

# COMPAS Breakfast Briefing Summary



## Who are Britain's new citizens?

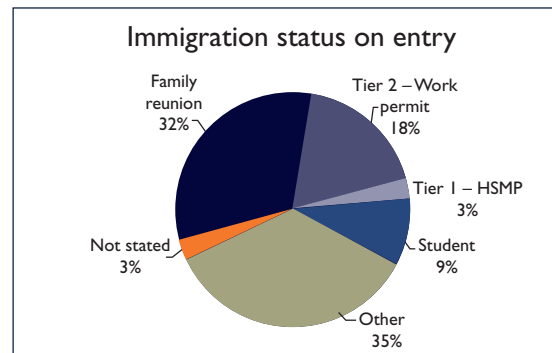
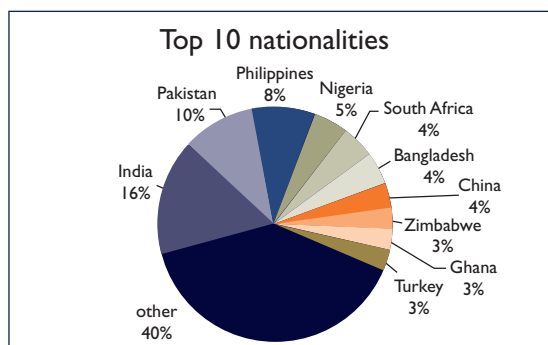
195,000 people became British citizens in 2010. Who are Britain's new citizens? What are their attitudes to Britishness? Are they integrating into British society?

The Integration and Citizenship project, delivered jointly by COMPAS and Birkbeck, University of London, surveyed people who applied for British citizenship last year, and conducted in-depth follow-up interviews with some of them. The research explored their journey from arrival to settlement to citizenship, their experiences of the naturalisation process, and their integration in terms of social interaction, local belonging and feelings of Britishness. This briefing will present a profile of Britain's new citizens, and what we can learn from them about the relationship between settlement, citizenship and integration.

### What is the profile of Britain's new citizens?

The project surveyed 3,940 people who received a decision on their citizenship application in the first quarter of 2010.<sup>1</sup>

- The main countries of origin of our sample were: India (16%), Pakistan (10%), Philippines (8%) and Nigeria (5%). A third came to the UK for family reunification, a fifth for work and a tenth for study.
- Half of the new citizens were in full time work (slightly higher than the 47% of the whole foreign-born population), 14% in part-time employment, 6% in self-employment, 8% in study, 15% were looking after family members and just 5% were unemployed.



To become citizens, 81% took the Life in the UK test, rather than the alternative ESOL with citizenship course route open to those with less English language proficiency on the point of application. The participants were very positive about the process of applying. Surprisingly, satisfaction was as high amongst those who were successful in their citizenship application as those who were not.

### What sort of communities do new citizens live in? Do they feel they belong locally?

Analysing the postcode of our survey participants reveals that new citizens are more likely to live in certain types of neighbourhood. Some of these are relatively deprived – terraced housing where lower income workers live, or low-rise family social housing. Others are less deprived – small modern starter homes, or predominantly young and educated urban apartments.<sup>2</sup>

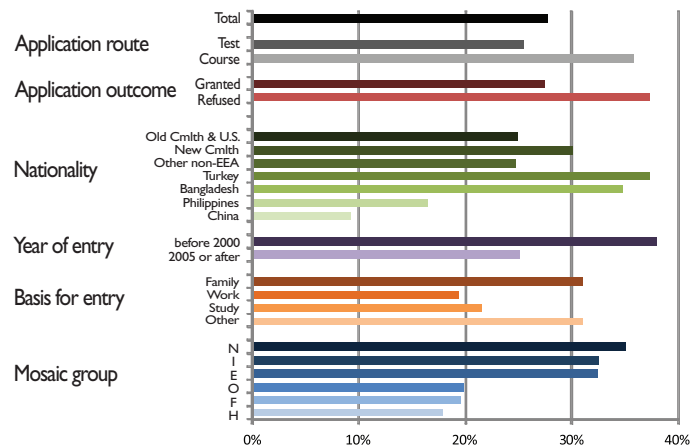
Participants were asked about local belonging. Most felt they belong 'fairly strongly' (47%) or 'very strongly' (28%) to their neighbourhood, compared to a fifth who believed they belong 'not very strongly' or 'not at

<sup>1</sup> Minor children, EU nationals and refugees were not included in the sample, due to the EU funding. 333 people whose applications were refused were included in the sample. Responses were weighted to compensate for unequal probabilities of selection of sample units and produce representative estimates for the target population: successful applicants in England were 'weighted up' to compensate for their smaller chance of being selected in our sample, while all refused applicants and granted applicants in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were 'weighted down'. In this briefing, where comparisons are made to the whole population or whole foreign-born population, the source is the 2009 Citizenship Survey. All other data comes from the COMPAS Integration and Citizenship survey.

<sup>2</sup> This analysis was based on the Experian Mosaic database, which categorises postcodes by aggregating several administrative and statistical data sources.

all'. Participants from some countries – generally those with large populations in the UK – were much more likely to report a very strong sense of belonging; well over a third of those from Bangladesh, for example. Applicants from newer migration countries, such as Philippines, were much less likely to. Some neighbourhood types also correlated with local belonging: high density social housing, multicultural terraces, and moderate suburban semis. Neighbourhoods with weaker local belonging were starter homes, modern family homes and low-rise social housing.

### Proportion of applicants who believe they belong 'very strongly' to their local neighbourhood



#### Mosaic Groups

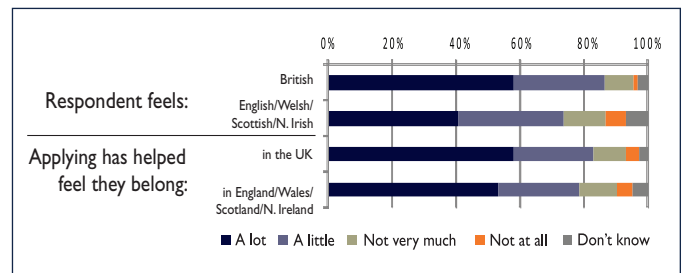
- E:** Middle income families living in moderate suburban semis
- F:** Couples with young children in comfortable modern housing
- H:** Couples and young singles in small, modern starter homes
- I:** Lower income workers in urban terraces in often diverse areas
- N:** Young people renting flats in high density social housing
- O:** Families in low-rise social housing with high benefit needs

### Who do new citizens socialise with?

46% of respondents said that over half of their friends are of the same ethnicity as themselves. 31% said that over half of their friends are from other ethnic groups, compared to 21% in the whole foreign-born population and just 5% of the UK-born population. Those who are younger, working or studying were more likely to socialise across ethnic lines; older participants, family carers and economically inactive people were less likely to do so. Participants outside England, and especially those in Northern Ireland, are more likely to have more inter-ethnic friendships.

### Feeling British

58% of respondents feel British 'a lot', compared with only 10% feeling British 'not very much' or 'not at all'. This is not only a higher rate than in the foreign-born population as a whole, but also the UK-born population. A lower but still substantial share of citizenship applicants (40%) feel English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish 'a lot' – much lower than in the UK-born population. The majority of respondents also believe that applying for citizenship has helped them feel they belong in the UK and its nations.



### Two paths to integration?

The research shows that there is some relationship between local belonging, civic activities, friendship across ethnic lines and feeling British – but not a straightforward relationship. In particular, there is no correlation between local belonging and interethnic socialising, although both are associated with developing national belonging. This suggests that we can think of multiple paths to integration: integration as an uneven process which occurs across a series of different domains of life at different rates for different migrants. Two particular paths stand out in the research. There are those who develop both a strong sense of Britishness and a strong sense of local belonging, often connected to family ties (e.g. children in local schools) to multicultural urban areas. And there are those who live and work or study in areas with fewer migrants outside the traditional migration gateways, and develop both a strong sense of Britishness and many inter-ethnic friendships, but a weaker sense of local connection. In general, the research suggests that the overwhelming majority of those applying for UK citizenship show the sorts of attributes that are seen in the literature as positive indicators of integration.

This briefing is by Ben Gidley, Senior Researcher at COMPAS. Research team for the Integration and Citizenship project: **Ben Gidley, Alessio Cangiano and Sarah Spencer** at COMPAS and **Dina Kiwan and Zoe Khor** at Birkbeck. The postal survey was administered by TNS-BMRB. The project was co-financed by the European Fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals.



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Thumbnails - First page: Kelly O'Brien, COMPAS Photo Competition Entry 2010; Second page: Clare Barthelemy, COMPAS Photo Competition Entry 2010