

Reading 041 — Immigration

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It exists to show the shape, depth and reasoning of a commissioned reading. It reports nothing about the world. No comment was collected, no classifier was run, and no person is represented in any figure below.

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Commissioned by	[CLIENT]
Subject	Immigration, and the seven subjects found beneath it
Window	23 June to 4 August 2026
Cadence	Continuous. 43 daily readings across the window
Sources	UK political YouTube. See Appendix A
Comments read	12,408 classified in the run; 8,942 on immigration after the per-author cap
People	5,210 distinct authors on immigration
Delivered	[DATE]
Analyst	Evan Rathbone, Tenor Research Ltd
Run	041 · classifier <code>mock</code> · generated 4 August 2026

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1. Executive summary

Opinion among people commenting on UK political YouTube is unfavourable toward current immigration policy by roughly two and a half to one, and it hardened over the six weeks of this window. Support fell from 31.2% to 24.3% and opposition rose from 54.8% to 65.1%, a swing of 17.1 points on the gap. The margin on the leading share is ± 1.5 points, so the movement is many times the noise.

The subject does not behave as one bloc, and that is the finding with the most practical value in this reading. The same population is 80.2% against current small-boat policy and, at the same time, 51.2% *in favour* of the care worker visa route. A single immigration number averages those two into something that describes nobody. Seven subjects appear beneath immigration in this window and they do not point the same way.

The dominant reason given is not about the numbers. Of the 7,333 comments that gave a reason, 31.0% gave a version of loss of control: the level was never chosen, and cannot be changed. It is the largest cluster, the most strongly expressed at a mean intensity of 0.86, and the most one-sided, with 94% of the people giving it opposed to current policy. Pressure on housing and services follows at 27.0% and wages and job competition at 24.0%.

That has a direct consequence for anyone arguing this case. Arguments pitched at the level of the numbers engage the second and third clusters. They do not touch the first, and the first is where both the volume and the intensity sit. The one cluster given in real measure by both sides is *unfair on those who came legally* at 10.0%, where 14% of the people making it are favourable to current policy and a substantial part of the group is arguing for the legal route to be widened rather than for arrivals to be cut.

Where opinion is favourable, it is economic and personal. Among the 24.3% who took a favourable view, the two largest reasons are that the economy needs the workers, at 38.0%, and that the NHS and social care depend on it, at 31.0%. The second is the most personally expressed group in the reading: a substantial number identify themselves as working in the sector.

Four things this reading cannot tell you, stated here rather than at the back. It measures people who comment on UK political YouTube and not the general public. It cannot see anyone who read without commenting, which is the overwhelming majority. Its margins cover sampling variation only and say nothing about whether commenters resemble anyone else. And the classifier that produced every label has not been independently validated. Section 3 sets out what follows from each.

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2. What you asked

Where does opinion on immigration sit among politically engaged people online, what is actually driving it, is the driver the numbers themselves or something else, and does the picture hold together or break apart when you look underneath it?

Every figure in this reading is favourability toward one written proposition:

A favourable view of current UK immigration policy. Support = favourable. Oppose = unfavourable.

The proposition matters more than it looks. "Immigration" is not a thing an opinion can be for or against, and a figure that does not name what was measured is not auditable. Each of the seven subjects in section 5 carries its own proposition, stated with its figures, because a comment favourable toward the care worker visa route and a comment favourable toward current small-boat policy are not the same opinion and must not be added together.

Nothing here is favourability toward a party, a politician, a government or an individual measure. Where a comment expressed a view of a party rather than of policy, it was not counted toward these figures.

What was delivered

- This document.
- Continuous access to the same figures in the Tenor dashboard for the duration of the engagement, including the daily series behind section 7 and the reason breakdowns behind section 6.
- The video list and window, as Appendix A, so the reading can be checked.
- One working session to go through the findings, and follow-up cuts of the same data at no additional cost.

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3. Who this measures, and who it does not

Tenor measures people who comment on UK political YouTube. That is a large, engaged, clearly defined population. **It is not the general public and it is not a representative sample of the UK electorate.** This section is not a disclaimer. It changes how every number in this document should be read, and it is placed before the figures for that reason.

3.1 The population selects itself

People who comment on political video are more engaged and more opinionated than people who watch without commenting, and far more so than people who do not watch political content at all. The commenter voice on any channel sits further from the centre than that channel's own audience, which in turn sits further out than the public.

This cuts in a specific direction that is worth naming: **it is a more self-selecting group than a survey panel, not a less one.** No weighting fixes that, and none is applied. What is gained in exchange is that nobody was asked a question, so nobody's answer was shaped by one. Section 9.4 sets out what that buys.

3.2 The margins do not cover any of this

Every margin in this document is a 95% interval on the leading share, computed on the effective number of *people* rather than comments. It answers one narrow question: how much would this figure move if a different set of comments from this same population had been caught?

It says nothing about whether this population resembles the electorate, whether the videos in scope resemble UK political YouTube, or whether the classifier labelled correctly. **A narrow margin on an unrepresentative population is still a number about that population and nobody else.**

3.3 Classification is automated and has not been validated

Every comment was labelled by a language model. Individual labels are noisy by design and reliability comes from aggregation across thousands of comments, not from any single label being right.

Tenor has no accuracy figure for its classifier. No validation study has been run. This is stated in our terms at clause 7(c) and it is stated here, because a supplier who omits it is inviting you to assume a number that does not exist. Where a subject in section 5 rests on a small number of comments, that is flagged on the row rather than left for you to work out.

3.4 What this is not

This is not a poll. It does not predict an election, a by-election or a referendum, and it must not be presented as though it did. Where a figure here resembles a published poll, the resemblance is not evidence that either is right.

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4. The topline

8,942 comments from 5,210 distinct people. Effective sample 3,781.6 after author-clustering.

Position	Share	95% margin
Oppose current policy	65.1%	± 1.5
Neither	10.6%	
Support current policy	24.3%	

Net **-40.8 points**.

4.1 Intensity, and why it is reported separately

Mean intensity across the subject is 0.764 on a 0 to 1 scale. It is not symmetric:

Position	Mean intensity
Oppose	0.828
Support	0.612
Neither	0.394

Opposition here is not only more common, it is more strongly expressed, by a wide margin. Intensity is reported separately from share because the two answer different questions and averaging them would hide exactly this. A subject can be evenly divided and quiet, or evenly divided and furious, and those are not the same brief.

4.2 Coverage

The volume and spread of voices behind this figure is **full**: 5,210 people, no single author able to contribute more than three comments to any tally, and an effective sample of 3,781.6 after clustering by author.

Coverage is a volume and diversity heuristic. **It is not a confidence level and must not be read as one.** A subject can have full coverage and still be wrong, if the videos in scope were unrepresentative of the conversation.

4.3 What this figure does not say

It does not say 65% of the public opposes immigration policy. It says that among people who commented on the videos in Appendix A during this window, 65.1% of weighted opinion was unfavourable toward the proposition in section 2. Every qualification in section 3 applies to it.

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5. Subject by subject

Immigration is not one conversation. Seven subjects appeared beneath it in this window, each with its own proposition, and they do not point the same way.

Subject	n	Oppose	Neither	Support	95% margin
Small boats	4,218	80.2%	8.0%	11.8%	±1.9
Care worker visas	2,106	33.1%	15.7%	51.2%	±3.2
International students	1,734	44.7%	14.5%	40.8%	±3.5
Asylum accommodation	1,592	83.1%	7.5%	9.4%	±2.8
Net migration target	884	74.2%	25.8%	0.0%	±4.3
Seasonal worker visas	21	42.8%	19.1%	38.1%	—
Settlement rules	12	58.3%	16.7%	25.0%	±29.0

The subject totals come to 10,567 against a topline of 8,942. That gap of 1,625 is deduplication working. A comment tagged with both small boats and asylum accommodation counts once in the topline and once under each subject. If the gap ever disappears, the roll-up is double-counting and the topline is wrong.

Two rows are printed for completeness and are not findings. Seasonal worker visas cleared the volume floor at 21 comments but its effective sample collapsed to 1.0, meaning a handful of people carry almost all the weight. No margin can honestly be computed for it and none is shown. Settlement rules sits below the volume floor at 12 comments; its margin of ±29.0 points is printed precisely so that nobody quotes the 58.3%. Neither row should leave this document.

5.1 Small boats

A favourable view of current small-boat crossing policy.

4,218 comments from 2,487 people. Effective sample 1,806.4. Margin ±1.9.

Position	Share	Mean intensity
Oppose	80.2%	0.874
Neither	8.0%	0.401
Support	11.8%	0.642

The most one-sided and the most strongly expressed subject in the reading, at a mean intensity of 0.831 overall. It is also the largest, carrying 47% of all comment on immigration.

Reasons given, of the 3,462 comments on this subject that gave one:

Reason	Share	Of all comments on the subject	People
Loss of control	41.0%	33.6%	902
Risk to life at sea	22.0%	18.1%	495
Cost of accommodation	18.0%	14.8%	401
Unfair on those who came legally	11.0%	9.0%	246
Other	8.0%	6.6%	178

Risk to life at sea is the row worth stopping on. It is 22% of the reasons given on this subject and it does not belong to one side. Roughly half of the group argues that drownings are the reason the route has to be closed by enforcement; the rest argue that only a safe legal alternative removes the demand that fills the boats. Both halves describe the current position as the worst available option. Smugglers are named more often than policy is.

Broken down by position, the two sides are arguing about different things entirely rather than the same things in different proportions:

Unfavourable (3,383 comments, 2,782 gave a reason)

Reason	Share	Of the subject	Intensity
Loss of control	37.0%	24.4%	0.89
Risk to life at sea	24.0%	15.8%	0.81
Cost of accommodation	21.0%	13.8%	0.76
Unfair on those who came legally	12.0%	7.9%	0.73
Other	6.0%	4.0%	

Favourable (498 comments, 402 gave a reason)

Reason	Share	Of the subject	Intensity
An obligation to people fleeing danger	41.0%	3.9%	0.70
Safe legal routes would end the crossings	30.0%	2.9%	0.66
The numbers are small in context	22.0%	2.1%	0.55
Other	7.0%	0.7%	

Neither position (337 comments, 278 gave a reason)

Reason	Share	Of the subject	Intensity
Wants the trade off stated plainly	46.0%	3.0%	0.40
Distrusts the figures on all sides	33.0%	2.2%	0.37
Other	21.0%	1.4%	

Note what the favourable side is *not* saying. Nothing in its list is an economic argument, which is the dominant favourable argument at the immigration level (section 6.3). On this subject the favourable case is a duty case, and its second cluster reaches the same practical conclusion as part of the unfavourable side by the opposite route.

Movement within the subject. Small boats hardened faster than immigration as a whole:

As at	Oppose	Support	Comments
23 June	72.4%	17.1%	3,312
7 July	76.6%	14.6%	3,701
21 July	79.1%	12.6%	3,980
4 August	80.2%	11.8%	4,218

Opposition rose 7.8 points here against 10.3 at the immigration level, but from a much higher base, and the favourable share fell by nearly a third of its starting value. **This subject was already settled at the start of the window and became more so.** It is the least likely of the seven to respond to anything.

5.2 Care worker visas

A favourable view of the care worker visa route.

2,106 comments from 1,338 people. Effective sample 972.1. Margin ± 3.2 .

Position	Share	Mean intensity
Oppose	33.1%	0.688
Neither	15.7%	0.372
Support	51.2%	0.631

The row that breaks the single-number story. The same population that is 80.2% against current small-boat policy is 51.2% in favour of this route. The margin of ± 3.2 puts the favourable share clearly above the unfavourable one.

Mean intensity across the subject is 0.604, the second lowest in the reading. This is the calmest part of the immigration conversation as well as the most favourable, and the two facts are probably related: it is the subject where the argument is about a mechanism rather than about control.

The reason cluster that lands hardest here is *the NHS and care depend on it*, which appears under this subject for 61% of its members (section 6.3). *Wages and job competition* is the counterweight, appearing here for 38% of its members (section 6.1).

5.3 International students

A favourable view of current international student numbers.

1,734 comments from 1,104 people. Effective sample 801.5. Margin ±3.5.

Position	Share	Mean intensity
Oppose	44.7%	0.629
Neither	14.5%	0.358
Support	40.8%	0.554

The only genuinely close subject in the reading. The 3.9-point gap between unfavourable and favourable is inside the ±3.5 margin, so this subject should be reported as divided rather than as leaning either way. Do not describe it as "narrowly opposed": the reading does not support that.

Mean intensity of 0.567 is the second lowest of the substantial subjects.

5.4 Asylum accommodation

A favourable view of current asylum accommodation policy.

1,592 comments from 1,021 people. Effective sample 742.8. Margin ±2.8.

Position	Share	Mean intensity
Oppose	83.1%	0.887
Neither	7.5%	0.416
Support	9.4%	0.598

The most unfavourable subject in the reading, and the most intense, at 0.848 overall and 0.887 among those opposed. *Pressure on housing and services* appears under this subject for 47% of its members, the strongest single subject-to-reason link anywhere in this reading.

The argument here is overwhelmingly local and specific. It is about a named place, a named service and a running cost, rather than about immigration in the abstract, and it is the clearest instance in this data of a national subject being argued in entirely local terms.

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5.5 Net migration target

A favourable view of the current net migration target.

884 comments from 571 people. Effective sample 402.3. Margin ± 4.3 .

Position	Share	Mean intensity
Oppose	74.2%	0.779
Neither	25.8%	0.388
Support	0.0%	not observed

The sharpest row in the reading. Not one comment in 884 expressed a favourable view of the current target. Zero shares are usually a volume artefact; at 884 comments from 571 people this is not one, and it should be treated as a signal.

Read it precisely. It does not say everyone wants a lower target. A quarter of the comment took neither position, and the largest neutral cluster in the reading distrusts the figures on all sides (section 6.4). The reading is consistent with a population that has stopped believing the target means anything, which is a different problem from a population that wants it changed.

There is no intensity figure for the favourable position because no favourable comment was observed. That cell is empty rather than zero, and the difference matters.

5.6 Seasonal worker visas

A favourable view of the seasonal agricultural worker scheme.

21 comments from 14 people. Effective sample 1.0. No margin can be computed.

Position	Share
Oppose	42.8%
Neither	19.1%
Support	38.1%

This is not a finding and must not be quoted. The subject cleared the volume floor of 15 comments, but the effective sample after author-clustering collapsed to 1.0, meaning one or two people carry essentially the whole figure. Coverage is 0.245.

It is printed because a reading that silently drops the subjects it could not measure is not auditable, and because it is a genuine observation about the conversation: this subject is barely discussed on UK political YouTube, which is itself worth knowing if you were considering commissioning work on it.

5.7 Settlement rules

A favourable view of the proposed settlement rules.

12 comments from 9 people. Effective sample 6.4. Margin ±29.0. Below the volume floor.

Position	Share
Oppose	58.3%
Neither	16.7%
Support	25.0%

Indicative only. Not a finding. The margin of ±29.0 points is wider than the gap between any two positions, which is the honest way of saying this subject was not measured. Coverage is 0.15.

It appears in the reading because *loss of control* points at it: 11% of that cluster's members raise settlement rules, and 34% of the *unfair on those who came legally* cluster does. The subject is being referenced inside other arguments far more than it is being discussed on its own. **If settlement rules matter to you, that is the case for a reading scoped to it directly**, on video where it is the topic rather than an aside.

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6. Reasons, in full

Comments are grouped by the reason they gave, and each group is named from words its members share rather than lifted from any one comment. A reason cluster is reported only where it holds at least 8 comments from 5 distinct people.

No comment appears in two clusters. Each is assigned to exactly one, which means these shares sum and it also means this reading cannot tell you which reasons are given together. That question is not answerable from this method and is not answered anywhere below.

6.1 Across every position

Of the 8,942 comments on immigration, **7,333 gave a reason**. Shares below are of those 7,333.

Reason	Share	Of all 8,942	People	Intensity
Loss of control	31.0%	25.4%	1,402	0.86
Pressure on housing and services	27.0%	22.1%	1,247	0.79
Wages and job competition	24.0%	19.7%	1,108	0.74
Unfair on those who came legally	10.0%	8.2%	486	0.71
Other	8.0%	6.6%	371	

Loss of control — 31.0%

The largest cluster, the most intense, and the most one-sided. Of the people giving it, 94% oppose current policy, 5% take neither position and 1% support it.

The argument is about who decides, not about how many. Policy is described as something that happens to the country rather than something it chooses, and the complaint holds even where the official figures are accepted. Almost a third of the group is arguing about the process by which a decision was reached rather than about the decision itself, and those comments frequently reference consultation or the absence of it. It is the most strongly worded group in the reading and the least likely to concede a point.

Within it	Comments	Share of the cluster
Borders and enforcement	864	38%
Who decides	705	31%
Scale and pace	500	22%

These are the largest groups inside the cluster from a second clustering pass. **They do not sum to the whole:** anything too small to name is absent rather than swept into a residual that would imply the list was complete.

Appears under	Share of the cluster
Small boats	52%
Net migration target	21%
Settlement rules	11%

This is the reason your question was about. It is not about the numbers. It is about the level never having been chosen, and it runs across every subject in section 5 including the ones where opinion is favourable. Support for the care worker visa route is frequently expressed as the argument that a deliberate, chosen route is the opposite of the problem.

The practical consequence: an argument pitched at the level of the numbers engages the 27% and the 24%. It does not touch the 31%, and the 31% is where the intensity is.

Pressure on housing and services — 27.0%

Of the people giving it, 88% oppose, 9% take neither position and 3% support.

Immigration is treated as the visible end of a housing and services shortage rather than as its cause. These comments are local and specific, and they are usually about waiting lists and rents rather than about migrants. The comparison offered is almost always to the same place ten or twenty years ago rather than to anywhere else in the country. Health and housing dominate, but school places carry a fifth of the cluster and those comments are the angriest in it.

Within it	Comments	Share
GP and hospital waiting	792	40%
Rents and availability	673	34%
School places	396	20%

Appears under	Share of the cluster
Asylum accommodation	47%
Small boats	24%
International students	16%

Wages and job competition — 24.0%

Of the people giving it, 81% oppose, 12% take neither position and **7% support** — the highest favourable share of any cluster in the reading.

An argument about the labour market made in the first person. Wages are said to have been held down in a named trade, and the claim is offered as personal experience rather than as a statistic. Construction, driving and care work account for most of it. This is the least uniform of the large clusters: a noticeable minority

making the argument nonetheless take a favourable view of current policy overall, which usually means they are angry at employers rather than at arrivals.

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Within it	Comments	Share
Pay held down in a trade	739	42%
Fewer entry-level jobs	528	30%
Undercutting on rates	370	21%

Appears under	Share of the cluster
Care worker visas	38%
Seasonal worker visas	22%
International students	19%

Unfair on those who came legally — 10.0%

Of the people giving it, 72% oppose, 14% take neither position and 14% support.

The only sizeable cluster given in real measure by both sides. A fairness complaint made on behalf of people who went through the system, often written by commenters who say they or their family did. The grievance is that the rules were applied to some people and not others. More than a quarter of the people making it are not opposed to current policy, and a good number are arguing for the legal route to be made easier rather than for arrivals to be reduced.

Within it	Comments	Share
Time and cost of the legal route	315	43%
Rules changed midway	227	31%
Family separation	154	21%

Appears under	Share of the cluster
Settlement rules	34%
Small boats	29%
Care worker visas	18%

If any part of this reading identifies common ground, it is this cluster. It is the one place where a change to the legal route would satisfy people on both sides of the topline.

Other — 8.0%

A residual holding everything too small or too varied to name as a reason of its own. It is reported so the shares add up. It is not a finding, it carries no characterisation, and no trend is drawn through it.

6.2 Among those unfavourable

5,821 comments took an unfavourable position; 4,790 gave a reason. These clusters are computed *within* the unfavourable side rather than sliced out of the list above, because the two sides are not giving the same reasons in different proportions.

Reason	Share of the 4,790	Of all 8,942	People	Intensity
Loss of control	34.0%	18.2%	1,032	0.88
Pressure on housing and services	29.0%	15.5%	889	0.82
Wages and job competition	22.0%	11.8%	674	0.77
Unfair on those who came legally	9.0%	4.8%	289	0.73
Other	6.0%	3.2%	191	

Control is the whole of the argument in the largest group. Numbers are offered as evidence of it rather than as the objection itself, which is why correcting the numbers rarely moves these comments. Around a third of the cluster argues about who holds the decision rather than what the decision should be, and consultation comes up repeatedly in those.

In the housing and services group, the complaint is made about the service rather than about the people using it, and a considerable number of these comments say so explicitly. Where a solution is proposed it is more capacity rather than fewer arrivals.

The wages group names agencies and employers more often than it names migrants. Rates are quoted, often with a year attached.

The fairness group is aggrieved rather than hostile, and many of its members would be satisfied by a faster legal route rather than by fewer arrivals, which separates them from the rest of this side.

6.3 Among those favourable

2,173 comments took a favourable position; 1,743 gave a reason.

Reason	Share of the 1,743	Of all 8,942	People	Intensity
<i>The economy needs the workers</i> INVENTED · NOT A POLICY · TENOR RESEARCH LTD	38.0%	7.4%	438	0.64
The NHS and care depend on it	31.0%	6.0%	361	0.71
An obligation to people fleeing danger	18.0%	3.5%	214	0.68
The numbers are overstated	8.0%	1.6%	96	0.52
Other	5.0%	1.0%	61	

Nothing in this list appears in the unfavourable list. That is the single clearest demonstration in this reading that the two sides are not in the same argument.

The economy needs the workers is an argument from vacancies. Sectors are named, and the claim is that the work is not being done rather than that it is being taken. Agriculture, hospitality and social care recur. The group rarely engages with the objections raised on the other side, which makes it the least argumentative cluster in the reading and, on its own terms, the least persuasive.

Within it	Comments	Share
Vacancies going unfilled	285	43%
Who will do the work	205	31%

The NHS and care depend on it is the most personal and most strongly held favourable cluster, at 0.71 intensity. It is usually raised by people describing a ward or a care home they know directly, and a substantial number identify themselves as working in the sector. These comments treat the question as settled by experience rather than by argument, and they are the favourable group most likely to address the opposing case head on. It appears under care worker visas for 61% of its members.

Within it	Comments	Share
Staff on my ward	243	45%
Care home staffing	173	32%

An obligation to people fleeing danger is a duty argument rather than an economic one. It concedes the pressures the opposing clusters describe and says they do not settle the question, which makes it the only cluster on either side that routinely grants the other's premise. Around a third argue specifically for safe legal routes as the practical answer, which is the same conclusion a portion of the unfavourable side reaches from the opposite direction.

The numbers are overstated disputes the premise rather than the policy, and generally argues that gross arrivals are being reported where net migration is meant. Sources are cited more often here than anywhere else in the reading. It is the only cluster in the reading arguing about measurement rather than about consequences, and at 8.0% it is small.

6.4 Among those taking neither position

948 comments took neither position; 651 gave a reason. Too few for a third nameable cluster, which is why the residual is 23% here against 6% on the unfavourable side.

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Reason	Share of the 651	Of all 8,942	People	Intensity
Wants the trade-offs stated plainly	44.1%	3.2%	201	0.41
Distrusts the figures on all sides	32.9%	2.4%	152	0.38
Other	23.0%	1.7%	108	

The first group declines to take a side and asks for costs and benefits to be set out together. These are frequently the longest comments in the reading and the most likely to address several subjects at once. A recurring move is to state what evidence would change the commenter's mind, which almost nothing else in the reading does. Intensity of 0.41 is the lowest of any cluster, which is what a genuinely undecided position looks like rather than an evasive one.

The second rejects the statistics rather than either position, and treats the government and its critics as equally unreliable narrators of the same data. Official figures and media reporting are distrusted in roughly equal measure. These comments are sceptical rather than disengaged: many ask how a number was arrived at, which is a question the rest of the reading does not ask.

Read together with section 5.5, this is the most actionable neutral finding in the reading. A quarter of comment on the net migration target takes no position, and the largest neutral cluster distrusts the figures. Those are probably the same people.

6.5 The two percentages, and why they do not multiply out

Every reason above carries two shares, and they answer different questions.

- **Share** is of the people who gave a reason at all.
- **Of all 8,942** is of every comment on the subject.

Worked through: 65.1% of comment on immigration is unfavourable, and 34.0% of the reasons given by that side cite loss of control. Multiplying gives 22.1%. **The true figure is 18.2%**. The gap is the people who took an unfavourable position without giving a reason for it.

The reported figure is always computed directly, as the cluster's comment count divided by the subject's, never by multiplying two shares. Both routes agree in principle and the second accumulates rounding, and figures that disagree with each other on a page destroy confidence in all of them.

Every table in this section prints its denominator for exactly this reason.

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7. Movement across the window

The reading runs continuously. Each point in the series is **the whole reading as it stood on that day**, over the trailing window, rather than that day's comments in isolation. That is what makes the last point equal to the topline in section 4, and it is the reason a point is described as "as at" a date and never "on" it.

43 daily readings were taken between 23 June and 4 August 2026. The table below gives the weekly reference points.

As at	Oppose	Neither	Support	Comments in the reading
23 June	54.8%	14.0%	31.2%	7,120
30 June	57.1%	12.8%	30.1%	7,684
7 July	58.9%	12.3%	28.8%	8,013
14 July	61.2%	11.7%	27.1%	8,290
21 July	62.8%	11.3%	25.9%	8,551
28 July	64.3%	10.9%	24.8%	8,772
4 August	65.1%	10.6%	24.3%	8,942

7.1 What moved

Opposition rose 10.3 points and support fell 6.9 points, a swing of 17.1 points on the gap between them, against a margin of ± 1.5 on the leading share. The movement is many times the noise and is not in question.

The neither-position share fell steadily too, from 14.0% to 10.6%. That is worth separating out.

Opposition did not only grow at the expense of support: it grew at the expense of people who had not taken a side. On a subject where the undecided group is already small, that is the harder loss to reverse.

The movement is monotonic. There is no week in the window where the trend reversed or paused. A steady drift across six weeks with no reversal usually indicates something continuous rather than a single event.

7.2 The reasons moved too, and one moved more than the rest

Reason, as at	23 June	4 August	Change
Loss of control	28.5%	31.0%	+2.5
Pressure on housing and services	26.2%	27.0%	+0.8
Wages and job competition	24.8%	24.0%	-0.8
Unfair on those who came legally	11.2%	10.0%	-1.2

Loss of control grew while everything else held or shrank. The subject did not just become more unfavourable across the window. The composition of the unfavourable case changed, toward the argument that is least responsive to information and most responsive to process.

7.3 Events marked against the window

Three events are marked on the chart in the dashboard for orientation.

Date	Event
30 June	Policy statement to Parliament
14 July	Committee report published
28 July	Consultation closes

These are illustrative placeholders, and no causal claim is made or supported. A marker sitting near a movement in the lines is not evidence that one caused the other, and this reading contains nothing that could establish it. In a real reading each event carries a source link and the same caution applies.

What can be said without a causal claim: the movement in this window is smooth and continuous, and does not step at any of the three dates. **Whatever moved this population, the shape of the series is not consistent with a single announcement moving it.**

7.4 Where the movement actually came from

Immigration moved 10.3 points on the unfavourable share. The subjects beneath it did not contribute equally.

Small boats, already the most unfavourable subject at the start of the window, moved 7.8 points further and gained 906 comments, growing from 46.5% to 47.2% of all comment on immigration. It is the largest single contributor to the topline movement, by weight of volume rather than by rate of change.

The more useful observation is where the movement was not. The topline shift is concentrated in the subjects that were already unfavourable. Nothing in this window suggests the favourable subjects turned. Care worker visas remained favourable throughout, and international students remained divided.

This is a hardening of the opposed, not a conversion of the favourable. Those are different problems and they have different answers. A campaign built on the assumption that supporters were being lost would be aimed at a movement that did not happen in this data.

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8. What Tenor could not see

Stated plainly and at length, because a reading that lists only what it found is not auditable.

Anyone who did not comment. The overwhelming majority of viewers. There is no way from this data to say whether commenters resemble them, and every reason given in section 3.1 to think they do not.

Any individual. Tenor holds no profile of anyone. There is no breakdown by age, sex, region, class, income or political affiliation, and no breakdown by the leaning of a channel or its audience. None of that is inferred, stored or reportable, and it is not an option at any price: inferring political leaning from platform data is prohibited by the YouTube Developer Policies, and the capability was removed from the pipeline rather than left switched off.

Which reasons are given together. Each comment is assigned to exactly one reason cluster, so co-citation between clusters is structurally zero. This reading cannot tell you whether the people citing loss of control also cite housing pressure. That is not a gap in this run; it is not answerable by this method.

Anything before 23 June 2026. The comparable series begins with the run that created it. Comparison to earlier periods is not available and cannot be reconstructed.

Private and semi-private discussion. WhatsApp, Facebook groups, forums, Discord. Not covered. This matters more on this subject than on most, because it is one where people are widely believed to say different things in private.

Sarcasm, irony and quotation. The classifier misreads some of it. A comment quoting a view in order to attack it is the hardest case and is certainly present in these figures. This is one reason individual labels are never reported as findings and never quoted.

Video selection. The reading covers a stated set of videos. A different set would give different figures, and there is no way from inside this data to say how different. Appendix A exists so that you can judge the selection yourself rather than take it on trust.

Whether the classifier is right. No validation study has been run. See section 3.3.

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9. Method

9.1 Collection

Public top-level comments on the videos listed in Appendix A, retrieved through the official YouTube Data API. Nothing was scraped, and no private, deleted or restricted content was accessed.

Every comment on each video in the window is collected rather than a sample of them, so within the stated set there is no sampling decision to bias. The selection that matters is which videos are in scope, which is why the list is published rather than summarised.

9.2 Classification

Each comment is read once by a language model, in batches, and returns the subjects it touches, a position toward each, an intensity, and a short account of the position taken. One comment may carry several subjects.

Batching is verified rather than trusted: every comment in a batch carries an integer id the model must echo back, and a batch is used only if the returned ids are exactly the ids sent. Otherwise the batch is discarded and the comments are classified one at a time.

9.3 Controls against distortion

Per-author cap. No individual contributes more than three comments to any single tally. A prolific commenter cannot become a crowd, and the loudest voice in a thread cannot choose the headline.

Sub-linear like weighting. A comment with 1,000 likes carries roughly four times the weight of one with none, not a thousand times. Popularity is evidence of resonance and is not allowed to become evidence of prevalence.

Author-clustered margins. Margins are computed on the effective number of people rather than the number of comments, using a Kish effective sample size. On this reading that takes 8,942 comments down to an effective 3,781.6, and every margin in this document reflects the smaller number.

Deduplication on roll-up. A comment tagged with two subjects beneath immigration counts once in the topline. See the note under the table in section 5.

9.4 What is comparable across readings

The immigration figure in section 4 is comparable across readings without qualification. Top-level subjects are hand-maintained, never created, renamed or merged automatically, and carry stable identifiers.

The seven subjects in section 5 are also comparable, with three caveats. An earlier version of this document said they were re-discovered every run and could never be compared over time. That was wrong. Discovered subjects are matched against the existing registry first by alias and then semantically, and a new

one is created only when neither matches, so identifiers persist between runs and a trend on a subject follows the same subject.

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The three caveats that do apply:

- **A subject widens over time** as it absorbs new phrasings as aliases, so part of a rising line can be the concept broadening rather than opinion moving.
- **A merge rewrites history.** Where two subjects are folded together, figures before the merge meant something narrower than figures after it. Merges are recorded and will be flagged in any reading that spans one.
- **A subject has no history before the run that first created it.**

Reason clusters are comparable, which is less obvious and worth stating. Clusters are matched between runs by comparing the centre of the comments in them, not by comparing their labels. Label matching was tried first and measured: the similarity between two phrasings of the same argument overlapped the similarity between two different arguments, so no threshold could separate them. Comparing cluster contents does separate them cleanly. A reason's trend therefore follows the same argument between runs even where a run's own wording of the label differs.

9.5 Retention

Per-comment records are ephemeral. Aggregates are durable.

Tier	What	Retention
1	Raw comment text, author handles, per-comment labels, author hashes	Scrubbed at 7 days, deleted at 30, cascading
2	Subject statistics, margins, reason labels and shares, series	36 months

Every figure in this document is Tier 2. It carries no comment text, no comment identifiers and no author identifiers, which is exactly what allows it to be kept and cited after the comments behind it are gone.

This is why **no comment is quoted anywhere in this reading**, and why none will be. A quotation would outlive the comment it came from, and would still be on the page after its author deleted it. What is delivered instead is the characterisation of each cluster: one comment is an anecdote, and the shape of 1,402 of them is a finding.

9.6 Data protection

Author identifiers are hashed with a secret salt on ingestion and the raw handles are discarded. Tenor holds no name, no email address and no profile for any commenter, and does not attempt to identify anyone. The lawful basis, the retention schedule and the rights available are set out in the privacy policy at readtenor.com/privacy.

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10. What we would look at next

Not a sales section. These are the cuts this reading suggests are worth having, with what each would and would not settle.

A reading scoped to settlement rules. Section 5.7 could not measure it, but two clusters point at it: 11% of loss of control and 34% of unfair on those who came legally. The subject is being argued inside other arguments rather than on its own, which is exactly the case where a scoped reading on video where it is the topic would find something the general reading cannot.

A second window, to measure rather than describe movement. This reading covers six weeks and shows a monotonic trend with no reversal. A second window would establish whether that is a trend or the middle of a cycle. It is the single highest-value follow-up and it needs elapsed time rather than money.

The fairness cluster, in depth. Unfair on those who came legally is the only sizeable argument given by both sides, and 14% of the people making it are favourable to current policy. It is the one place in this data where a change of position looks available. A reading scoped to legal routes would test whether that group is as large and as persuadable as it appears here.

What no further reading will settle. Whether any of this resembles the general public. That is a property of the population, not of the sample size, and no amount of additional reading changes it. If you need a representative figure, you need a poll, and the honest advice is to buy an omnibus question at £240 to £360 and read it alongside this rather than instead of it.

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Appendix A — Sources

This appendix is deliberately empty in the sample.

A real reading lists every video in scope, in this format, so that the selection can be audited by the person paying for it:

#	Channel	Video	Published	Comments read
1	[Channel]	[Title]	[Date]	[n]
2	[Channel]	[Title]	[Date]	[n]
...				
			Total	[n]

Each row also carries the video id, so any figure in the reading can be traced back to the material it came from.

No video list is printed here because no video was read. The figures in this document were generated to demonstrate the format. Inventing plausible channel names, video titles and dates would produce a document that looked exactly like a real reading and was not one, and that is a line this sample does not cross.

The window, the channel count and the comment total are stated on the front page of every real reading, and the full list is appended in this format.

Appendix B — How to read these figures

Share, and share of subject. Reason tables carry two percentages. One is of the people who gave a reason; the other is of everyone on the subject. They do not multiply out, and section 6.5 works through why.

The margin. Every margin is a 95% interval on the leading share, computed on the effective number of people. The margin on the gap between two positions is roughly twice the figure shown. It covers sampling variation only. It does not cover selection, coverage or classifier error.

An em dash in a margin column means no margin could honestly be computed, because the effective sample was at or near 1.0. It does not mean the margin was zero. See section 5.6.

Intensity runs from 0 to 1 and describes how strongly a position is expressed, not how confident Tenor is in it, and not how likely it is to be right.

Coverage describes the volume and spread of voices behind a figure. It is a heuristic. **It is not a confidence level** and should never be reported as one.

Effective sample is smaller than the comment count and smaller than the number of people, because it discounts for the fact that some people comment far more than others. It is the number every margin is computed on.

"As at" a date means the whole reading as it stood on that day, over the trailing window. It never means that day's comments alone.

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A zero share means the position was not observed. An empty cell means the figure does not exist for that row, which is not the same thing. Section 5.5 has one of each.

Appendix C — The underlying series

Every weekly reference point behind sections 6 and 7, printed so that any figure in this reading can be checked against the series it came from rather than taken on trust. Readings between these dates were taken daily.

C.1 Immigration, by position

As at	Oppose	Neither	Support	Comments
23 June	54.8%	14.0%	31.2%	7,120
30 June	57.1%	12.8%	30.1%	7,684
7 July	58.9%	12.3%	28.8%	8,013
14 July	61.2%	11.7%	27.1%	8,290
21 July	62.8%	11.3%	25.9%	8,551
28 July	64.3%	10.9%	24.8%	8,772
4 August	65.1%	10.6%	24.3%	8,942

C.2 Immigration, reasons across all positions

Share of the comments that gave a reason, at each reference point.

As at	Loss of control	Housing and services	Wages and jobs	Unfair on legal
23 June	28.5%	26.2%	24.8%	11.2%
30 June	29.1%	26.4%	24.6%	10.9%
7 July	29.6%	26.6%	24.4%	10.6%
14 July	30.1%	26.8%	24.2%	10.4%
21 July	30.5%	26.9%	24.1%	10.2%
28 July	30.8%	27.0%	24.0%	10.1%
4 August	31.0%	27.0%	24.0%	10.0%

The same figures as comment counts, since a share moving while its denominator grows is not the same as a group growing:

As at	Loss of control	Housing and services	Wages and jobs	Unfair on legal
23 June	1,663	1,529	1,447	653
4 August	2,273	1,980	1,760	733
Growth	+36.7%	+29.5%	+21.6%	+12.3%

Every cluster grew in absolute terms. Loss of control grew fastest, which is what moved its share. Unfair on those who came legally grew slowest, which is what made its share fall despite the group getting larger. **A falling share is not a shrinking group**, and this table is here so that distinction cannot be missed.

C.3 Small boats, by position

As at	Oppose	Neither	Support	Comments
23 June	72.4%	10.5%	17.1%	3,312
30 June	74.8%	9.4%	15.8%	3,560
7 July	76.6%	8.8%	14.6%	3,701
14 July	78.1%	8.6%	13.3%	3,844
21 July	79.1%	8.3%	12.6%	3,980
28 July	79.8%	8.1%	12.1%	4,102
4 August	80.2%	8.0%	11.8%	4,218

C.4 Small boats, reasons across all positions

As at	Loss of control	Risk to life at sea	Cost of accommodation	Unfair on legal
23 June	38.6%	23.2%	19.0%	11.6%
7 July	39.6%	22.6%	18.5%	11.3%
21 July	40.5%	22.2%	18.1%	11.1%
4 August	41.0%	22.0%	18.0%	11.0%

Risk to life at sea fell as a share while the subject hardened. It is the one cluster on this subject given in real measure by both sides, and it lost ground in a window where the subject became more one-sided. That is consistent, though not evidence, of the middle of this argument emptying out.

ILLUSTRATIVE SAMPLE. EVERY FIGURE IN THIS DOCUMENT IS INVENTED. No comment was

collected and no classifier was run. Nothing here describes any real population, and no part of it may be quoted, cited or presented as a finding.

Tenor Research Ltd · Company number 17385950 · High House, Ranworth Road, Blofield, NR13 4PJ · readtenor.com

Reading 041 · Illustrative sample · Prepared by Evan Rathbone · The population and limits at section 3 apply to every figure in this document.