

## 'Happier in UK than in Poland'

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**Poles who have recently arrived in the UK are by and large happy to be here. They think the British have been friendly and welcoming, but they do not think we are hard-working.**

**These are just some of the findings of a survey of 135 Polish residents conducted by the BBC.**

We know so little about our recent arrivals, it is hard even to conduct a full-size survey of them. Without a full census of the population, no-one really knows what a representative sample would look like.

So to fill a gap, we decided to conduct a straw poll of Poles.

A detailed 30-item questionnaire - in Polish - was given to people at a festival over the weekend, and then separately to a smaller group of Poles seeking work on the street.

### FINDINGS IN FULL

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Take-up was high, as there was a small reward (£2 or a refreshment voucher) for filling the survey out.

All 135 respondents were adults who had been here from two months to five years.

It took them a little over five minutes to fill out the survey. They did not have to give us their names or phone numbers.

They give the impression of being content to have come.

Of our 135, only eight regret coming to Britain.

Two-thirds are happier here than in Poland and most think they have been welcomed, and trust the British.

The only criticism is a clear majority think the British are not hard-working. And they do not like the food.

Perhaps most fascinating is the fact that a quarter of the Poles we surveyed are earning below the £5.05 minimum wage for adults over 22.

Our Polish assistant spoke to some of them about this, to ensure they had understood the question. They had understood.

And also, a third of our sample was sharing a bedroom with someone who was not their spouse or partner.

Clearly, cheap accommodation is a key to Poles being able to fill gaps in the jobs market in high-priced areas.

Whatever their feelings about Britain, our Poles appear unhappy about sharing their life here with Bulgarians and Romanians.

A small majority of our sample thought they should not have the same right to come here when they join the EU, as the Poles themselves have enjoyed.

There was a notable difference between the happier group of 111 at the festival, and the less happy group of 24 we surveyed on the street.

Most of the results had the same pattern, but those on the street tended to be older, were more likely to be below the minimum wage, had been more likely to spend a night sleeping rough, and a few more of them did regret coming. It was not as rosy a picture.

### **Unconvincing answers**

It almost seemed as though there are two Polish communities here.

Which of course reminds us that what Poles think depends on which Pole you ask - and no-one knows yet which kind of experience is the most typical.

Scrutinising the results, we found some of the answers decidedly unconvincing. Many of the Poles appeared not to speak much English, and yet few have admitted to that in the survey.

It also seems unlikely that quite so many read British newspapers as say they do.

They may have interpreted the question as asking about Polish newspapers aimed at the UK Poles.

In any event, no weight can be given to the precise numbers - it is the broad findings that appear robust.

Story from BBC NEWS:

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/uk\\_news/5343504.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/uk_news/5343504.stm)

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