

# BRINGING BRITAIN TOGETHER

*British Future:  
our vision and future  
programme*

British  
Future...



# ABOUT *British Future*

*British Future is an independent, non-partisan thinktank and registered charity engaging people's hopes and fears about integration and immigration, opportunity and identity.*

These debates, from EU immigration and refugee protection to integration of people from different faiths and backgrounds, remain noisy and polarised. But since British Future's founding in 2012, we have developed a unique understanding and expertise on public attitudes to these issues in the UK, through in-depth qualitative and quantitative research. We have found that there is a surprising amount of common ground among the public on which they can agree.

Our Theory of Change recognises that securing political consent for policy change on these issues requires public support – and that it is possible to build this support with the right approach:

- We develop and test messages to find arguments that are persuasive to the public, particularly what we call the 'Anxious Middle' – the majority of the British public, who are neither wholly pro- nor anti- immigration.

- We work with immigration and refugee advocates to help them to be more persuasive. We also identify new messengers – like the army, business and faith leaders – to build broader coalitions that can reach this persuadable Anxious Middle group.

- We project our findings publicly to inform national debate, contributing to discussions on issues such as citizenship, EU migration, integration, refugee protection, the status of EU nationals in the UK after Brexit, combating racism and xenophobia, international student migration and national identities.

British Future engages people's legitimate concerns and offers constructive solutions in response. We believe we can build a broad consensus among the public and opinion-formers for reforms to immigration and integration policy that work for everyone.

**Our long-term aim is a country where we are no longer 'Them' and 'Us' but rather a confident and welcoming Britain, inclusive and fair to all.**



# FORWARD AGENDA

## Current activities and future programme

### I. IMMIGRATION AFTER BREXIT

#### Securing public trust in Britain's immigration system

Immigration policy will change after Brexit – and securing public consent for a new system will mean engaging people in debates about what these changes should be. We will build on the findings from our *National Conversation on Immigration* project, the biggest-ever public consultation on immigration, to inform policy change.

#### Protecting the rights of EU nationals in Britain

The commitments made to the 3 million EU nationals in Britain must be honoured. British Future is working with migration advocates and business to press for the fair reforms needed to carry out the biggest administrative task in the Home Office's history.

#### How do business voices win public consent for migration?

Advocates of the economic gains of migration do not have the public and political support they need. British Future is working closely with employers to develop public messages, policy agendas and broader coalitions to engage concerns effectively by proposing constructive solutions.

### 2. REFUGEES WELCOME – MAINTAINING BRITAIN'S PROUD TRADITION

How can charities make the case for refugee protection to those who are sceptical about the asylum system and whether Britain can cope with the scale of the crisis? British Future is disseminating new research into public attitudes and messages that resonate with persuadable sceptics, to help organisations working on refugee protection communicate more effectively.

### 3. INTEGRATION: FROM 'THEM AND US' TO THE 'NEW US'?

#### Reconnecting Britain

To help bridge the divides in British society today, we are building a powerful civic coalition advocating for proactive integration strategies that prioritise greater social contact and universal fluency in English.

#### Making citizenship matter

Our agenda for citizenship reform includes an independent inquiry into citizenship policy, led by Alberto Costa MP; scrutiny of the EU Settlement Scheme; and a focus on raising the profile and impact of citizenship ceremonies.

#### Getting local integration right

We are working to institutionalise effective city-region strategies across the UK, building on our successful advocacy for a Deputy Mayor for Social Integration in London, including work in West Yorkshire, the West Midlands and Greater Manchester.

#### Voices for the common ground

Smaller organisations working to combat prejudice and xenophobia need support to communicate effectively. British Future works with local and national civic society, sharing evidenced, tested messages that resonate with harder-to-reach audiences.

#### Shared history, shared future

Working with the Royal British Legion, our Remember Together project is increasing knowledge of the diverse contributions to our shared history, encouraging contact between people from different backgrounds and making our tradition of Remembrance more inclusive.



### 4. SHARING THE LESSONS FROM POPULISM

Britain is not alone in facing the challenge of populist politics. We are sharing the lessons of British Future's UK-based work with organisations across Europe, informing common responses to challenges from the divisive rhetoric of President Trump to the fear and prejudice being sown by some in response to Europe's refugee crisis.

# BRINGING BRITAIN TOGETHER

## Our vision

*A more confident, welcoming and inclusive Britain – the mission at the heart of British Future’s agenda – resonates precisely because most of us are aware that is not the country that we live in today.*

British Future is no longer an ambitious start-up. It has a strong presence as a thought leader on identity, immigration and integration – engaging people seriously in how we handle the issues that can divide our society.

The stakes are now higher than ever. Britain is embarking on the most important political change in half a century at a time when our country is more anxious and fractured than any of us would want. The referendum vote of 2016 illuminated long-standing divisions – between the capital and the regions; between generations and social classes, minorities and majorities. It also presented new challenges: not only the complex policy and diplomatic issues of Brexit but also broader issues of rising hate crime and democratic mistrust.

How to respond? A strong liberal instinct is to fight back and mobilise ‘our tribe against theirs’: if somebody wants to start a culture war, then surely we need to fight and win it. Yet such a battle between two opposing minorities will generate much heat and little light. A glance across the

Atlantic to the dystopian mood of Donald Trump’s divided America warns that a cycle of mutual polarisation, in which both the volume and temperature of the angriest public debates is ratcheted up ever higher, will never unite us around inclusive values. That cannot be where we want Britain to be five or ten years from now.

So this must be a time for the staunch defence of the values that make us the country we are. But those values must be defended effectively – not polarising between ‘open’ and ‘closed’, but accepting the challenge to defend liberal values in a way that makes sense to the majority of our fellow citizens. That will mean showing how the gains of being an open society can be more widely shared.

Some will recognise this as a moment of challenge and danger, so will seek to ‘limit the damage’. But we will also need a more ambitious mindset for this ‘reset’ moment, if we are to seize the opportunity to set out a broader vision that brings people together.

What is unusual about British Future’s work is not the widely shared aspiration for a more confident and inclusive society, but the distinctive way in which we work towards it.

### **Understanding our audiences**

We are a thinktank which understands that policy expertise alone cannot shift highly salient and polarised debates. It also requires a deep understanding of how people think and how politicians, business and civic leaders need to



communicate if they want to shape debates about the issues that matter most to people.

### **Engaging anxieties**

Our journey to build a common future must begin with a serious engagement with the anxieties that most people feel, so that we do not find ourselves only talking to those who are already confident about our future.

### **Proposing solutions**

We understand that, as advocates for a more confident and welcoming Britain, we succeed in getting a hearing – whether from decision-makers or at the school-gate – when we are much more

than voices of critique and complaint, by advancing constructive solutions to the big questions of the age.

### **Being strategic and responsive**

Effective advocacy must be capable of navigating this era of dizzying volatility, when a referendum at home and elections abroad, tragedy in the Mediterranean or a terrorist atrocity in Europe might each transform the public agenda. That requires the ability to anticipate and respond in real-time, so as to be relevant to public conversations that we need to influence. It also requires a robust theory of change to ensure that we and others are responding strategically.

### **Getting the message heard**

It takes creative flair to communicate that positive vision to the public in compelling new ways. That includes linking up unusual allies and long-standing supporters in ways that reach into conversations in living rooms and around kitchen tables across the country.

**So we must now show that we do have viable responses to the challenges of the Brexit era. Our three core priorities will be:**

- Securing a post-Brexit immigration approach that rebuilds public confidence and political consent, while meeting the needs of the economy, public services and our global obligations. That will need a much deeper level of public involvement, to address people's anxieties and respond with a system that

manages the pressures and secures the gains of immigration.

- Changing the way we think about integration. That means refusing to divide people into 'Them and Us' – whether that's about migrants, ethnic minorities or British Muslims – by proposing concrete ideas to make integration an 'everybody' issue, shaping a 'New Us' that we can all feel part of.
- Developing winning coalitions broad enough to make change happen. It will take unusual alliances to find the common ground – across the political and referendum divides and in local communities too. So British Future is deepening our own local engagement in ways that can bring new voices into our national immigration and integration debates.

British Future launched in 2012 to address the fractures in our society. Yet it did so in an Olympic and Jubilee year which provided important glimpses of how Britain is at its best when people come together. If we fear those divisions widening today, the task of finding common ground is more urgent still. It is now time to work together for the shared future we want.



**Sunder Katwala**  
Director of British Future



# SUPPORT *British Future*

***Britain's public and political debates on immigration and integration can often seem noisy and divisive.***

I've followed them closely over the years as Executive Editor of the country's biggest Asian publishing house, chronicling the progress of our Asian community in publications like Eastern Eye and The Asian Rich List.

I joined British Future's Board of Trustees in 2015 as it seemed to be one of the few organisations seeking to bridge these divides and bring people together to find common ground.

Since its launch in 2012 British Future has established itself as a leading voice on immigration and integration. It uniquely offers in-depth understanding of public attitudes on these issues, which look set to dominate our politics.

It provides impartial political analysis, policy expertise and maintains a broad range of relationships spanning political and referendum divides, including with charities, corporates, faith and community groups.

So I'd like to invite you today to join us and offer your support.

I'm asking you to join me today and become a supporter and donor to British Future. Donors enjoy a range of benefits including private advice, analysis and interpretation of policy issues, written briefings, exclusive events and previews of new publications.

As you've read here, we have an ambitious agenda for the years to come. We now need your help to make that a reality.

Contact British Future's Director, Sunder Katwala, for more information at:

**[sunder@britishfuture.org](mailto:sunder@britishfuture.org)**



**Shailesh Solanki**  
Trustee of British Future



# WORKING with British Future

*This is a crucial time for reform of immigration and integration policy. British Future partners with organisations on events, research and other projects to help address challenges from strategy and messaging to reaching decision-makers and the public.*

## Events

Our extensive experience of supporting and delivering events includes keynote speeches from senior ministers, all-day conferences, invite-only briefings and roundtables, as well as the coordination of national networks across the migration, integration and refugee protection sectors. We also host events and offer panellists at Party Conferences.

Recent event partners have included PwC, Fragomen, Migration Exchange, EY, IoD and Eastern Eye. If you would like to find out more about our events programme and opportunities to partner with us, please contact [lucy@britishfuture.org](mailto:lucy@britishfuture.org) for more information.

## Research

British Future is a thought leader on migration, integration and national identity and our timely research regularly reaches a wide and influential audience. We have partnered with organisations on research projects related to these issues and welcome approaches regarding joint research projects.

## Advice

British Future has expanded its offer to help organisations and businesses navigate today's volatile politics and influence decision-makers. Our offer includes strategic and policy advice, political analysis, research on public attitudes and effective messaging, communications advice and media interventions.

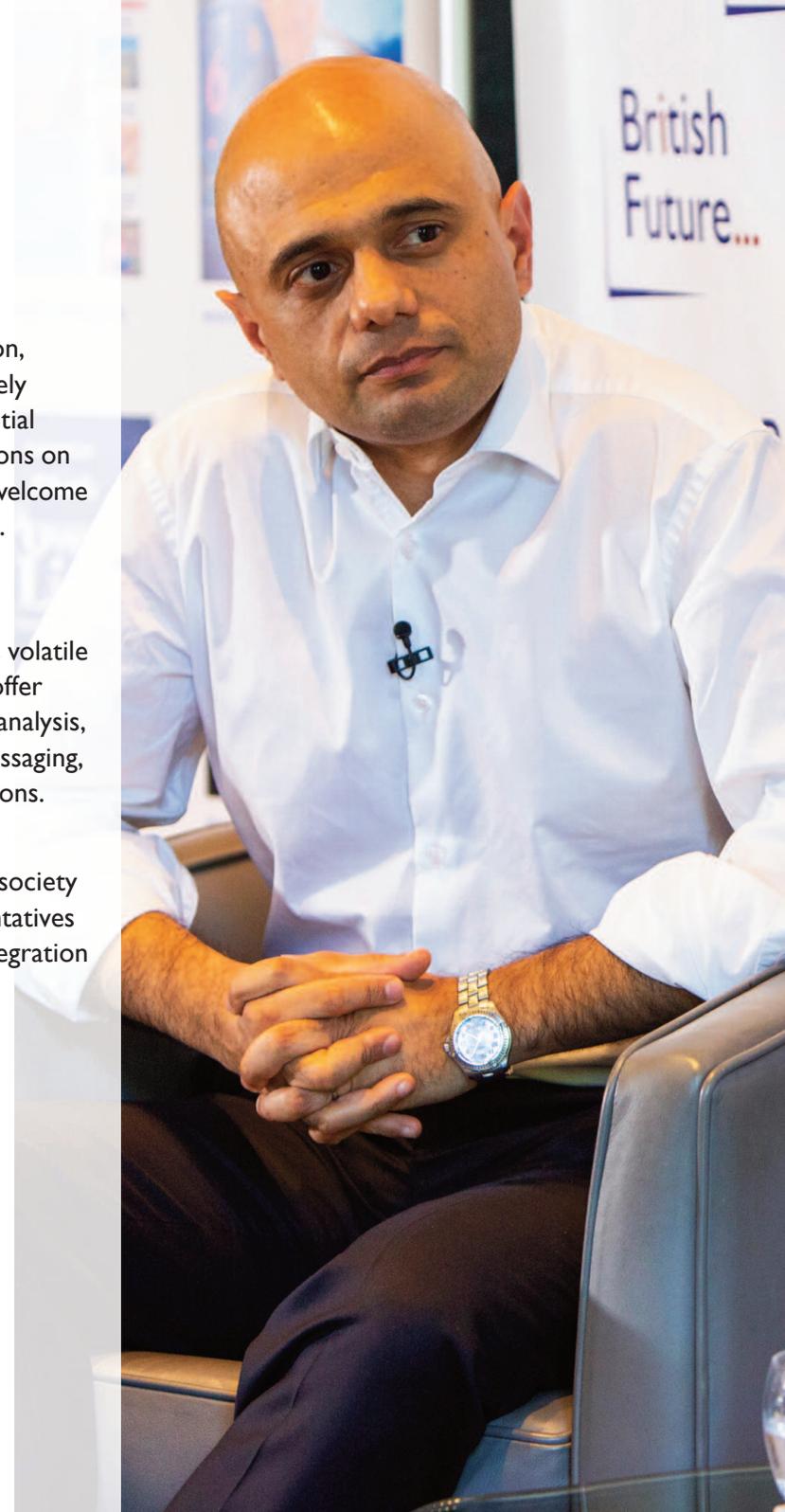
## Networks

We convene a variety of networks with civil society groups nationally, and with business representatives on a range of themes including migration, integration and combating prejudice.

We would like to thank the following organisations for their support:



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