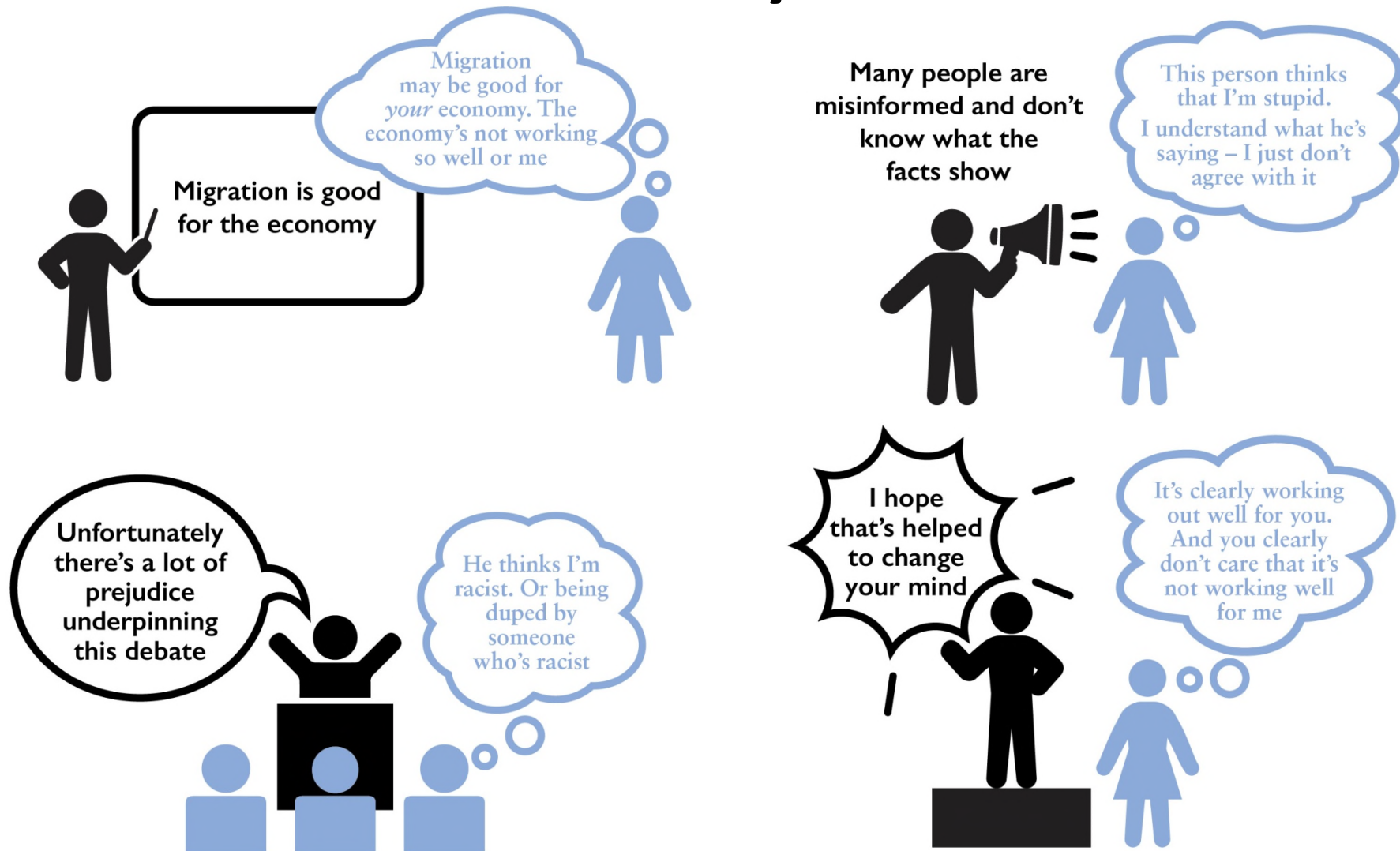
The populist challenge

The populist anti-migration narrative

stories about “them and us”

- There are **too many of them** (numbers)
- They are **taking our stuff** (resources)
- They’re **not like us** – and they don’t want to be (identity, culture)
- We’re not even allowed to talk about it – or they call us racist

What is said isn't always what is heard



People want a **conversation**, not a lecture about why they are wrong.

‘They are good for us’ responses

- Our long histories of migration, back to the Huguenots and beyond
- *‘They pay in more that they take out’*

Treasury data shows a net contribution to the public purse.

- *Let’s celebrate the benefits of diversity*
- the food is better.
- All true points – which resonate with those already supportive; sometimes beyond.

“They are good for us” points – however benign - are still a (softer) “them and us” story.
- **To transcend that, we need a broader story of the bigger “us” – shared local and national stories about what we share**

**From 'they are good for us' to
the 'new us'**

The 'new us': welcomers **and** the welcomed.



Boxer Ajmal Faizy and his trainer Barry Higginson, in Darwen, Lancashire
"He's like my son," says Higginson. "I don't treat him any different to my kids and he's like an uncle to my grandkids. I had a tough upbringing myself, so there's a connection. And he's the nicest, humblest lad you'll ever meet. I wish I had 10 of them in this gym, it would be the most prosperous place."

What does **contribution** mean?



Place less emphasis on Nobel prizes and Olympic Golds as migrant contributions?

Getting it right locally

What would deepen local confidence?

Narratives won't be enough

- **Local integration plans**
 - Sustained, visible public engagement in what makes integration work & priorities for action.
- **English language as foundational**
 - More creative ways to fill the gaps?
- **Promote meaningful contact**

This isn't just about ethnic and faith diversity given post-Brexit polarisation.
- **Can't duck challenges**

Messaging can fail if it is seen as only interested in celebratory 'fairy-tales', but a gap between citizens and stakeholders on the gains/risks of 'difficult conversations'

How (lack of) contact matters: 'unnamed communities'

- *"I see why people get upset, they come from a country, I don't want to pick on a country, let's say somewhere in Asia, and they come over and they don't make an effort to learn the language, they dress in their own way, which is okay, it's fine, but it alienates themselves a little bit.....Well some are very nice but others do keep themselves to themselves, speaking their own language when it suits them. Sometimes I'm terrified because I wonder what they are saying, on a train or something. You know, are they going to bomb us? It's terrifying walking around Birmingham, around Christmas time. I'm far from racist, but I just don't know."*
- **National Conversation citizens' panel participant, Kidderminster**

Should cities polarise or depolarise?

- **Increasing polarisation** by education, age and place
 - business/political voices in cities are cast as ‘metropolitan elites’ (& counter-mobilisation too)
 - Need to engage with “patchwork polarisation”, across every region, and within every city.
- Speaking up for ‘**Open versus Closed**’ can also polarise
 - Could bridge liberals *and* balancers by making case for **rebuilding confidence** in migration and integration, and in pro-active ways to **spread gains of openness** to those who don’t yet feel it works for them.

Bridging in polarised times

- 'Let's manage the pressures better to secure broader confidence in the gains of migration'
- Let's spread economic opportunity within each region, across cities, to make sure the benefits are fairly shared too.
- Let's promote more contact – so we can better challenge prejudice and racism together.

Case study: Remember Together

Aims: To bring about positive social contact across faith divides and deepen understanding of shared multi-ethnic, multi-faith history and contribution to Britain, using the frame of the First World War centenary.

Audiences: The tough end of the Anxious Middle and some 'latent hostile audiences, along with ethnic minority Britons.

Activities: Three filmed workshops bringing children of different backgrounds together to learn about shared WW1 history + an imams' workshop.

Short films of each event projected to target audiences using Facebook advertising.

Broad coalition of support across faiths and politics, projected in a DailyTelegraph letter with accompanying news story.



The logo features a white graphic on a dark blue background. It consists of a vertical line on the left, a horizontal line at the bottom, and a diagonal line extending from the bottom-left corner towards the right.

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