



**THE INTEGRATION CENTRE**  
Connecting Communities • Advancing Integration

**Attitudes towards Immigration and  
Immigration Policy Among TDs  
1<sup>st</sup> February 2012**



**MillwardBrown  
Lansdowne**

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## What?

Millward Brown Lansdowne conducted a survey among members of the Dáil, with the purpose of ascertaining TDs opinions, attitudes and interactions with immigration and immigrants.

## How?

165 TDS were contacted, with 74 participating in the survey - a 45% success rate. All TDs were contacted by telephone and absolute confidentiality was assured in all cases. The margin of error for this survey, at its greatest point, is +/- 8.5%. The results in this presentation are based on those who either agreed or disagreed, and do not depict those who neither agreed or disagreed with a statement, or could not answer.

## Why Not?

Reasons given for **not** participating included refusals on principle (based on not partaking in surveys in general, as opposed to the specific subject matter of this survey), refusals based on being too busy to participate, and in some cases, because of an inability to directly contact the individual in question.

## When?

The research was conducted between 22<sup>nd</sup> June and 12<sup>th</sup> of July 2011.

# Who we interviewed

Political Party affiliated with:



Base: All TDs who answered (74)

Q. And what Political party are you a member of, or are you an Independent TD?



- **3 in 10** have spoken in the Dáil around the area of immigration or refugee rights.
- Less than **1/3** feel immigrants should have the right to vote in general elections after 3 years in the country, and only **4 in 10** would allow them the right to vote in referenda.
- Nearly **6 in 10** claim to have encountered racist sentiments when canvassing for the 2011 General Election.
- Over **1/3** of TDs feel that speaking out in support of immigrant rights would negatively affect their own support.

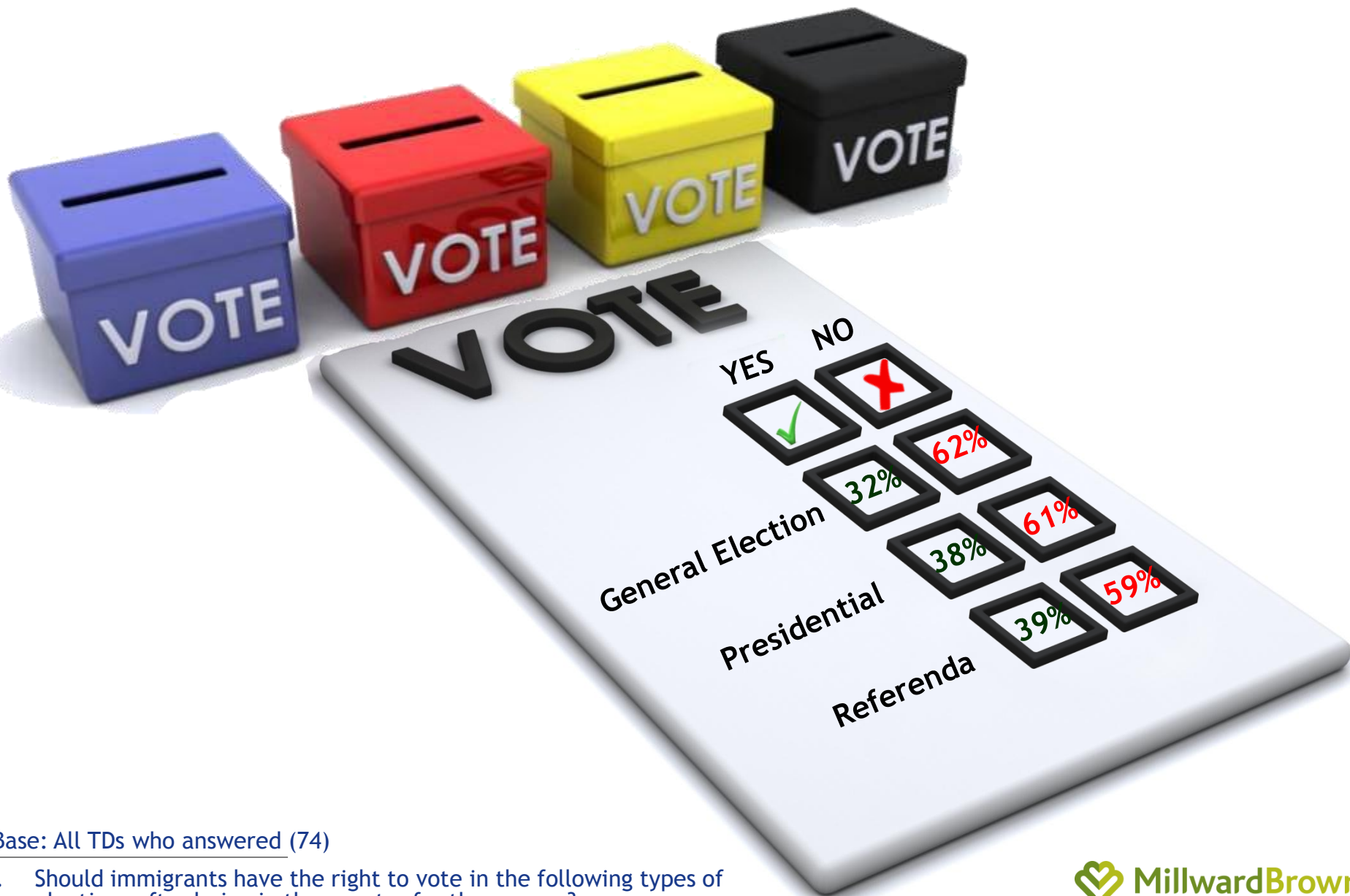


- **1/3** are of the opinion that responsibility for integration should not ultimately lie with the Department of Justice.
- **1/4** are not familiar with anti-racism and diversity strategies being developed in their own constituencies.
- There is **division** amongst TDs about who should be responsible for rolling out integration strategies.



- There is evidence of some **resistance** towards taking measures to make public/civil service employment more accessible to immigrants.
- There is however a sense among TDS that **working together** with immigrants can benefit our economy in terms of skills and trade links.
- A majority of TDs agree that changes need to be made regarding training and integration, however **1 in 5** do not agree with mandatory training of frontline public sector staff in the area of diversity.

The majority of TDs feel that immigrants should not have voting rights after 3 years in the country.



Base: All TDs who answered (74)

Q. Should immigrants have the right to vote in the following types of elections after being in the country for three years?

Opinion is divided as to whether racial incidents are increasing or decreasing.

### Frequency of racial incidences in downturn



However, almost 6 in 10 (58%) claim to have encountered racist sentiments whilst canvassing for the 2011 General Election.

Base: All TDs who answered (74)

Q. In general, do you think there has been an increase or decrease in the number of racial incidents in Ireland since the economic downturn?

Q. Did you encounter racist sentiments when you were canvassing in the recent general election?

# Speaking out for the rights of immigrants

Just **3 in 10** TDs have spoken in the Dáil about Immigrants/refugee rights.



Yes	30%
No	61%
Not yet but intend to	5%

A majority made no specific attempts to target naturalised voters in the most recent election.



Yes	20%
No	61%
Made no distinction	19%

Over **1/3** feel that speaking out in favour of immigrant rights would impact negatively on their support.



Would/does have a positive effect	4%
Would/does have a negative effect	36%
Wouldn't/doesn't make a difference	58%

**1 in 3** believe that immigration will become more politically contentious in the future.



Yes	31%
No	47%
Don't know	22%

Base: All TDs who answered (74)

- Q. Have you ever spoken on the record in the Dail regarding immigrant's or refugee's rights?
- Q. Did you make any attempts to identify and specifically target votes from naturalised Irish citizens in the most recent election?
- Q. Do you think that speaking out publically in favour of immigrant rights would have a positive or negative effect on your support in your constituency, or would it make any difference?
- Q. Do you think that in future Irish elections immigration will become a more contentious issue or not?

# Responsibility for Anti-racism strategies

A third feel that integration should **not** be the responsibility of the Department of Justice.



Yes	57%
No	34%
Don't know	9%

1 in 4 TDs are **unfamiliar** with anti-racism and diversity strategies in their own constituencies.



Very Familiar	24%
Fairly Familiar	19%
Neither	27%
Fairly Unfamiliar	5%
Not at all familiar	20%

Opinion is **divided** as to who should have responsibility for developing these strategies.



National Government should take the lead	53%
Local Authorities should take the lead role	32%
There should be a joint approach	14%

Nearly **1/2** feel there is no need for a national body to co-ordinate local authority integration policies.



Yes	45%
No	49%
Don't know	7%

Base: All TDs who answered (74)

Q. Do you think the Department of Justice is the most appropriate Government Department to have responsibility for integration or not?  
 Q. Local Authorities are mandated to develop Anti - Racism and Diversity Strategies. How familiar would you say you are with the strategies being implemented in your own constituency, using a scale of one to five, where 1 is Not at all familiar and 5 is very familiar?  
 Q. Should individual Local Authorities or National Government take the lead role in ensuring that long term integration strategies are developed and rolled out nationwide?  
 Q. Do you think that there is a need for a NATIONAL body to ensure that the Local Authority plans for the integration of immigrants are fully implemented?

Education & Integration: Broad support for diversity training/ education, but support for allocating more resources is marginally “softer”.

The school curriculum should be expanded to reflect the more diverse faiths and cultures that are now in Ireland

Agree

Disagree

73%

15%

Diversity training should be mandatory for all frontline public sector staff such as teachers, gardai and nurses

70%

18%

English Language supports for immigrant children should be expanded in schools

64%

15%

More resources should be allocated to assist with the further integration of migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds

62%

15%

Base: All TDs who answered (74)

Q. Could you please tell me on a scale of one to five how much you agree or disagree with the following, with “1” meaning you disagree strongly and “5” means you agree strongly.

**Employment Rights: Enabling newcomers to work receives majority support, but strong resistance to opt-out clauses/quota systems within the civil service.**

Asylum seekers should be allowed to work while waiting for their applications to be processed

Highly qualified newcomers, who currently are not entitled to work in Ireland, should have their applications to full working visas fast tracked

An opt-out clause on Irish language proficiency should be expended to all civil and public servant positions in order to reflect our growing multiculturalism (in non-essential cases)

A quota system should be introduced to increase the number of civil and public servant positions being made available to suitably qualified immigrants

Base: All TDs who answered (74)

Agree Disagree

64% 16%

62% 16%

45% 30%

15% 53%



**Utilising Immigrants' skills: General acknowledgement of the potential benefits/advantages of immigrants within the economy.**

**Immigrants' potential trade links with their home countries are currently under-utilised in Ireland**

**Immigrants have an important role to play in the recovery of our economy**

**Immigrants' skills are currently under-utilised in Ireland**

Base: All TDs who answered (74)

Agree

Disagree

73%

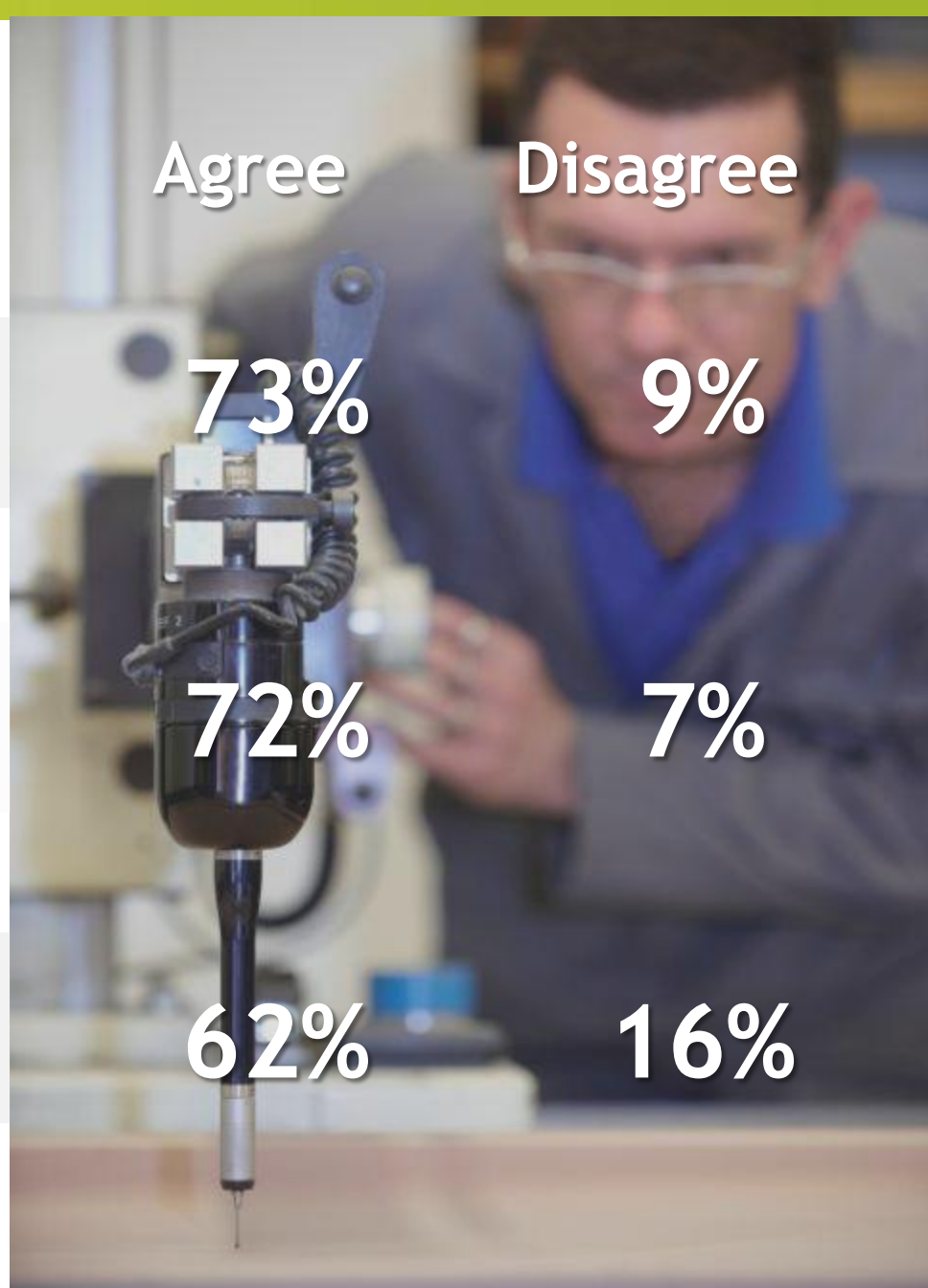
9%

72%

7%

62%

16%



Q. Could you please tell me on a scale of one to five how much you agree or disagree with the following, with "1" meaning you disagree strongly and "5" means you agree strongly.

Substantial minority feel immigrants are not treated positively in the media, with just 1 in 4 believing they are disproportionately affected by the effects of recession. Opinion somewhat divided on discretion of Justice Minister for Citizenship approval.

All citizenship approvals should remain at the absolute discretion of the Minister for Justice

Issues affecting Asylum seekers are not covered positively in the media

Immigrants are more likely to feel the effects of public service cuts more severely than Irish people

Base: All TDs who answered (74)

Agree

Disagree

45%

35%

41%

26%

26%

54%





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**Thank you!**

**For more information please contact**

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