

**consonant**

# Integration Policy Proposals

June 2018

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## About Consonant

Consonant has a vision of a British society that is inclusive and free of prejudice; that celebrates the diversity of its population; and that supports the rights of all people to enjoy freedom from persecution, danger and oppression. For over thirty years we have worked to remove the barriers that prevent migrants, refugees and asylum seekers from participating fully in society. We have helped tens of thousands of people secure protection in the UK, regularise their immigration status, learn English, and find work. Asylum Aid, our programme supporting refugees, asylum seekers, and stateless people provides free legal advice to the most vulnerable and excluded asylum seekers, and lobbies and campaigns for a fair asylum system that upholds respect for their dignity and human rights.

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*“Diversity is a fact, inclusion is a choice”*

Ratna Omidvar, Senate of Canada

*“This questionnaire is a rare opportunity for me to have a voice”*

Consonant Survey respondent

## I- SUMMARY

This paper is based on a submission by Consonant to the government’s Integrated Communities Strategy consultation. We aim to inform the policy work on integration by including migrants and their perspectives and ensure that their voices, in their multiplicity and variety are taken into account. It is Consonant’s contribution to the newly opened policy debate on integration as we endeavour to put together a framework within which integration can be discussed with the involvement of migrants and the host population together to develop the mechanisms through which the benefits of migration can be shared.

Consonant works to reduce inequality and discrimination by equipping migrants with the skills, confidence and ability to participate fully in society. We work to support their changing needs along the integration journey. The survey *“Migrants’ Perspectives on Integration”*, formed the basis for this paper, gathered experiences, views and barriers faced by migrants in the UK. The survey was distributed among service users, partner organisations, local community groups, faith groups and trade unions for one month between April and May 2018. The sample comprised a total of **207 respondents qualified to fill the survey**, i.e. they have been in the UK for over 1 year, of which 149 completed the full questionnaire. Respondents of the survey come from over 30 countries of origin both from the European Union, as well as outside. Female views were more strongly represented with 71% female respondents and 27% male. Nearly 70% of all respondents live in London, pointing to a clear London-bias, which needs to be addressed in future research.

The paper starts by looking at some of the cross-cutting issues around integration. It recognises that **inequality is a barrier to integration**, as integration policies will affect different groups in different ways. An equality approach in the integration strategy will ensure that tensions which may appear between established ethnic minority groups and newly arrived migrants are addressed adequately and barriers to integration are overcome.

Integration is defined in the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper as: *“... communities where people, whatever their background, live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities”*. This definition, as well as the recognition that **integration is “a two-way street”** is a welcome shift both in language and in thinking, which reflects better the dynamics of integration, with migrants and the host population having a shared role and responsibility.

**Integration is most successful when it starts upon arrival** to ensure migrants are aware of their rights, obligations and the services available to them so they can participate in mainstream provision

as early as possible. Developing long-term interventions that take into account the whole journey of integration and the changing needs over time can help provide relevant and adequate support.

While policy remains a national responsibility, **integration in practice happens locally**, in the workplace, the neighbourhood, the school. Integration measures will be most successful when they are targeted and take into account local realities, such as inequalities, demographics and specific characteristics of migrant groups.

Overcoming **discrimination and xenophobia** need to be taken very seriously for the purpose of integration. **Media coverage of migrants and migration** has been overwhelmingly negative, leaving a polarized public attitude. Media is also important for migrants themselves as they may be living and working successfully in the UK but their sense of integration has been fractured by the anti-immigrant coverage and rhetoric.

The paper examines as key and interrelated **Areas of Integration**: legal right to stay, economic participation, education and ESOL, housing, healthcare, civic and political participation and socio-cultural participation. It brings together the evidence from the survey with relevant other research.

The Integration Strategy rightly sets the tone by treating everyone who arrives in Britain on the path to citizenship. It is important that migrants feel they are welcome and they can make **long term plans for their stay**, as well as that they have a choice in this.

**The top 3 most important factors for integration** selected by survey respondents included: **speaking English - 72%, feeling respected and appreciated - 66%, and having a good job – 64%**. Respondents also ranked highly **having British friends and contacts** and **being involved in the local community**.

Economic participation is essential for integration and provision of employability and career advice services are vital not only for entry into the labour market, but also for progression and career development. **The workplace is the main place where integration happens**, according to the majority - 43% of survey respondents, emphasising the importance of employment not only for the livelihood and wellbeing of migrants themselves but for their active inclusion in the community. Furthermore, immigrants bring innovation, enterprise and diversity to both the economy and society and make them more resilient and able to adapt to changes. The role of trade unions is important to ensure that discrimination is not exercised by employers neither with regard to the local labour force, nor with regard to migrant workers.

**English is the most important factor for integration** as it links with all other aspects and facilitates participation and integration. Early enrolment into English language classes (ESOL) from day one of arrival needs to be established as an essential pillar of integration and provided widely. Language is important not only as a means of communication but also because it transmits 'cultural knowledge' – knowledge of national and local procedures, local customs and facilities. Facilitating the flow of this knowledge should also be a two-way process with the host society acquiring knowledge of the circumstances and cultural background of the migrants that settle alongside them.

**Access to housing and healthcare** are important indicators for integration. In these areas, the survey results show a pattern and needs similar to that of the host population, long waiting times and lack of affordable and secure housing, were mentioned among the main issues.

**Civic participation** is not very high among the survey respondents. Nearly 70% are not a member of any migrant group or group of their own nationality, trade union or political party indicating a clear gap. However, political participation, interest and willingness to vote are high with 80% of the survey respondents saying they would vote if they had the opportunity.

**Membership to socio-cultural groups** among the survey respondents is slightly higher than in civic organisations. However, measures clearly are needed in both areas to encourage participation of migrants in such groups on a long-term basis. Evidence increasingly shows that sustained and meaningful social contact, helps overcome stereotypes and increases community cohesion. **Art and promoting cultural diversity are closely interrelated.** Projects should aim to bring members of the host community and migrants together, towards a common goal. Also, showcasing the diversity and multiplicity of migrants' experiences is a way of countering the media and right-wing narrative of migrants as a threat. Through their own work, migrants can be seen as resilient, driven, facing life's challenges, like everyone else. **Sport opportunities** in the local community are also mentioned as important.

Three open questions aimed to investigate deeper **what can the host community, the local governments and the national government do to help migrants feel part of society** and facilitate their integration. Providing a wealth of answers which are all submitted with this paper, they show the diverse perceptions and needs migrants have. They also give a clear sense of people willing and able to integrate and make a new life in Britain. However, there is a shared sense of uneasiness following anti-immigrant rhetoric and the government's hostile environment policy.

In addition to this overall integration framework, specific initiatives such as learning about migration in schools, creating fora both on local as well as national level where migrants can be actively involved in shaping policy, providing language opportunities for the local British population, giving voting rights of migrants in local elections and revitalising community centres have been put forward. Discussion on the initiatives proposed in this paper will take place to deepen these proposals into concrete policy recommendations.

## II- INTRODUCTION

Britain is an increasingly diverse country with a long history of migration. Between 1993 and 2016 the foreign-born population of the UK more than doubled from 3.8 million to 9.2 million people.<sup>1</sup> Those recording their ethnicity as ‘white’ fell from 94.1% in 1991, to 86% in 2011, the most recent Census.<sup>2</sup> Despite this, the UK has never had a national integration strategy. At best this is short sighted. It has meant that the country could be better at maximising the benefits of immigration and ensuring they are shared among the whole population. The lack of a strategy has, at worst, contributed to resentment towards migrants, and a hugely worrying trend of rising incidences of hate crime and discrimination. Britain needs an integration strategy that addresses existing structural barriers to integration, ensuring the benefits are shared by everyone and maximising these benefits.

### 1. Background and aim

Comparatively, the UK has a mixed record in promoting and facilitating integration according to the Migrant Integration Policy Index – MIPEX, which measures how countries are promoting the integration of immigrants. The UK ranks as the 15<sup>th</sup> most favourable place in terms of integration policies out of 38 developed countries.<sup>3</sup>

Of course, many migrants find work, make new friends and contribute to their new communities without any state interventions. But there are some groups at risk of social exclusion. Poor language skills, unemployment and residential, educational and labour market disadvantages all act as major structural and economic barriers to integration.<sup>4</sup>

On a broader level integration does not happen in a vacuum: other government policies have undermined the efforts for integration. The “hostile environment” policy, which is now being referred to as the “compliant environment” has torn communities apart and increased the mistrust in government. In combination, the policy and target of reducing net migration is causing increasing shortages for vital skilled and unskilled labour. The government’s austerity policy has seen some of the most vital public services cut and in areas of deprivation and poverty led to the scapegoating of migrants. “Stop and search” and “Prevent” policies have reinforced negative stereotypes about young black and Muslim men. All of these have a negative effect on integration both of newly arrived migrants, as well as on existing ethnic communities.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/bulletins/ukpopulationbycountryofbirthandnationality/2016>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/articles/ethnicityandnationalidentityinenglandandwales/2012-12-11>

<sup>3</sup> MIPEX, Migrant Integration Policy Index:

[http://www.mipex.eu/sites/default/files/downloads/files/mipex\\_key\\_findings\\_new.pdf](http://www.mipex.eu/sites/default/files/downloads/files/mipex_key_findings_new.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> British Future, 2016, “What next after Brexit” - <http://www.britishfuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/What-next-after-Brexit.pdf>

And finally, a successful integration strategy will need to be linked with a clear immigration policy. In order for the new system to be sustainable, it will need to involve an element of economic value. Immigration has always been largely about filling labour shortages. However, it needs to go much further, recognising that migrants are more than economic agents whose contributions are measured in the rise of GDP. They are diverse individuals and families, just like everyone else, and they form and enrich the communities in which they live in a multitude of ways through their culture, experiences, knowledge and resilience.

The Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper published by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government - MHCLG in May 2018 is a welcome step in the right direction. It provides an opportunity to look deeper and understand what holds communities together or breaks them apart and to put this at the heart of an inclusive integration strategy. The cross-departmental approach involving the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Home Office and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy - BEIS is an opportunity to address crosscutting issues in a coordinated way. It is also an opportunity for race equality organisations, migrant organisations and the business community to work more closely together in overcoming key barriers to integration.

This response is the Consonant's contribution to the newly-opened debate on integration. We have endeavoured to put together a framework within which integration can be discussed with the involvement of both migrants and the host population together. Its aim is to develop sufficient mechanisms for integration to happen both on the national and at the local level. We see this as a process which has been started with this consultation Green Paper and will continue both with the responsible government departments and within the civil society sector.

This paper is an amended version to the response submitted to the MHCLG on 5 June 2018.

## 2. Consonant's approach to integration

Consonant has a vision of a British society that is inclusive and free of prejudice and celebrates the diversity of its population. Our role is to enable people of diverse origins to make the UK their home and to enrich British society by building community through mutual respect and partnerships.

Consonant's work on integration aims at enhancing *economic, civic and socio-cultural participation* as key pillars of integration that are also interconnected and mutually reinforce each other. In the field of economic participation, we work to provide people with the abilities to overcome barriers to work which include employability skills and English language abilities. Civic participation includes active citizenship, political participation and promoting membership to different volunteer, community organisations and trade unions. Socio-cultural participation helps to shift the way social interaction and culture is experienced and interpreted and go beyond simply "understanding" to "bringing" migrant and host communities together through shared experiences.

Our policy work is informed by our experience in developing and delivering integration services directly to migrants. We aim to include migrants in the debate about their own integration and ensure that their voices, in their multiplicity and variety are heard and taken into account. We also work to create partnerships with the business and other sectors on issues of common interest.

Our services include asylum and immigration legal advice, ESOL classes, employment advice and counselling, entrepreneurship support, creative and sports classes, etc. We work with the service users of Consonant to adapt the services provided to reflect and respond to their changing needs throughout their integration journey in the UK. Services are open to everyone as integration benefits both the migrants themselves, as well as the host society. We work with all migrants regardless of nationality or country of origin (this includes both EU and non-EU nationals). This includes refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants, regardless of their immigration status. The way migrants enter the country is in the realm of immigration policy, however, once in Britain migrants should be able to integrate based on the assumption they will stay here long term.

Consonant's experience is that for integration to be most effective it should start from day one of arrival by providing the necessary services and support. Especially with regard to new arrivals, ensuring effective mechanisms to access English language classes and the labour market as early as possible facilitates integration. People can sometimes develop coping strategies that may not be conducive to integration and it is essential that entering mainstream service provision starts as early as possible.

Choice and the opportunity to make decisions about their own and their families' lives are also beneficial to integration. The Consonant Survey shows that people who do have the right to bring their families with them often chose not to, 45% of respondents to the Consonant Survey confirmed this. At the same time having their family members with them helps people feel more settled and become better involved in the community.

In developing these mechanisms for integration, we are guided by the work on contact theory of Prof. Miles Hewstone of the Oxford Centre for the Study of Intergroup Conflict. His work shows how improving social integration happens through facilitating and promoting intergroup contact. Research consistently shows that contact with a member of another group (often a negatively stereotyped group) can improve negative attitudes not only towards the specific member, but also towards the group as a whole. For this contact to have that effect, groups need to have frequent interactions, equal status within the contact setting, cooperate in pursuit of common goals, contact supported by institutions (e.g. by the school or the employer) and group memberships acknowledged. Personal friendships, as well as looser social networks in school classes or workplaces create direct and indirect connections to other people and groups. These approaches complement approaches focused on inequality, social justice and discrimination<sup>5</sup>.

Contact theory is particularly relevant when developing interventions on the local level. In practice this is where integration happens - in the workplace, in the neighbourhood, in the schools, in the town.

We also recognise that there are instances where intergroup contact may not be directly possible, for example, in areas where there is no geographical proximity between migrants and the host population. Measures to address the divisions caused by prejudice and discrimination are directed at improving the public discourse around immigration and the value of migrants.

And finally, migrants are active agents of their own lives and the communities they have made their new home. Their views, experiences and challenges are diverse as are their integration journeys.

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<sup>5</sup> Martin Hewson, presentation Social Integration: The critical role and multiple effects of intergroup contact at Immigration and Integration Getting it Right Locally Conference, 17 May 2018

Their voice needs to be acknowledged and included in the design, implementation and evaluation of the policies that directly affect them.

### 3. Methodology of the Consonant Survey “Migrants’ Perspectives on Integration”

The survey “*Migrants’ Perspectives on Integration*” aimed at gathering the experiences, views and barriers experienced by migrants in the UK in their integration journey. It targeted migrants who have been in the UK over one year. It was conducted among a large group of migrants, which included: EU and non-EU citizens, refugees, asylum seekers and undocumented migrants. The Survey was distributed among Consonant service users, local community groups, faith groups and trade unions. It was also shared with Consonant partner organisations and networks outside of London in an effort to overcome the London-centrism of such surveys. The effort to facilitate the participation of as wider group of migrants as possible included translating the survey into eleven languages, in addition to English: Arabic, Bangla, Bulgarian, French, Hindi, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Urdu. It was conducted for one month in April – May 2018. The Survey was comprised of questions ranging from background questions related to age, country of origin, mother tongue, legal status, education and employment levels and covered all major aspects of integration: Education, Employment, Healthcare, Housing, Civic and Political participation.

By 29 May 2018 the survey had been completed by 202 respondents. The majority of respondents 44% were between the ages of 25-39 years old. 42% have been in the UK between 1 and 6 years, 45% over six years and 10% had been in the country less than a year. Nearly 70% of all respondents - 141 live in London, 10% live in a big city outside of London and 12% - 25 respondents live in a small city or town. Respondents of the survey come from over 30 countries of origin both from the European Union, as well as outside. Female views were more strongly represented with 71% female respondents and 27% male. A more detailed report and the survey data is enclosed in Annex I.

### III- CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

#### 1. Integration grounded in equality

The UK is one of the most unequal societies in Western Europe and inequality and discrimination continue to affect opportunities for individuals from different ethnic groups, women, minorities, people with disabilities. Labour market disadvantage among black, Asian and mixed ethnicity groups are found across the country. The Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities experience severe inequalities in all areas related to employment, income, housing, healthcare and education outcomes. Inequalities also cut across different migrant groups: non-EU migrants face high rates of unemployment and inactivity; Eastern European migrants tend to be overqualified and on low pay. Lack of equality is a barrier to integration, as integration policies will affect different groups in different ways (e.g. recent arrivals as against previous migration waves) and play a major part in integration outcomes.

The Equality Statement accompanying the Integration Strategy Green paper sets out the need for on-going equality assessment across a number of government departments. The implementation of the Equality Act 2010 requires strengthening the infrastructure to ensure compliance with the law, especially in its part on socio-economic duty. This will ensure that tensions which may sometimes appear between established ethnic minority groups and newly arrived migrants are addressed adequately.

#### 2. Language matters

Recognising the importance of language, the way that integration is defined is important in terms of policy but also in creating a positive environment for integration to happen.

The Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper gives the following definition: *“This is what true integration looks like-communities where people, whatever their background, live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities.”*<sup>6</sup> This definition, as well as the recognition that integration is *“a two-way street”* is a welcome shift which reflects better the dynamics of integration between migrants and the host population who together share the responsibility for integration.

Integration is recognised in the academic literature as a *“a complex and multidimensional process”*<sup>7</sup> and is also recognised as a potentially politically contentious task.<sup>8</sup> The ongoing major European research project INTERACT defines *integration as “immigrants participate in the host society at the*

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<sup>6</sup> *Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper*, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, March 2018

<sup>7</sup> Ager, Alastair and Strang, Alison, 2008, *“Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework”*, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, vol. 21, No. 2

<sup>8</sup> Hellgran, Zenia, 2015, *“Immigration as a Two-Way Process: Translating Theory into Practice”*, GRITim Working Paper Series, No. 23.

*same level as natives*". The unequal power relation between immigrants and native majority has the consequence that institutions and structures are far more decisive for the outcomes of the process than the immigrants themselves.<sup>9</sup>

It should be mentioned as well that integration is considered ambivalent among some civil society organisations as it "frames ethnic minorities, including those born in Britain, as a problem or as not properly belonging here. Instead the question should be how to ensure everyone living in the UK has equal life chances. Integration needs to be reframed to focus on building a society where everyone is treated fairly and has an equal chance to succeed, with mutual respect for all".<sup>10</sup>

We also share the conclusion of the House of Lords that the Green Paper has too narrow a definition of integration. It focuses almost exclusively on the integration of ethnic minority groups, with scarcely a mention of the challenges faced by disabled people, LGBT people, people in rural and some coastal communities, working class communities and all those who feel marginalised in our society.<sup>11</sup> Our current response focuses on the integration experience of migrants, as they are at the core of the work of Consonant. However, we acknowledge that an effective integration strategy needs to go beyond groups and establish a framework for inclusivity. The Mayor of London's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy "Inclusive London" is an example in this regard.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, it is worth noting that increasingly in academic circles and some European countries, integration is being replaced by terms such as '*inclusion*' as it links better to existing mainstream policy thinking around social inclusion, and better incorporates all social groups – not just new migrants and minority groups. In addition, '*inclusion*' minimizes any connotations that integration has with '*assimilation*'.

### 3. Integration from day one

Integration should start upon arrival to ensure migrants are aware of their rights, obligations and the services available to them so they can participate in mainstream provision as early as possible. Integration also includes "equal access to the labour market and education, opportunities for family reunion and political participation, the right of long-term residence as well as effective pathways to nationality".<sup>13</sup>

This should include also those who arrive in the UK seeking humanitarian protection. The status determination procedures for asylum seekers takes too long, often leaving people in limbo for years, with very little support (£36 month). Taking into consideration the length of the decision-making process, the right to work for asylum seekers should become automatic after a short reasonable period of time. They should also be able to attend language classes. Both measures have proven to

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<sup>9</sup> Hellgran, Zenia, 2015, "*Immigration as a Two-Way Process: Translating Theory into Practice*", GRITim Working Paper Series, No. 23

<sup>10</sup> Runnymede, *Integration for All: Why Race Equality Matters*, March 2018

<sup>11</sup> The Ties that Bind: Citizenship and Civic Engagement in the 21st Century, the House of Lords: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201719/ldselect/ldcitizen/118/118.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Mayor of London, "Inclusive London: The Mayor's equality, diversity and inclusion strategy", June 2018

<sup>13</sup> Wellman, Kim, 2016, *The refugee crisis offers an opportunity for Europe to promote sustainable, inclusive growth*, LSE European Politics and Policy (EUROPP) Blog (11 Jan 2016)

be effective both in terms of their integration outcomes and entry to the labour market, as well as widely supported by the general public.<sup>14</sup>

For those who come through resettlement programmes or are joining spouses there is an opportunity to start their integration even before they arrive. This can be applied also for cases of family reunion, while the documents are being processed. The Strategy recognises the potential of pre-departure integration but needs to go beyond providing information on laws, norms and standards. It should include directories for services in particular employment areas and language services as well as housing and health advice, ways to get involved in civil and political participation.

It is important that mainstream services are equally available for migrants irrespective of the different routes through which they enter the UK, be it for work, study, family reunion or seeking humanitarian protection through applying for asylum in-country or a resettlement scheme.

## 4. The future is local

While integration policy remains a national responsibility, integration in practice happens where people are, in the workplace, in the neighbourhood, in schools. Integration measures will be most successful when they are targeted and take into account local realities, such as inequalities, demographics and specificities of migrant groups and their challenges. Targeted measures to promote integration need to be developed locally. This is particularly important for areas experiencing poverty and deprivation.

In the UK there are different regional approaches of who is covered by the strategy, the New Scots Strategy for refugee integration in Scotland explicitly includes asylum seekers, as does the Mayor of London's Strategy for Social Integration. On a local level, the Cardiff Inclusive Cities Strategy ensures integration services, especially ESOL, are provided regardless of immigration status.

Integration should remain a government strategy with national coverage to ensure that it is developed taking into account a cross departmental approach and accounts for different government policies. At the same time, responsibility can be shared at local level to ensure that strategies are developed for the place where people work and live, that they take into account the local realities in terms of demographic characteristics, labour market and language needs. The provision of some integration services is more difficult in areas outside of big cities and can create barriers locally.

Local integration is not only about local services but more broadly about the spaces which communities share and where they can come together. Parks, public squares, libraries can promote integration and the lack of such spaces can lead to increasing segregation. Inclusive design provides new and innovative ideas of how to create spaces that promote contact and inclusion, the Mayor of London's Equality strategy is a good example of how it can be used.<sup>15</sup> Bradford council and the

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<sup>14</sup> British Future, 2018, "*Many Rivers Crossed: Britain's attitudes to race and integration 50 years since 'Rivers of blood'*": <http://www.britishfuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ManyRiversCrossed2.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Mayor of London, "Inclusive London: The Mayor's equality, diversity and inclusion strategy", June 2018

redevelopment they undertook of the town square as part of their regeneration and local integration strategy is another example how public spaces can foster and facilitate integration.<sup>16</sup>

In the Consonant Survey, community centres which allow communities to improve interaction and integration, were mentioned as an important place for local integration. One respondent wrote: *“Reinstating community centres – they brought children who would otherwise be making trouble and their parents together. They were also really good for hosting community events such as potlucks and fundraising fairs, which were a good way of meeting people in the community and familiarising yourself with people who would not usually consider befriending you.”* Another shared their positive experience with local integration: *“I am very happy with cheap accessible public spaces and services, like parks, activities for children in community centres, little street concerts and festivals that helped me a lot to feel part of the community”.*

Involving migrants in local councils’ consultations, discussions, providing a forum where they can put forward their ideas is also important part of making integration work locally.

## 5. Discrimination and xenophobia

Discrimination is a very salient issue, exacerbated by media and politicians who demonise and scapegoat migrants and refugees. Discrimination is linked to inequalities as mentioned earlier, and for example existing racial and gender inequality leads to discrimination, which in turn has a very negative effect on integration. Field experiments in the UK show that people with foreign-sounding names are less likely to get a job interview than identical candidates with local names.<sup>17</sup> Anti-discrimination laws need more vigorous enforcement as part of the integration framework. Hidden discrimination was mentioned in the Consonant Survey as preventing integration into the British community, *“create fairer system which rewards hard work”*. Another respondent wrote: *“Less racism and xenophobia on a micro and macro level in all aspects of life”*.

Xenophobia is also on the rise. The months after the Referendum saw a substantial increase in racially and religiously motivated hate crime, with reported offences seeing a 41% increase in July 2016, compared with the same period in 2015.<sup>18</sup> Recorded hate crimes in the UK jumped almost 30 per cent between April 2016 and March 2017, peaking after the Brexit referendum and rising again after the terrorist attacks in Westminster. Offences were connected to race, sexual orientation, religion, disability or transgender. More than three quarters of the offences recorded were race hate crimes, a category that includes xenophobic incidents where people are targeted because of their nationality.<sup>19</sup> In June 2017, reported hate crimes peaked at 6,000. The Muslim community has been particularly affected by this with Home Office figures showing a rise also in the wake of the Westminster Bridge, Manchester Arena and London Bridge attacks, which took place in March, May, and June of 2017. There was an increase in hate crimes against the Muslim community, especially

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<sup>16</sup> Presentation of Bradford Council at Immigration and Integration Getting it Right Locally Conference, 17 May 2018

<sup>17</sup> Job applications in British cities from people with white sounding names were 74% more likely to receive a positive response than applications from people with an ethnic minority name. National Centre for Social Research, 2009: <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/media/20541/test-for-racial-discrimination.pdf#page=13>

<sup>18</sup> British Future, 2018, *“Many Rivers Crossed: Britain’s attitudes to race and integration 50 years since ‘Rivers of blood’*: <http://www.britishfuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ManyRiversCrossed2.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/6ecbde7a-800a-31e8-9b12-1ce7f6897c4b>

women who are visibly Muslims. “The headscarf was conflated with being foreign and not welcomed.”<sup>20</sup>

A less discussed rise in hate crime has been against Eastern Europeans, the fastest growing minority in the UK.<sup>21</sup> A study published in November 2017 looked into the first analysis since the Brexit Referendum on how current plans for Britain to leave the European Union are impacting on young Eastern Europeans’ lives. It found that majority of the young people said they had seen an increase in incidents of xenophobia. The study finds racism is clearly a feature of many young migrants’ lives with the majority (77%) saying they had experienced racism because of their nationality, accent or the way that they look. These experiences range from ‘everyday racism’ such as name calling, ‘jokes’ and friendly banter over accents, looks or country of origin, to physical attacks and attacks on family members and damage to their homes or property. These incidents included face-to-face and online attacks. The study also reveals the pervasive nature of racism, whereby it is seen as normalised behaviour and young people do not report it as they think teachers and police will not be interested<sup>22</sup>.

As a consequence, discrimination, xenophobia and the fear of increasing hate crime result in increasing barriers to integration that migrants find difficult to overcome. This also creates the incentive to self-separate for protection and the emergence of segregation largely as a coping strategy.

It is also important to recognise that racism also exists among migrant communities and there are indications it may be on the rise as well.<sup>23</sup> It is as damaging and detrimental as racism towards these groups and it should be addressed.

## 6. Public attitudes and media

Public attitudes to immigration are polarized with around a quarter of people thinking the impact of immigration on the UK has been positive, around a quarter that it has been negative, and about half of the public believes it to be somewhere in between.<sup>24</sup> The majority of people - 60% want to see immigration reduced<sup>25</sup> and this played a considerable role in the vote to leave the EU. This group cites a range of concerns including the impact of immigration on jobs and wages, British identity, access to housing and public services, and security.

Public attitudes to immigration, however, are more nuanced than the polarised views often presented by politicians and media. British Future’s research has consistently found, when asking people to give a score out of ten rating whether they feel immigration has been good or bad for the

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/10/hate-crimes-rise-brexit-vote-attacks-171018110119902.html>

<sup>21</sup> ONS found that Romanians are now the second most common non-British nationality in the UK after Polish: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/may/24/romanian-second-most-common-non-british-nationality-uk>

<sup>22</sup> Eastern European Young people in Brexit Britain: Here to Stay, Policy brief, November 2017:

<http://www.migranyouth.org/files/2016/08/Eastern-European-Young-People-in-Brexit-Britain.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Hope not hate, State of hate 2018: <https://www.hopenothate.org.uk/2017/04/25/british-polish-nazis-make-love-affair-official/>

<sup>24</sup> British Future 2016 - <http://www.britishfuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/What-next-after-Brexit.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> Ipsos MORI (2017), “Shifting Ground: 8 key findings from a longitudinal study on attitudes towards immigration and Brexit”;

UK, that around a quarter to a fifth give a high (positive) score; around a quarter give a low (negative) score; and about half of the public scores it somewhere in between – what they have termed the ‘anxious middle’.<sup>26</sup> Only one fifth of people want to cut immigration of skilled workers. More people would prefer the numbers of migrant doctors, engineers and scientists to increase. And while two-thirds of people would like fewer low-skilled workers in future, that is not the case across the board: only one in four would cut the number coming to work in care homes, for example.<sup>27</sup>

National media is an important influencer of public opinion and this is especially important for areas with little or no immigration. In the absence of personal experiences, the media creates the norm. Media coverage of immigration tripled during the 10-week EU Referendum campaign, rising faster than any other political issue and appearing on 99 front pages, compared with 82 about the economy. Most of these front pages were dominated by “overwhelmingly negative” reports about the consequences of migration to the UK.<sup>28</sup>

There have been suggestions that attitudes towards immigration may be shifting and the importance of immigration among voters as well. The Windrush scandal has exposed a change in attitudes which has been going on for a while. A new survey by Ipsos MORI conducted online among British adults aged 18-75 on 11-14 May finds that attitudes towards immigration remain more positive than before the Brexit vote. The switch from a negative balance of opinion to a positive one started in the middle of 2015 before the referendum in 2016– but has gained pace since. Among those who have become more positive, there are roughly two equal reasons for this- either people feel more positive about the contribution immigrants make or they are reassured that with Brexit, there is, and will be, a reduction in immigration. However, despite this shift over half still want overall numbers reduced. The majority of the public -63% also say they are ashamed of how Britain has treated the Windrush generation.<sup>29</sup>

The UK also remains positive about immigration in a comparative context with the rest of the EU as shown in a recent EU survey on public perceptions on immigration and integration. The indicators for the UK are quite positive; overall 71% think integration is working, which is higher than the average for the EU - 54%, and only Portugal and Ireland have higher scores. 35% see immigration as more of an opportunity than a problem and integration is seen as a two-way process by 80% compared with the EU average of 69%.<sup>30</sup>

Overcoming prejudice and negative attitudes needs to be taken very seriously for the purpose of integration. Surveys seem to show there is a correlation between higher levels of negativity towards

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<sup>26</sup> British Future 2016 - <http://www.britishfuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/What-next-after-Brexit.pdf>;

<sup>27</sup> British Future 2016 - <http://www.britishfuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Britains-immigration-offer-to-Europe.pdf>;

<sup>28</sup> Moore and Ramsay, “UK media coverage of the 2016 EU Referendum campaign,” Centre for the Study of Media, Communication and Power, May 2017: <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/policy-institute/CMCP/UK-media-coverage-of-the-2016-EU-Referendum-campaign.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> Ipsos MORI, Attitudes towards Immigration after Windrush, May 2018:

<https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/attitudes-towards-immigration-after-windrush>

<sup>30</sup> Special Eurobarometer survey 469 on "Integration of immigrants in the European Union," European Commission, 2018: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/news/results-special-eurobarometer-integration-immigrants-european-union\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/news/results-special-eurobarometer-integration-immigrants-european-union_en)

immigration and lower levels of contact with migrants.<sup>31</sup> The UK is not alone or unique in this, a comprehensive report by OECD found that attitudes towards migrants tend to be more positive in regions with a greater share of migrants or where unemployment is lower.<sup>32</sup>

For locations where there are few migrants, sustained and meaningful interaction between members of the migrant and non-migrant community are more difficult to arrange. As it has been proven that people adapt their attitudes and behaviours to be norm-consistent, positive stories about migrants, their lives, contributions, experiences as real people will counter the narrative of ‘the other’ and can create the norm that migrants are a benefit to society and the economy. Supporting and promoting initiatives and programmes that show migrants “in” society and stories of migrants’ daily lives can normalise their relationships as being the same as everyone else. National and local TV and radio campaigns can create the perception of a norm around positives related to immigration. This perception can help shift public opinion, especially in areas where direct interaction between migrants and the local population is more difficult due to lack of diversity.<sup>33</sup> The government and local authorities need to be seen as actively creating this norm to replace the current “hostile environment” toward migrants and to start shifting public opinion as well. In the Consonant Survey one respondent mentioned: *“To show that they recognise and value the contribution that migrants did and continue to do to British society and economy. Even promoting events that celebrate different nationalities”*.

The media coverage of immigration is also important for migrants. In the Consonant Survey, 15% mention national media as an important source of information for British community and values. Media was also mentioned as an important issue that can facilitate integration on a national level. Although migrants may be living and working successfully, their sense of integration has been fractured by the anti-immigrant coverage of almost all media. As one respondent put it, *“Pressure mass media for more informed, fact-based, responsible and ethical ways of presenting information... Politicians should show more respect, responsibility and account for everyone living in the country”*.

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<sup>31</sup> IPSOS MORI (2017) Shifting Ground: 8 key findings from a longitudinal study on attitudes towards immigration and Brexit. [https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2017-10/Shifting%20Ground\\_Unbound.pdf](https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2017-10/Shifting%20Ground_Unbound.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> OECD (2018), Working together for local integration of migrants and refugees, OECD Publishing, Paris:

<sup>33</sup> Tankard, M. and Levy Paluck E., “Norm Perception as a Vehicle for Social Change”, Social Issues and Policy Review, Vol. 10, No. 1, 2016.

### III- AREAS OF INTEGRATION

This section looks at the different areas of integration and measures that can be adopted to facilitate the process by taking into account migrants’ self-reported perspectives, needs and barriers. The research is clear that the two strongest predictors of integration success (i.e. in terms of having a broad impact across social and economic integration) are employment and native language acquisition. Length of stay in the host country is an important factor in the integration process, but without employment and language acquisition, it has little impact on meaningful integration. Employment and language proficiency work in tandem (both influence each other’s outcomes and improve the prospects of social interactions), but employment has the additional advantage of enabling new migrants to feel financially secure, be autonomous and be viewed as contributing to the host society. The evidence also shows that, whilst employment and fluency in the native language are prerequisites for ‘meaningful’ integration, these cannot be completely achieved unless we take account of the other key integration dimensions – namely social and cultural integration with other communities. This particularly includes social relations with ‘existing settled residents’ (both ethnic minority and white residents).<sup>34</sup>

Overall most respondents to the Consonant Survey felt they were integrated and accepted by their local community. The issues most important for migrant integration according to the survey were: “speaking English” – 72% followed by “feeling respected and appreciated” by 66% and “having a good job” by 64%. Interestingly, at the lower end of the scale are “being part of one’s religious community” – 4%, “having friends and social contacts from my home country” – 19%, showing people understand and value the interaction with the host British population as part of their integration process. “Having British friends and social contacts” is seen as very important by the majority of respondents with 54%.

**Q31. Which of the issues below are important for your integration?**

<i>Legal status and rights</i>	56%
<i>British citizenship</i>	23%
<i>Having your family in the UK</i>	30%
<i>Having British friends and social contacts</i>	54%
<i>Having friends and social contacts from my home country</i>	18%
<i>Having friends and social contacts with other nationalities</i>	40%
<i>Speaking English</i>	72%
<i>Children doing well at school</i>	23%
<i>Family feeling settled</i>	29%
<i>Having a good job</i>	64%
<i>Having good housing</i>	56%
<i>Feeling respected and appreciated</i>	66%
<i>Studying</i>	36%
<i>Having future career development</i>	62%
<i>Being involved in the community</i>	45%
<i>Being part of my religious community</i>	4%

<sup>34</sup> Runnymede, Integration for All: Why Race Equality Matters, March 2018

Some migrants themselves recognise that integration and making an effort depends on them but this is not always the case. One Survey respondent wrote: *“I speak to many other migrants and a lot of times they choose not to integrate... I wish I knew how to encourage these acquaintances to be more open to British life, culture and values.”* Statements like these need unpacking to understand what lies beneath the reluctance and how can British culture be made more accessible. Another had a different experience *“I feel integrated – in general the community is welcoming. May be showing more interest in learning about other cultures and nations”*.

A gendered approach to integration is particularly relevant for employment and education as women face additional barriers. A more detailed gender analysis of the responses provided will be conducted by Consonant and will be available to share at a later stage in this consultation.

## 1. Legal right to stay

Secure legal status, whether it is citizenship, Indefinite Leave to Remain or the existing rights for EU nationals as part of freedom of movement, underpins successful integration as it is the formal means for accessing services and support, as well as employment. Giving migrants the choice about the legal status that best reflects their needs is important as they may have different circumstances. It should be noted that although legal status is important, people lacking secure legal status can and most often do create links with the host society in terms of work and social contacts and in practice integrate.

The Integration Strategy rightly sets the tone by treating everyone who arrives in Britain on the path to citizenship. It is essential for their integration that migrants feel they are welcome and they can make long term plans for their stay. Research has also shown that for individuals to make claims on a state legal system, they must first conceive of themselves as part of the community. In this context citizenship takes on a social status and legal subjectivity is linked to a sense of self as a member of the national community.<sup>35</sup>

Having secure legal status and rights was mentioned in the top 5 most important issues for integration by 56% of the Consonant Survey respondents. It was seen as an important way to feel part of British society by 30% of respondents, while for 23% it was better for their legal status.

### **Q27 Would you like to obtain British citizenship?**

<i>Yes, it is important for me to feel part of British society</i>	30%
<i>Yes, because it is better for my legal status</i>	23%
<i>No, because it does not make a difference for my legal status</i>	8%
<i>No, I do not plan to stay long</i>	7%
<i>No, because I have to give up my home nationality</i>	10%
<i>I have British Citizenship</i>	15%
<i>Other (please specify)</i>	9%

It is important to recognise that migrants should have choice in deciding what is the best for their legal situation and this may or may not be acquiring citizenship. People do not always move with the intent to settle or seek citizenship and for some their intention is to return to their country of origin one day. The Consonant Survey results confirm this with approximately 25% saying they are not interested in British citizenship either because they were not planning to stay long in the UK, they

<sup>35</sup> Kaindama, Mujina, Unwelcome home: managing migration and constructing citizenship. In: LSE Research Festival 2018, 19-24 February 2018, London, UK

did not want to give up their home nationality, or it does not make a difference to their legal status. Recent study of new migrants' integration demonstrates that a large part of the new migrant population in Europe is highly mobile and moves back and forth between countries of origin and different countries of destination.<sup>36</sup> Circularity of migration can be enabled and encouraged and respective legal rights should underpin this circularity. This can be achieved through an extension to Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR), which allows people to work and study in the UK but ends if they are outside of the UK for more than two years.

It is necessary to ensure at the same time that the path to citizenship is open for those who have decided to stay in the UK and would like to pursue it.

EU citizens living in the UK should also be given a guarantee of their legal status, whether it involves a new form of settled status or a recognition of their existing rights. This should also include a simple and low-cost procedure, as well as a clear path to citizenship.

### ***No taxation without representation***

This rallying call of the American colonies sparked the war of Independence. It was also used by the Suffragettes, who pointed to the vital contribution of women's labour to fighting World War I. It established a basic principle that everyone who is paying income tax should have the right to influence how these taxes are spent. However, this is not only a contributions argument; migrants are active participants in society and through voting they would be allowed and required to participate in the political life of the country they have chosen to reside in in equal measure.

Without voting rights, migrants lack a very important means to assert their interests – and politicians have few incentives to take into account or address their concerns. This will affect their integration as well, both by creating a more involved democratically active population and by better representation politically.<sup>37</sup> In many ways, migrant voters are model members of the electorate. Previous research confirms that the majority of migrants come to the UK with a positive outlook on democracy, trust in the political process and recognition of the importance of electoral participation. Once they are registered to vote, migrants tend to have relatively high levels of engagement with the political process.<sup>38</sup>

Given the importance of the local elections in the UK and the reality of local integration, extending the right to vote to migrants seems a natural step. Currently only EU citizens have this right. It should be recognised and maintained post-Brexit and further extended to all migrants, who have residence in the UK - non-EU, refugees and asylum seekers. This will recognise the agency and role of migrants in their communities and enable local political participation and integration.

The Scottish Government has confirmed it is seeking to make legislative proposals to extend voting rights in local and Scottish parliament elections to everyone legally resident in Scotland. This includes, EU and non-EU adults, recognised refugees and those seeking asylum.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Diehl, Claudia and Lubbers, Marcel and Mühlau, Peter and Platt, Lucinda (2016) Starting out: new migrants' socio-cultural integration trajectories in four European destinations, *Ethnicities*, 10 (1).

<sup>37</sup> Aitchison, G., 2018, "The next step for suffrage: give all immigrants the right to vote": <https://theconversation.com/the-next-step-for-suffrage-give-all-immigrants-the-right-to-vote-91175>

<sup>38</sup> Migrants Rights Network (MRN), 2015, "*Migrant Voters in the 2015 General Elections*": [http://migrantsrights.kerokero.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/publications/Migrant\\_Voters\\_2015\\_paper.pdf](http://migrantsrights.kerokero.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/publications/Migrant_Voters_2015_paper.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> [http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/16245625.Refugees\\_to\\_be\\_given\\_right\\_to\\_vote\\_in\\_Scotland\\_under\\_new\\_plans/](http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/16245625.Refugees_to_be_given_right_to_vote_in_Scotland_under_new_plans/)

## 2. Economic participation

In the face of growing insecurity of work and pay following the financial crisis, immigrants have once again become an easy scapegoat and have been blamed for squeezing out UK-born workers and having a negative effect on wage increases. It is important to note that there is an increasing body of research on the effects of migration on jobs and wages that unpacks the relationship between immigrants, jobs and wages. The so-called “lump of labour fallacy” is based on the assumption that the total number of jobs in the economy is fixed and/or immigrants all compete for the same jobs. In reality, the number of jobs in an economy can grow or shrink based on other factors. Immigrants also consume local services and goods and through this increased demand raise job prospects for those producing the goods and services. Furthermore, immigrants, especially if they are more skilled, can boost productivity, leading to an increase in wages, not decline (these effects have been observed in many studies summarised in Dustman et al. 2005, Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, 2014; Portes 2016a).

Most recently an authoritative study by the LSE Centre for Economic Performance reviewed evidence as to whether these trends have changed since the financial crisis and the severe economic downturn it cause. It examined the effects of immigration on the UK and specifically on UK-born citizens’ job prospects and wages. The report shows that the areas of the UK with large increases in EU immigration did not suffer greater falls in jobs and pay of UK-born workers. It compared data for unemployment, employment and wages for individuals born in the UK and EU immigration trends and found little correlation between them. Changes in employment are more linked to the economic cycle. The study found that in 2016 employment was almost back to the levels of previous recoveries, while immigration kept rising. The big falls in wages after 2008 are attributed to the global financial crisis and a weak economic recovery, not to immigration, as previous periods of wage gains have coincided with rising immigration. Changes in wages and joblessness for less educated UK-born workers show little correlation with changes in EU immigration. For higher skilled workers it has led to a limited wage increase of 1.24% for the median worker.<sup>40</sup> Other studies have found a reduction of 1.03% in wages for the bottom 10% and even this limited decline can be attributed to other factors.<sup>41</sup> The study found that a 10-percentage increase in the share of EU immigrants in a local area is associated with a 0.4% reduction in the overall unemployment rate in that area (not with an increase).<sup>42</sup>

Therefore, it is safe to say that the myth about the negative effect of immigrants on the jobs and wages of UK-born citizens, even those in low-skilled, low-wage employment, has been consistently disproved. On the contrary an overall positive effect has been found on the growth of the economy (GDP rate), productivity and taxes. Furthermore, immigrants bring innovation, enterprise and diversity to both the economy and society and make them more resilient and able to adapt to changes. They bring skills that are essential in the fast-pace and volatile world that people and economies alike find themselves in today.

### ***Migrants don’t drive wages down, employers do***

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<sup>40</sup> Wandsworth, J. et al., “Brexit and the impact of immigration on the UK,” Centre for Economic Performance, LSE, 2016;

<sup>41</sup> Dustman et al., “The effect of immigration along the distribution of wages,” 2013

<sup>42</sup> Portes, J. (2016b) “EU Immigration and the UK Labour market”

However, it is still important to recognise that on a local level migration has more complex effects which are not reflected in nation-wide statistics, especially in areas that are experiencing economic decline. Agencies solely recruiting newly arrived, or workers directly from abroad, willing to take badly paid and unsafe jobs can create resentment among the local community. There have been instances where employers have attempted to undercut wages by discriminating against local workers and these incidents have fed into the broader anti-immigrant narrative.

Other employer practices, such as same-language shifts undermine the principle of togetherness of integration and create an “us vs them” environment. Given the importance of the workplace for integration employers should be facilitating this process and not seeking to divide their workers.

A successful integration strategy will ensure that local workers are not unfairly disadvantaged through enforcing sanctions for employers who breach the legal minimum wage legislation, who fail to ensure adequate and safe conditions or otherwise discriminate between migrants and local workers. The Employers Sanctions Directive is part of the EU’s migration control legislation and at the same time gives a basic protection for the labour rights of undocumented migrants. However, the UK specifically opted out of this. Adoption and enforcement of similar legislation will deter rogue employers, while ensuring that migrants are not exploited and equal wages are paid for equal work, thus reducing discrimination and exploitation across the system.

#### ***Engage the trade unions to build trust and reduce discrimination across the labour market***

The trade unions also have an important role to play in their work to reduce exploitation. Their involvement in national and regional networks of partners against exploitation of immigrant labour is another way forward to ensure workers’ rights are guaranteed for both local and migrant workers, reducing the overall exploitation in the system. Equal pay for equal work should be the basic principle through which discrimination is eliminated and local and migrant workers together benefit from fair, safe and secure employment conditions.

#### ***Employability and career advice services***

Supporting migrants in getting into work quickly is essential in their integration process, this investment in the initial stage results in migrants’ earlier entry into the labour market. The services need to be designed based on the particular needs of migrants around language and knowledge of the system. Through the provision of such services, Consonant has developed insight into what works for migrants. The advice sessions need to be longer and provide advice on developing a CV, recognition of qualification/ acquiring new qualifications and the hiring and working culture and practices in the UK. Career services can also help in linking with employers to identify and reduce gaps in employability.

#### ***More active involvement of employers***

Employers and businesses also have an important role to play in facilitating labour market integration of diverse groups. A more diverse workforce tends to boost creativity and innovation and can help tap new markets both domestically and abroad.<sup>43</sup> They are typically hard-working and highly motivated, skilled migrants can fill skills shortages, while less-skilled ones can fill jobs that locals no longer want to do.<sup>44</sup> Recent research in the US also shows how immigrants fuelled regional

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<sup>43</sup> OPEN, Step Up: How to get refugees into work quickly, August 2017: [http://www.opennetwork.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/TENT\\_StepUp\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.opennetwork.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/TENT_StepUp_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

inventiveness, bolstered creative momentum within their industries, and drove long-term technological growth.<sup>45</sup>

However, businesses may face challenges in hiring some migrants, especially refugees and asylum seekers, as they lack information about the right to work or the duration of their stay. Lack of local work experience and qualifications, as well as language and cultural barriers, can also make businesses reluctant. Businesses should be encouraged and supported to overcome these barriers through partnerships with migrants and migrant organisations, who can advise and help address the issue. Businesses can also build partnerships between themselves to share good practice. Speaking more confidently about their integration work and supporting each other is important for creating a positive narrative of migration and the labour market.

### ***Supporting progress in work***

Evidence has increasingly shown migrants enter jobs below their qualification level and often remain trapped in low-paid, low security jobs, as they have no ability to improve their language, upskill or get recognition for their qualifications from back home. Career advice should be made available to people who already have a job but would like to progress in it, or would like to obtain extra qualifications. This is particularly relevant for women as often they juggle family and work duties and have fewer opportunities to progress professionally.

56% of the Consonant Survey respondents indicated that learning English has helped them into better employment and 52% said learning English helped them cope better with their jobs. Therefore, continuing the provision of both language classes, as well as employment advice beyond the initial stage of finding employment, is relevant for ensuring people progress in their work and feel satisfied and appreciated. Developing long-term interventions that take into account the whole journey of integration and changing needs over time can help provide relevant and adequate support.

### ***Promote entrepreneurship programmes***

Migrant entrepreneurship is an untapped resource and targeted measures are needed to support migrants and non-migrants alike in setting up businesses. A comprehensive, nationwide analysis of the scale of migrant entrepreneurship in the UK found immigrants are behind one in seven of all UK companies. Their entrepreneurial activity is near double that of UK-born individuals.<sup>46</sup> They are on average, eight years younger than the typical UK-born entrepreneur and come from over 150 nationalities. Interestingly, *a greater proportion of migrant women start companies than among the UK population*. The top sectors in which migrant entrepreneurs work, are construction and real estate, followed by consumer goods, IT and manufacturing. Migrant entrepreneurs are especially active in the SME segment of the economy - companies with a turnover between £1m and £200m, where the study found migrant-founded companies employ 1.16 million people out of a total of 8.3 million people. This, as with company formation, shows migrants are responsible for 14% of SME job-creation.<sup>47</sup>

Entrepreneurship support schemes need to take into account both the development of business skills relevant to the local context and the need to have specialised knowledge of how the system

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<sup>45</sup> Ufuk Akcigit & John Grigsby & Tom Nicholas, 2017. "[Immigration and the Rise of American Ingenuity](#)," American Economic Review, American Economic Association, vol. 107(5)

<sup>46</sup> CFE and DueDil, "Migrant entrepreneurs: Building our business, creating our jobs", 2016

<sup>47</sup> CFE and DueDil, "Migrant entrepreneurs: Building our business, creating our jobs", 2016

works, have a network of contacts, etc. They also need to help build the confidence of entrepreneurs, talking them through the different stages and the insecurity accompanying the launching of a business. The Consonant Survey found that of the 180 respondents 22 or 12% answered they were self-employed or running their own business. Providing on-going advice and mentoring to new entrepreneurs reduces the anxiety and insecurity around self-employment and increases the possibility of success.

### 3. Education and English language training

#### **Education system**

Schools are a natural place for integration and the Consonant Survey asked people who have children in school whether they think their children are accepted and treated equally to other children. In the Consonant Survey, the majority of 78% responded that they felt their children were well accepted, while 21% felt their children were treated differently, but none elaborated in more detail on this. Children doing well at school was mentioned by 24% of respondents as important for their integration.

One respondent pointed to discrimination and bullying in schools *“I think there must be better migrant education for children in schools and colleges because I felt that there are too many cases of bullying in there.”* Migration is a global phenomenon with direct local effects and its importance will only rise in the future. Learning about migration in schools can therefore help create a positive and welcoming environment for immigrant children which can affect their integration process and their ability to quickly learn English and advance in their studies.

#### **English language training**

Speaking English is quite possibly one of the most important factors for integration, and supports employment, civic and socio-cultural participation. It was the most important issue for integration selected by 72% of the Consonant Survey respondents. Furthermore, respondents felt that English helped with: *“daily life”* 67% and *“for socializing”* 58%; *“improved job prospects”* and *“basic communication ability”* each received 56%, with one respondent saying they felt learning better English will *“help them with their career as a dentist;”* *“more involvement with local community”* was also important for 48% of respondents.

#### **Q11 Has learning English helped you in one or more of the following?**

<i>Basic communication ability</i>	56%
<i>Job vocabulary</i>	52%
<i>More involvement in local community</i>	48%
<i>Better job access</i>	56%
<i>For socializing</i>	58%
<i>Help in school</i>	21%
<i>Help with children</i>	18%
<i>Daily life</i>	67%
<i>N/A</i>	6%
<i>Other (please specify)</i>	5%

ESOL - English for Speakers of Other Languages provision has received a lot of focus in the Integration strategy and this is very welcome. The development of an ESOL strategy for England will respond to the need for standardised provision. Early enrolment into English language classes from day one of arrival needs to be established as an essential part of an integration strategy. ESOL classes are important as they provide the basis of a common language bringing different communities and the host population together. ESOL is also a path to understanding the culture and practical integration steps. Classes should be geared towards facilitating integration by introducing topics such as the local culture, role of institutions, libraries, volunteering and bank holidays.

Provision of ESOL should be made available in principle to all migrants in the UK. Recognising the challenges posed by cuts to local budgets, availability of ESOL classes should be provided not on the basis of legal status but on other principles such as needs basis, vulnerability or means testing. From Consonant’s own work, lessons include the provision of ESOL as early as possible and making classes accessible for groups that may be experiencing barriers such as:

- accessibility
- minimum length of stay in the U.K. (ranging between 6 months and 1 year depending on provider);
- no recourse to public funds/refugee status (i.e. asylum seekers are often not accepted);
- receipt of "active benefits" for eligibility (e.g. JSA/ESA/universal credit);
- lack of childcare: very few providers offer this;
- evening and late afternoon classes can cater for the needs of migrants already working/ or those with care responsibilities.

Learning and speaking English is of value to the UK both within the country and also if people leave as they take away knowledge of the language, culture and contacts with them. This supports the UK’s foreign influence abroad in a similar way that the work of the British Council does.

***Language classes for host population***

Language is important not only as a means of communication but also because it transmits ‘cultural knowledge’ – knowledge of national and local procedures, local customs and facilities. Facilitating the flow of this knowledge should be a two-way process with the host society acquiring knowledge of the circumstances and cultural background of the migrants that settle alongside them. Providing opportunities for locals to learn other languages will help also reduce their anxiety and make migrants feel less unfamiliar.

## 4. Housing

Housing is an area where migrants and refugee continue to experience persistent barriers. In the survey, 49% said they would like to be able to move to a better house or they would like to be able to afford their own place, while 45% of the respondents to the survey said they were satisfied with the quality of their housing.

***Q15 Are you satisfied with the quality/ standard of your house?***

<i>Yes, I am satisfied</i>	49%
<i>No, I would like to move to a better house</i>	45%

Housing was also among the issues mentioned as most important to integration with 56% - 84 respondents, mentioning *“having good housing”* as an important integration factor. Secure housing is also important so that people can engage in their local community: *“having access to low cost, secure housing would contribute to my sense of belonging as I would be able to spend more time on volunteering and taking part in my local community”*. Two respondents mentioned they would like to change the neighbourhood where they live. Respondents said the following: *“I would like to be able to afford my own flat and not be constantly looking for a room to rent”* and *“I find the neighbourhood quite aggressive and hostile”*. This raises an important point with regard to neighbourhood segregation. Often migrants live in areas where there is a high concentration of immigrants, which can sometimes create a sense of living separate lives.<sup>48</sup> People need to engage with different cultures and have diverse and multiple opportunities to come together to increase the sense of shared lives and commonality in daily life.

## 5. Healthcare

Access to quality healthcare is also an important factor of integration. In terms of healthcare provision, 48% of the Consonant Survey respondents said they were satisfied with the health service they receive, while 31% share the frustration of long waiting times with the host population. 11 people or 6% felt or experienced discrimination, while nearly 4% cannot access healthcare, either because they do not know how to register, or are worried about the financial costs related to seeking medical help. The most common concerns were not enough time for doctors to conduct examinations, prescription of standard medication such as paracetamol, as well as the heavy bureaucracy around appointments. These concerns are similar to what most British people would also share about the NHS.

### Q16: Do you feel you are receiving good healthcare?

<i>I am satisfied</i>	48%
<i>I think waiting times are too long</i>	31%
<i>I feel discriminated</i>	6%
<i>I don't know how to register</i>	2%
<i>I don't go to the doctor for legal reasons</i>	0%
<i>I don't go to the doctor for financial reasons</i>	2%
<i>Other (please specify)</i>	11%

<sup>48</sup> Cantel, T., 2004, *“The End of Parallel Lives? The Report of the Community Cohesion Panel”*

One respondent's comment gives a glimpse of the multiple barriers faced by migrants in the NHS system, especially those who have had traumatic experiences: *"Racism plays a part in my care so I feel like I have to exaggerate my pain in order to have my issues taken seriously. With mental health I have to be careful; often I downplay my symptoms so that I don't get sectioned because of the implicit bias that being a migrant and having traumatic experiences pertaining to that, makes you a danger to society by default."*

From Consonant's own experience, one of our primary groups of concern is those migrants who are most vulnerable. In particular, I am referring to persons who are simultaneously homeless, lack proficient (or even basic) English language skills, have significant mental health problems or a low mental capacity. When these people look for support and healthcare, they often receive directions they are unable to follow through by themselves, such as completing forms in English or contacting authorities via digital/telephone advice services. Community organisations are sometimes able to help them access appropriate support services and advice, however for those less networked and living in isolation, such steps may be insurmountable, resulting in deteriorating healthcare. To complicate matters, as a result of their inability to communicate, negotiate, problem solve, and poor or no advocacy/representation, such migrants often end up in with very complex legal immigration situations and become very vulnerable to exploitation. These are the groups whose needs are least represented as they are least likely to take part in surveys and are consumed by their own problems. As we work with them from time to time, we know that many of the struggles that they face are directly relevant to this integration strategy. Some of these individuals may have spent years or even decades in London, living on couches with friends, or on the streets of London. Though they may feel very British and are deeply immersed into British life and culture, yet the lack of integration strategy means that core components are missing that allow them to lead fulfilling lives as British citizens.

## 6. Civic and political participation

Civic participation has received an important focus in the Integration Strategy green paper. In any discussion about how to support migrants/refugees in getting involved in civic participation, there has to first be a discussion about civic participation in general as this effectively sets the context within which approaches to support migrants/refugees have to work.<sup>49</sup>

Membership in civic participation groups is not very high among the Consonant Survey respondents. 67% are not a member of any migrant group or group of their own nationality, trade union or political party and 57% are not a member of cultural, sports, media or religious groups. Despite actual membership in such groups not being very high, such membership is broadly seen as beneficial for integration. 25% are members of a volunteer or community group. Some had volunteered in the past and found it useful but were not involved now. Around 20% were unsure if this had helped with their integration, while one mentioned that maybe they *"changed some locals' perception about migrants"*.

**Q20 In this country, are you a member of:**

A group of your own nationality	17%
A migrant group	10%

<sup>49</sup> Urbact, January 2018, Discussion on civic participation of migrants and refugees: <http://urbact.eu/short-discussion-note-civic-participation-migrants-and-refugees>

A trade union	10%
A political party	4%
I am not a member of any group	67%
Other group (please specify)	6%

An increasingly important aspect of civic participation is digital inclusion. Out of 101 computer assessments carried out at Consonant between July 2017 and June 2018, 44% were at beginner level. This means that they lacked core digital skills. Participants enrolled onto our programme in order to learn how to use a laptop to carry out basic daily activities such as creating an email account, writing an email, applying for jobs, online shopping, online banking, social networking and staying safe online. 57% had a good/excellent grasp of digital skills and could use digital devices and the internet in their daily lives, however enrolled onto the programme as they wanted to develop skills to enable them to work, study, improve their employment prospects, and support family members digitally. Digital citizenship skills are essential in the 21st century, and continue to have a strong bearing on the integration possibilities available to members of our community.

Political participation, interest and willingness to vote are high among the Consonant Survey respondents with 80% saying they would vote if they had the opportunity. In addition, 4% mention they are a member of a political party. 79% think that there is a need for more politicians of migrant origin and of these over 50% of respondents think that such politicians can better understand diverse experience and represent migrants better. 26% thought politicians of immigrant background have a symbolic importance to the country.

**Q19 Why do you think there should be more politicians of immigrant background?**

They understand better diverse experience	52%
Can better represent migrants	57%
They are important symbolically for the country	26%

Some of the reasons for this cited include: *“Migrants should also have a say in running society,” “They may have a broader view of diverse communities and are more representative of the electorate,” “They could inspire other immigrants to aspire to go high in British society.”*

Involving migrants in developing both national and local integration strategies is essential. Through providing a forum where migrants could speak directly to the Minister of State regarding their experiences of integration they can support the development of better-informed policy. On a local level this process can be further developed with the establishment of local integration councils and the inclusion of migrant groups in them. In the words of one Consonant Survey respondent: *“{local authorities} ... should invite us to participate not only for photographs during election times, we should be taking an active part in the discussion tables.”*

## 7. Social and cultural participation

Membership to socio-cultural groups among the Consonant Survey respondents is slightly higher than in civic organisations as seen below. However, measures clearly are needed in both areas to encourage participation of migrants in such groups on a long-term basis as this creates opportunities

for meeting and interacting with members of the British community. Sustained and meaningful social contact, helps overcome stereotypes and increases community cohesion.

**Q22 In this country, are you a member of:**

<i>Cultural organisation or group</i>	12%
<i>Sports team</i>	7%
<i>Media group</i>	4%
<i>Religious group</i>	9%
<i>Volunteer or community group</i>	25%
<i>I am not a member of any group</i>	57%
<i>Other group (please specify)</i>	4%

Creativity is also an important way of establishing meaningful social interaction between migrant groups and the host population. Art and promoting cultural diversity are closely interrelated, according to a joint study entitled “*Art in the immigrant society*” by Germany’s Bertelsmann Stiftung Foundation and UNESCO’s German Commission. Projects are successful when they reach members of the social majority as well as migrants, the study’s authors found, adding that music and dance projects are particularly suitable because they overcome language barriers. The study states that exhibitions, workshops and festivals “communicate fundamental challenges” and help improve understanding. The authors acknowledge however, that cultural projects can’t solve problems of racism and intolerance. Cultural activities help reflect and shape cooperation and a collective identity, say the study’s researchers: “It’s not only about art for migrants, it’s about art by and with migrants.”<sup>50</sup>

Taking creative exhibitions and events organised by migrants to areas that do not have migrant populations can create an opportunity for interactions, learning and understanding. Showcasing the diversity and multiplicity of migrants’ experiences is a way of countering the media and right-wing narrative of migrants and refugees as a swarm and a threat. Through their own work, migrants can be seen as resilient, driven, facing life’s challenges, like everyone else. A most recent example of such projects is the work of street artist Dreph called “Migration,” a collection portraying first-generation immigrants, “these works are the artist’s attempt to capture the diversity and depth of the many inspiring immigrants working to move the UK forward.”<sup>51</sup> Such creative initiatives are quite often implemented in places where diversity and inclusion is already happening, in the big cities. Taking such works of art and creative projects to areas where there are no migrants can bring the reality of migration closer to members of these communities.

Creative and cultural spaces are also important for maintaining the socio-cultural identity of the host community. Different cultures, diverse migrant cultures and English culture alike should be valued and people should feel they have the space where they can practice and engage with their own culture. This will reinforce a sense of security and communities will not feel threatened that their culture is being drowned out or is not respected. At the same time sharing one’s own culture and learning about others can be encouraged and facilitated.

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.dw.com/en/how-culture-promotes-understanding-study/a-43820642>

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/dreph-migration-series-murals-uk/>

Alongside steps taken to help new migrants to integrate in the creative arts field, sports activities are another way of engaging both migrants and the host community in long-term positive interaction. This is not something new, as it was the case throughout the 20th century that many foreign nationals were able to integrate into their host community through associations including sports clubs. Integration through sport enables migrants to gain access to communities, to get to know them better and to share a number of their values. This mutual adoption/adaptation is a two-way process between migrants and the residents of the host country.<sup>52</sup>

To facilitate this, the Council of Europe has launched a Sport Migrant Integration Platform that will collect, share and promote mutual learning between different sports projects across Europe that would enable both project partners and national and local stakeholders to link, share experience and engage in the design and implementation of such activities.<sup>53</sup> This platform is particularly useful for local authorities when designing their local integration plans and actions.

Sport activities were also mentioned in the Consonant Survey as a way local authorities can support integration with providing swimming and gym classes mentioned. One respondent wrote: *“The local sports centre could offer more opportunities to do sports together. At the moment I go to Pilates on Monday and this is the most amazing community time I have with other women of all ages, ethnic backgrounds and economic status. If there were any outdoor activities with this group such as Pilates in the weekend, in the park, I would love to do it and get to know the other women better.”*

To end with the eloquent words of one Survey respondent *“Hope we can all contribute to keeping the UK as a tolerant and democratic country that welcomes people from different nationalities and allows them to feel at home”*.

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<sup>52</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/16806f37c7>

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/sport-migrant-integration-directory/about-the-platform>