

Employer Perceptions of Migrant Workers Research Report

December 2006

This document is of interest to everyone in the learning and skills sector

Executive Summary

Employer and migrant typologies

The research found a range of employer attitudes towards employing migrant workers, ranging from generally negative (termed 'reluctants'), to extremely positive (termed 'advocates'). The majority of employers in the research would fit into a third, moderate category termed 'pragmatists'. These employers had positively balanced views towards hiring migrant workers, viewing them dispassionately and as a cost-effective commodity. The main advantage of hiring migrant workers for these employers was that they were perceived to have a stronger and more positive work attitude and ethic than UK-born workers.

The research found employer perceptions of the migrant workers themselves could also be divided into three broad categories. Low-skilled workers who aimed to stay in low-skilled roles, attracted by the comparatively higher pay found in the UK were termed 'economic migrants'. Economic migrants were the least likely to integrate in their workplace. Student or skilled workers that took unskilled work in the UK while they improved their English language abilities or gained relevant qualifications were termed 'aspiring migrants'. Workers who take skilled positions in the UK and filled a genuine skills gap were termed 'global migrants'. Aspiring and global migrants were found to be more likely to integrate in the workplace than economic migrants. The different migrant types were spread across the employment sectors studied, with the exception of global migrants who were concentrated in the professional and public sectors.

Migrant employment and training

The employers in this research did not perceive there to be a major skills gap in the UK. Rather they pointed to an 'attitude gap' especially in younger UK workers, who were seen as unmotivated and unwilling to take low or unskilled jobs. This appeared to be the case across industry sectors.

The research sample was focused on EU or non-EU via asylum route migrants and the lower end of the skills scale, therefore their employment roles typically did not require any additional specific skills or training.

Whilst other migrants were being employed for their specialist skills in some professional capacities (as an IT programmer for example), these workers were already well-qualified or experienced and therefore did not require further skills training.

Accordingly, there was little perceived need for any additional training to be made available to migrants, except in English language. However some employers assumed that willing employees would acquire conversational English relatively

quickly through social and workplace interaction without additional formal training.

Employers were able to identify some possible training opportunities for migrant workers:

- language skills (although the perception was that training provision was already available)
- British culture and ways of immersion
- living in Britain, such as practical guidance on bank accounts and the UK tax system
- health and safety or first aid courses in foreign languages
- basic computing courses
- basic office skills and qualifications
- some limited need for more skill provision in specific sectors, for example in the NHS (different protocols training), in finance (UK regulations) or in law (UK law conversion).

In addition (as is already taking place) there was felt to be potential to provide employers with assistance in 'translating' foreign qualifications into UK equivalents (such as gas-fitting or dentistry) for consistency and quality of service.

Broad implications

The broader findings from this research point to the importance of social inclusion and integration, of both migrant workers within the UK workplace and society, and of young UK workers in to gainful employment.

Many employers felt that young adults growing up in the UK today were typically ill-equipped and poorly prepared to face the working world due to their reluctance to take on menial jobs, especially those involving dirty or monotonous tasks and over-long or anti-social hours.

Whilst employers sympathised with today's youth to some extent, they were unsure how they would be able to secure employment, given that they would have to compete with very willing and eager migrant workers. There was concern about their long-term future and the potential burden on the State.

Finally, some employers felt that over-qualified migrants in menial jobs are likely to become dissatisfied over the next three to five years. Some could use their skills, combined with their deeper understanding of UK culture and customs to set up their own businesses or to progress on to more skilled jobs. However some could equally be left 'stranded' in menial employment and effectively assume the mindset or attitude of an unwilling UK worker. Both of these scenarios could result in unskilled positions going unfilled. Over time the UK would therefore again be left with a resource gap and resultant need for a new influx of migrant workers.

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Introduction

- 1 The Adult Learning Committee of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has set up a task group to gain a better knowledge of the current position of learning and skills issues in relation to migrants. The ultimate objective is to determine the key issues relating to skills and migration, and to consider how this can inform LSC policy.
- 2 UK government policy already explicitly recognises the potential role of migration to address labour market deficiencies, especially in key professions and some unskilled jobs. Migration is also increasingly being viewed as a solution for replacing workers who are retiring and not being replaced at the younger end of the workforce because of falling birth rates.

Terminology

- 3 For this research, the LSC wanted to focus on migrants who have come in from the EU or recently from outside the EU via the asylum route. Those coming in through highly skilled routes were less of a focus. Throughout this report, both these categories will be referred to by the general terms 'migrant worker' or 'migrant'.
- 4 Unskilled work is that which does not require technical training or skills and would include jobs such as kitchen porter, factory line worker or warehouse picker. Workers in such occupations are the focus of this research. Skilled jobs are those that require specific skills or professional training, such as dressmaker, office administration assistant, doctor or IT professional. Workers in this type of skilled occupation are a minority in this research sample.

Dates

- 5 Field work was conducted between 24 August and 6 October 2006. A topline debrief was presented to the steering committee on 20 September 2006. A full debrief presentation was given on 31 October 2006.

Objectives

6 The overall aim of the research was to address the knowledge gap in the area of migrant employment and training, and more specifically to gain views from employers in terms of:

- perceptions of and attitudes towards employing migrant workers
- perceived positives and negatives of recruiting migrants
- positive and negative experiences of employing migrants
- the types of migrants being employed
- how successfully migrants who are employed integrate
- the types of migrant particular employers are likely to recruit, and how migrants are recruited and assessed
- the kinds of roles migrants occupy and how this compares with their skill set
- attitudes to training migrants
- the training migrants receive through work.

7 The research aimed to understand whether these attitudes and experiences vary across different sectors and according to the size of a business, and how other variables such as the country of origin of migrant workers, and their skill level or route to employment affect employers' views.

Sample and Methodology

Rationale

8 A combination of methodologies was deemed necessary to address the objectives. Individual, face-to-face depth interviews were the chosen

methodology for the 35 of the sample, supplemented by 5 paired depth interviews and 2 quad groups (group discussions comprising four respondents).

Depth interviews

- 9 Depth interviews provide an intimate and secure environment that is ideal for establishing rapport and facilitating the discussion of potentially sensitive topics such as attitudes to migrant workers. When sufficiently reassured, depth interviews allow respondents to talk about their experiences, be they positive or negative, uninhibited by the presence of others.
- 10 Individual depth interviews were chosen because employee roles, recruitment and training issues are often idiosyncratic to a company. It was therefore necessary to understand at an individual level what employers and trainers were doing. Furthermore, as the sample spanned different types of industries and businesses, it was important to be able to understand whether views and experiences could be segmented according to sector.
- 11 Paired depth interviews were also used. Interviewing two people together can be a revealing process, giving insights into different priorities, attitudes and the role each plays in, for example, decision-making. Such interviews were also necessary in some larger firms where employment and training were separate responsibilities held by two people. This allowed the research to cover both employment and training issues in a single interview.
- 12 Each depth interview session was an hour long and was recorded if the respondent agreed to this.

Quad groups

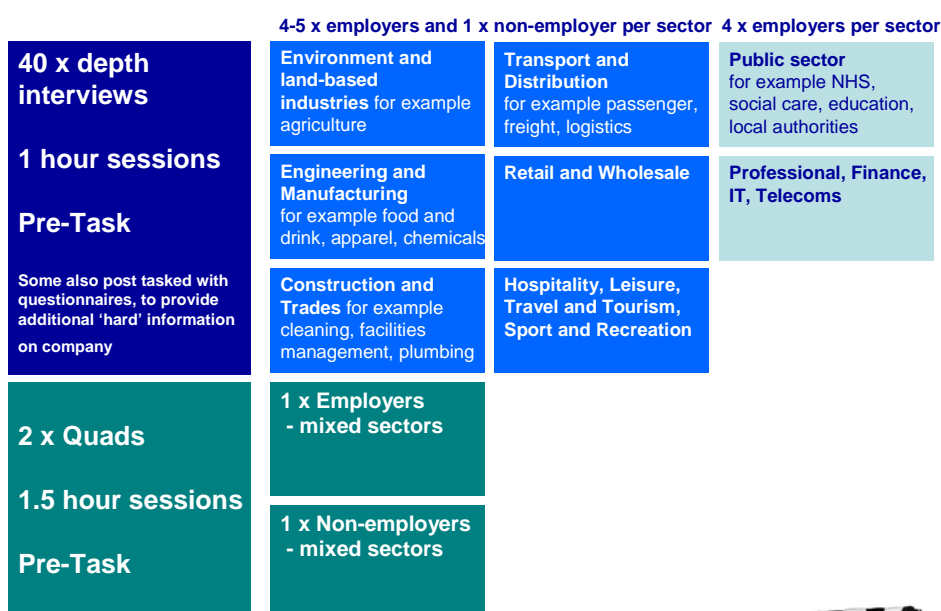
- 13 Quad groups combine the strengths of individual depth interviews and group discussions. They retain the intimate nature and the potential for individual expression provided by depth interviews, yet inject more dynamic characteristics typical of groups. The small number of respondents encourages detailed responses and it is easier for respondents to foster a sense of 'team' or belonging with one another. In these circumstances,

respondents are more likely to open up, and give their views. Accordingly, quad groups are ideal methodologies for combining detailed evaluation with constructive development. Employers from different companies were put into groups on the basis of whether they employed migrant workers or not.

- 14 Each quad session was an hour and a half long. The quad groups conducted for this research were viewed and recorded.

Sampling

Figure 1: Research samples.



Research conducted between August and October 2006



- 15 Several factors were considered and accounted for when defining the sample, as described in paragraphs 16–26.

Experience of employing migrants

- 16 In total, 34 of the 40 depth interviews and 1 of the quad groups comprised employers with experience of employing migrant workers. This was to gain insight into their reasons for employing migrants, how they recruit and assess them, the positive and negative aspects of employing migrant workers, and any training required or offered. Among this group, the majority were currently employing migrants although an exception was made for some employers who

had done so in the recent past. This was to account for those employers that offer seasonal work, or those whose labour needs had changed recently.

- 14 It was also felt necessary to conduct a small number of interviews with those who had never employed migrant workers. This was to provide valuable insight into preconceptions about migrant workers and any anticipated difficulties or pitfalls of employing them. Contrasting these with actual experiences allowed the research to identify where the biggest gaps in misunderstanding lay, and what information or support might help to overcome employers' barriers to employing migrant workers.
- 15 These non-employer interviews were conducted with respondents who could potentially employ migrant workers and who had appropriate labour needs. The research aimed to sample half of non-employers who were relatively positive about recruiting migrants and half who were relatively negative about doing so.

Industry sector

- 16 Migrant workers are concentrated in six main sectors (Green, Owen and Wilson, 2005). To these six, the research added environment and land-based industries, which are anecdotally believed to make heavy use of seasonal workers, and construction and trades, which is emerging as an increasing area of migrant employment.
- 17 The research therefore included the following sectors, adapted and amended from Green, Owen and Wilson (2005), the intention being to recruit an even number of employers and non-employers from within each sector:
- Environment and land-based industries
 - Engineering and manufacturing
 - Construction and trades
 - Transport and distribution

- Retail and wholesale
- Hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism, and sport and recreation
- Public sector
- Professional, finance, IT and telecommunications.

Size of business

- 18 Small- to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) were chosen as the primary focus of this study as they form the bulk of British businesses (Small Business Service, 2005). However, a small number of small and major-sized companies were also chosen for the sample partly to gain a different perspective, but also because larger companies are often more advanced in terms of their employment policies and practices.
- 19 SMEs were divided into four categories according to the number of employees they had. The sample was weighted towards companies of fewer than 50 employees as they form the vast majority of British businesses (Small Business Service, 2005). Public sector employers were based on the size of the local unit.

Table 1: Categories of SMEs used.

Size description	Number of employees	Number of interviews
Micro	2–20	16
Small	21–50	12
Medium	21–249	8
Major	250+ and FTSE-listed	4

Location

- 20 The vast majority of migrant workers are concentrated in London, where 31 per cent of workers are born outside the UK (Green, Owen and Wilson, 2005). Across the rest of England, the percentage of workers born outside the UK is considerably lower, with the next highest areas being the South East region (9

per cent) the Eastern Region (7 per cent), the East Midlands (6 per cent) and West Midlands (6 per cent) (Green, Owen and Wilson, 2005).

- 21 Three-quarters of the interviews were therefore conducted in London and the South East region. The remainder took place in Birmingham, Leeds and Scremerston in Northumberland to allow any potential regional variations to be explored.

Position and role of respondent

- 22 As the research concerned issues around both the employment of migrant workers and their training, the majority of cases identified a single person who carried responsibility for, and had knowledge of, both employment and training within their organisation. Among the micro-companies, this tended to be a company director, whereas within the larger companies it tended to be individuals in human resources. Some of the larger organisations required paired depth interviews where responsibility for employment practice and training was split between two individuals.

Migrant worker factors

- 23 It was important to ensure the sample included employers with a range of experiences of employing migrants. A consideration of the following factors was necessary when deciding the sample.
- a **Skill level:** Those working in less-skilled positions were of the greatest interest for the purposes of this research. Therefore the number of employers who 'only' or 'mainly' employed highly skilled migrant workers was limited at recruitment.
 - b **Status of employment:** It was important to have a range of employers who were employing migrant workers on permanent, short-term or temporary contracts. At least five employers in this research had migrant employees on permanent contracts.

- c **Percentage of workforce that comprises migrant workers:** The research used a spread of the percentage of workforce comprising migrants, which differed across industry sectors and companies.
- d **Country or area of origin:** The research identified three main types of migrant of particular interest for this study, those from:

- EU 15 countries
- EU 10 accession states
- outside the EU who have come in via the asylum route and now have refugee status.

These definitions were chosen so that the study could examine potential differences between employer experiences in terms of workers' level of English or their willingness to accept lower paid jobs. The sample achieved a spread of respondents employing from these three different labour markets.

- e **Routes to employment:** The research aimed to achieve a spread of recruitment methods and successfully sought to include employers within the sample who had sourced migrant workers through an employment agency.
- f **Gender:** Employers were not recruited on the basis of whether they recruited men or women, but a naturally occurring spread was achieved across the sample.
- g **Training offered to employees:** At least 21 employers had offered or provided training for their workforce in the last 12 months, mainly using external training sources, which was also available for their migrant workers.

Stimulus materials

Pre-task

- 24 Pre-tasks provide an opportunity for respondents to start thinking about the relevant issues before the interview and to record their thoughts privately. The pre-task was designed to demonstrate and reassure respondents that the research process was not an ‘investigation’ into their work practices but an opportunity for them to express their opinions.
- 25 The pre-task was a thought-bubble exercise (see Annex A), which posted or emailed to respondents. Employers were asked to write down the main pros and cons of employing migrant workers. Employers who had no experience of employing migrants were sent the same pre-task in order to provide a comparison between the two groups.

Opinion cards

- 26 Techniques such as the use of opinion cards are useful for uncovering attitudes and beliefs where the respondent may be reluctant to express their true feelings for fear of exposing socially undesirable views. During the depth interview, respondents were presented with a number of views that ‘other employers’ had expressed (see Annex A). Examples of the opinions presented to respondents include:

Migration from outside the UK is good for the country; it has the potential to address labour market deficiencies, especially in key professions and some unskilled jobs. It also offers a potential solution to compensate for our falling birth rate as a country.

These workers are only good for low-skilled jobs; that’s why they get paid less.

- 27 Presenting the statements as the opinions of others helps to legitimise the sentiments and stimulates discussion by offering a range of viewpoints, some of which would reflect and some of which would challenge the respondent’s own point of view.

Findings from recruitment, sampling and context

- 28 During recruitment, the aim was to invite those with job roles that were reflective of their industry sector to participate in the research study. However, this was not always possible, especially as the sample focus was on low-skilled or unskilled roles.
- 29 For example, within the public sector quota, some interviews were with those responsible for employing doctors, whereas others were with those responsible for staffing within support services such as hospital cleaning or catering.
- 30 Moreover, within each sector, company types were often diverse, making it difficult to generalise or identify trends and therefore the findings can be idiosyncratic.
- 31 During the recruiting and field work, there was significant negative tabloid press coverage detailing how migrant workers were changing the shape of the UK economy (see Annex C). It is possible that this had a knock-on effect on recruitment issues as potential respondents became more aware of the press coverage. Industry sectors such as transport and distribution and smaller business employers were more difficult to recruit than the others and required more reassurance that the research was genuine. Some 'snowballing' of recruitment occurred, in which a participant who had taken part in the research suggested further potential participants from their professional or social networks. This provided further reassurance for potential recruits who met the screening criteria as they knew and trusted a contact who had already taken part.
- 32 An invitation letter detailing the research (see Annex B) and link to a project information page on the Directions Research & Marketing website were also provided as reassurance for all potential respondents.

Summary Findings and Conclusions

Employer and migrant typologies

- 33 The research found a range of employer attitudes towards employing migrant workers, ranging from generally negative (termed 'reluctants'), to extremely positive (termed 'advocates'). The majority of employers in the research would fit into a third, moderate category termed 'pragmatists'. These employers had positively balanced views towards hiring migrant workers, viewing them dispassionately and as a cost-effective commodity. The main advantage of hiring migrant workers for these employers was that migrants were perceived to have a stronger and more positive work attitude and ethic than UK-born workers.
- 34 The research also found three broad types of migrant workers. Low-skilled workers who aim to stay in low-skilled roles, attracted by the comparatively higher pay found in the UK were termed 'economic migrants'. Economic migrants were the least likely to integrate in their workplace. Workers who may be skilled but take unskilled work in the UK while they build up their English language abilities or gain relevant qualifications were termed 'aspiring migrants'. Workers who take up skilled positions in the UK and who are genuinely filling a skill gap and were termed 'global migrants'. Aspiring and global migrants were found to be more likely to integrate in the workplace. The different migrant types were spread across the employment sectors studied, with the exception of global migrants who were concentrated in the professional and public sectors. Global migrants were less of a focus in this study.
- 35 Migrant type appeared to relate to the likelihood of work and social integration, with economic migrants the least likely to integrate and aspiring and global migrants more likely. This in turn was related to workplace factors, and the motivation of the migrant.

Migrant employment and training

36 Currently, employers do not perceive there to be a major skills gap in the UK. Rather they point to an 'attitude gap', in the sense that they find it difficult to recruit UK workers, especially younger workers, who are motivated and willing to take on low-skilled or unskilled jobs. This appears to be the case across industry sectors.

37 The research sample was focused on EU or non-EU via asylum route migrants and the lower end of the skills scale. Migrant workers are mainly fulfilling a resource or attitude role by taking on the jobs for which employers are unable to find willing UK workers. Thus migrants are generally being employed in unskilled or menial jobs that they don't need specific skills or training for.

38 Whilst other migrants are being employed for their more specialist skills in IT programming for example, these workers are already well-qualified or experienced and therefore also do not require further skills training.

39 Accordingly, there is little perceived need for any additional training to be made available to migrants, except in English language, and many are felt to pick the basics up fairly quickly in any case.

40 However, employers do identify some possible training opportunities for migrant workers:

- language skills (although the perception is that there is training provision here already)
- British culture and ways of immersion
- living in Britain, such as practical guidance on bank accounts and the UK tax system
- health and safety or first aid courses in foreign languages
- basic computing courses

- basic office skills and qualifications
- limited needs for the more skilled provision in specific sectors, for example in the NHS (different protocols training), in finance (UK regulations) and in law (UK law conversion).

41 In addition, as is already taking place, there is felt to be scope to provide employers with assistance in ‘translating’ foreign qualifications into UK equivalents such as gas-fitting or dentistry for consistency and quality of service.

Broad implications

42 The broader findings from this research point to the need to consider the issues surrounding social inclusion, both in terms of the integration of migrant workers within the UK workplace and beyond, as well as how well young UK workers of today will earn their place within broader UK society.

43 Many employers felt that young adults growing up in the UK today are typically ill-equipped and poorly prepared to face the working world due to their reluctance to take on menial jobs, especially those involving dirty or monotonous tasks and over-long or anti-social hours.

44 Whilst employers sympathise with today's youth to some extent, they are unsure how the latter will be able to secure employment, given that they will have to compete with very willing and eager migrant workers. There is a worry about their long-term future and the potential burden on the State.

45 Set against a context of increasing social exclusion, segregation and ghettoisation in the UK, it seems critical that migrant workers be further encouraged to integrate to avoid further destabilisation within society.

46 Finally, some employers feel that if over-qualified migrants in menial jobs become dissatisfied over the next three to five years, some may use their skills, combined with their deeper understanding of UK culture, customs, systems and so on to set up their own businesses or to progress further into

more skilled jobs. Those left behind may become a burden on the State, having become fed up with menial work. Either way, the UK may again be left with a resource (or attitude) gap unless these jobs are soaked up again by new migrant workers.

Detailed Findings

Employers' perceptions of and attitudes towards employing migrants

47 The research found that perceptions and attitudes to employing migrant workers varied considerably across the sample. Employers can be placed in one of three broad categories, expressing the perceptions and attitudes of that category to a greater or lesser extent.

Reluctants

48 Reluctants have generally negative attitudes towards hiring migrant workers and show signs of being quite heavily led by negative stories in the media. They feel that migrant workers will or do detract from the UK by 'playing the system', scrounging off the State, stealing jobs and undercutting UK workers. Reluctants in this sample tended to be micro employers and to have some racist views that were sometimes reinforced by bad experiences of employing migrants.

They take jobs away from me, my neighbours and my family.

49 Reluctants may endorse statements such as:

There's enough people scrounging off the State without the foreigners doing it.

All they do is save the money they earn and send it back home, then they can pay cash for properties over there.

They're pushing down the wages for UK workers – and charge less as they have no insurance etc.

They are coming in, meanwhile UK companies are also moving abroad for cheaper costs.

*The tax man chases us ... but not these migrants who abuse the system!
We're an easy target!*

Pragmatists

50 Pragmatists have positively balanced views about employing migrant workers and were the largest group of employers found in this research. They feel that migrants fulfil a role by compensating for gaps in the workforce. Migrant workers are seen as beneficial overall but ultimately are viewed as a commodity. Pragmatists are largely unemotional about migrant workers and are unlikely to build relationships with these workers.

They make my life easier, basically.

51 Pragmatists are largely positive in attitude, but would acknowledge some possible negative outcomes of employing migrant workers:

We simply could not fill the vacancies without them; the only other people who will apply for this job are young people who don't want to work for the money.

Immigrants make a valuable contribution to the UK, although a small minority tarnish their image. Those who complain that immigrants are here to take our jobs are precisely the people who don't want the jobs they're taking.

Advocates

52 Advocates have broadly positive views towards employing migrants and feel that migrants enrich society as well as the workplace by bringing something more than their UK counterparts in either their general work ethic or skills set. Advocates are more interested than pragmatists in migrants as people and tend to operate a more progressive work culture, or will specifically aim to have a diverse workforce.

They bring something more to the company.

53 Advocate employers in particular are associated with statements such as:

They are the cogs of Western society.

They are the backbone of our workforce – the hospitality industry wouldn't function without them.

Perceived positive and negative aspects of recruiting migrants

Positive aspects

54 Employers were able to come up with a number of clear, positive reasons for employing migrant workers. The most prominent advantage mentioned was that migrants appear to have a stronger work ethic and attitude than UK workers:

They tend to put more effort into their work and worker harder [than some UK nationals]. Their attitude to work is different and they seem appreciate their job more.

55 Migrant workers are also seen as eager to please, more determined to succeed, reliable and punctual, courteous and polite, obedient and respectful of authority and able to work flexible and longer hours as they often have fewer social or familial commitments.

56 Another positive attribute cited by employers is that migrant workers are seen as cost-effective for their business. Low-skilled or unskilled migrant workers are often willing to accept lower wages as they believe they upskill in other ways, for example improving their English language skills and gaining UK work experience. Experienced or qualified migrants are seen as a potential way to reduce the training budget as they may have skills above those of their peers in the UK workforce.

57 Low-skilled or unskilled migrants are also seen as a way to fill a resource gap. They are willing to take unskilled or menial jobs that are boring, repetitive, dirty or simply hard, working long hours for relatively low pay:

She has a real desire to learn the language, so she is happy to take £1,000 less than UK workers are paid.

58 In sectors such as hospitality, catering and cleaning in particular, migrant workers are seen as filling the 'right work attitude' gap left by the UK workforce:

There is a gap here for whatever reason, whether it's the laziness of the British people who can't be bothered – you know, the nanny state – that

they're getting benefits or whatever. The foreign nationals are harder working and want to get on.

59 From a recruitment perspective, migrant workers will often have a pool of similar friends as potential candidates for future vacancies. They also rarely demand as much holiday time as UK employees, especially around popular times such as Easter, Christmas and bank holidays.

60 Having access to experienced or qualified migrants is a positive aspect for employers because these workers can fill a skills gap. They may have specialist skills or experiences in IT or translation for example that could provide the employer with better quality work than could be provided by the UK workforce:

UK graduates cannot offer the skills we need, so we have to look abroad.

61 Advocate employers identify further advantages of employing migrant workers. Migrant workers may bring different kinds of experiences to the workplace such as alternative work practices and ideas as well as greater diversity. Their national language can be a real bonus in some sectors such as hospitality and retail as some employers like to have employees of an ethnicity that reflects the local community of the workplace:

I want, and believe, that my staff should represent the diversity of people that live in this country.

Negative aspects

62 There are also perceived negative implications of employing migrant workers. Practical issues such as the language barrier can be problematic, particularly in customer-facing roles. Some workers might not always integrate well into the workforce or society in general. There may also be additional costs to the employer, for example recruitment fees, and the financial burden of extra training. Employers can fear that migrant workers are a transient workforce and are therefore less committed than their UK counterparts, or that their employment might incur a negative reaction from customers or locals. These drawbacks are recognised, if not always a strong influence on all three employer types.

- 63 Pragmatists cite further drawbacks. There are general issues, such as the fact that some migrant employees are believed to be uncomfortable with differences in UK culture. Some employers cited experiences of migrant workers who did not mix well with Black workers or who don't like to have female bosses. Migrant workers can also need additional social assistance if for example they don't know how a UK system such as the NHS works. They may want longer periods of time off work in one go, for example saving their holidays up to go back home once a year for four weeks. They can require additional supervision or attention to avoid breaking EU legislation by working too many hours or over-stating their abilities, which may affect the quality of work.
- 64 Reluctant employers are able to identify still further, often morally based negative factors, which often reflect issues highlighted by the media. Reluctants often blame government policy for the lack of control over the number of migrants allowed into the UK. They may also feel that the influx of illegal and white-collar migrant workers is taking jobs away from UK nationals.
- 65 They also express the perception that migrant workers don't seem to understand the values of this country, are often disrespectful and do not reinvest their earnings back in the UK economy. Reluctants believe migrant workers to be restless and to have no long-term stability; that they are likely to return to their homeland either because they are homesick or because they have made enough money to take back home with them.
- 66 Overall, most respondents in the research sample had positive views on employing migrant workers, although a research effect or social desirability bias almost certainly would have an effect on this skew. While many employers acknowledged and could even give examples of exploitation that migrant workers face, none openly admitted to exploiting migrants themselves. A minority would however admit to paying migrant workers lower wages than their UK counterparts as an example of good business sense, and faced little resistance from migrant workers. More would admit to enjoying the benefits of

having a workforce that is, among other things, willing to take on the worst jobs and the most anti-social hours.

Experiences of employing migrants

67 The research found mostly positive examples of employing migrant workers:

We had two graduates from Poland who both started working in the warehouse. They worked really hard and were lovely guys. At the same time, we were struggling to recruit engineers. Anyway the guys both went back to Poland for a year, did their Master's degrees, then came back, I started helping them with their English and now they have moved over to the engineering side. They are so loyal to us now, and have gone from living in one room with two other blokes, to having their own homes, good jobs and really nice cars. That's it now, they are here for the long term.

I started as a waitress, then I was a supervisor and now I'm the manager here ... I came here with pretty much nothing and have worked my way up and have a house and a good job.

The Poles are very ambitious ... they seem to learn English very quickly and seem to just slot in ... they stay, buy property, open businesses ... they're just great at finding the niches.

They can come here and start with nothing and go on to get properties back home and some even go for management.

One girl, I wasn't able to give a lot of hours to, went off fruit-picking. She went off at 4am in the morning and then was dropped off at 1am. She was paid a pittance and charged money for the petrol to take her to work. They were asylum seekers then, but now, have 'full' status and her daughter has just gone to university.

68 However, some negative experiences also arose:

The pair of brothers both went back to Poland together due to a family problem and took it as holiday. One said he would come back but in fact neither of them returned and didn't tell me.

I had to go through a disciplinary process with one worker as he was always coming in late. We had to get his written warning translated into his own language.

We once had some Armenian workers who left in the middle of a shift because they had had enough of it.

We've had real problems with the male toilets and have never established whether this is the Muslims or the Sikhs. They take the seats off and the tops of the cistern off.

Types of migrants employed and integration

Types of migrant worker

69 The research found that employers' perceptions of the types of migrant worker employed in the UK could be divided into one of three categories:

- economic migrants
- aspiring migrants
- global migrants.

Economic migrants

70 These migrants were seen by employers as having no or few transferable skills and in their home countries would probably be working in unskilled jobs, for example in a shop or on a farm. In the UK they seek low-skilled or unskilled work such as factory work or fruit-picking. These workers are glad to take any type of work as pay in the UK is significantly higher than in their home countries for equivalent work; indeed they are anecdotally believed to earn up to five times the pay they receive at home for equivalent work. They are typically working class or students and have short-term plans or opportunistic ideas with regard to employment; they want to make money easily and quickly. They may arrive in groups or with family and are unlikely to integrate strongly with the UK workforce, especially if they are working in groups of their own nationality in a remote area. Learning the language is generally not a high priority, although some students in this category may be an exception to this.

They can earn five times as much here doing the same job as they did in Poland.

Aspiring migrants

71 These workers were seen by employers as being skilled or qualified professionals in their own countries but lacking the English language skills or transferable qualifications to practise their profession in the UK. These migrants take on low-skilled or unskilled roles while they improve their English or gain a relevant qualification to allow them to practise their preferred

profession in the UK. An aspiring migrant could equally be a medical doctor working as a labourer on a building site or a graduate at the beginning of their work career. Aspiring migrants are happy to make easy money doing unskilled work and view it in the context of being an opening to greater opportunities. They often have a friendship group in place and are unlikely to have any dependants, a possible exception being if they are working to support a family at home. They are open to staying in the UK longer than economic migrants, especially if career opportunities arise. Given that they have a focused interest in learning English, they are more likely to integrate.

They are here to get better at English so they can pursue their true career path.

Global migrants

72 These workers were seen by employers as skilled or highly qualified professionals, for example an IT programmer, but who might not have good English language skills. In the UK they will occupy highly skilled or qualified positions as they already have the skills necessary to perform the job. They are prepared to follow opportunities in the global marketplace to optimise their career and earning potential, to the extent of potentially causing a skills gap or brain-drain in their own countries. They have a very clear skill set to offer and tend to have built up work experience in their homeland or other countries. These migrants are able to cherry-pick jobs in the global marketplace and therefore have actively selected or have been encouraged to come to the UK. They may have dependants who will migrate with them, and are generally open to settling in the UK long term provided the career conditions remain favourable. They are also likely to integrate and learn English to facilitate their settling in the country, and will be working alongside and living near English people.

We need specific skills so we have to look further afield than the UK.

Integration

73 Levels of social integration in the workplace appear to be affected by several factors, namely the:

- mix of nationalities in the workforce
- standard of spoken English among the migrant workers
- proportion of migrants in the company
- size of the company work unit.

74 There appears to be some correlation between migrant type and ease of integration.

75 Lower levels of social integration at work tend to occur in larger organisations where there are either groups of the same nationality working together, conflicting nationalities or where the English language is weak. These tend to be the circumstances in which economic migrants are employed whose short-term focus may mean that they care less about integrating. This may be exacerbated by UK employees ignoring or even excluding these employees when talking, socialising or bantering. Consequently, economic migrants are perceived as money focused and consciously segregating themselves from other workers:

They don't seem to want to mix that much – they just want to get on with the work – which is fine by me.

76 Cultural barriers may also have an impact on integration. For example, abstinence from after-work drinking may affect integration in the workplace:

There's not much socialising in the workplace as they treat this as work and social life as separate.

If we have a company-funded night out, they will come along, but not if it's just an impromptu drink after work.

77 Higher levels of social interaction at work tend to occur where:

- there is a harmonious mix of nationalities in the workforce
- the standard of spoken English among migrant workers is generally high

- the proportion of migrant workers in the company is generally lower and so they have to mix with other nationalities
- the company size is smaller.

78 These factors tend to be associated with global migrants and, to a lesser extent, aspiring migrants. In contrast to economic migrants, aspiring migrants appreciate the opportunity for social interaction at work as it serves as a means of developing language and career potential:

Some of them are really keen to improve their English and get on. They want to start their own businesses. One is always talking about setting up a Portuguese take-away locally.

Some of our supervisors have left to go to Oxford Brooks [University] once their English is good enough and they have saved up the money.

79 Global migrants also welcome social interaction at work. They have a long-term focus, so social interaction is key to establishing roots and building a life in the UK:

They fit in with ease because they make the effort.

They socialise with us – they've learnt our way of life and little colloquialisms.

They came over for the short term but like the culture and end up bringing their families over.

They come here and want to integrate with other workers. They socialise and share their experiences.

80 Employers and employees both influence the success of integration within the workplace. Some employers advocate that migrant and non-migrant employees should not socialise, believing it to be 'good for business'. They may fear that willing or diligent migrants could eventually take on the worst characteristics of their UK counterparts, and therefore are content for the workplace to be effectively segregated.

81 Such behaviours could increase the risk of creating social exclusion in the workplace. The authors of *Skills in England 2005: Key Messages* (Wilson and Hogarth, 2006) claim that 'the ideal is to build a society that achieves a balance between wealth creation and social cohesion' (p. 5 para. 35). The

long-term effects of exclusion may be detrimental to society and ultimately the economy. Interaction is key for integration and can be encouraged by the sharing of a common language, common social activities or a shared sense of humour.

Factors influencing the employment of migrants

82 Certain factors seem to influence the overall likelihood of migrant workers being employed. The main reasons given for not employing migrant workers were if the business:

- only had specialist roles to fill that required UK qualifications
- needed fluent English speakers with English accents
- had a strong desire to support the local area
- was generally prejudiced against migrant workers.

83 Migrant workers were more likely to be employed in highly competitive job markets where costs can be reduced by lowering wages, where there was a need to fill unattractive roles that UK workers would not do, and if there was a high local availability of migrant workers.

84 Overall, the impression was that migrant workers were hired mainly due to the unwillingness of UK workers to take on low-skilled or unskilled, unattractive jobs.

Industries and roles occupied by migrants

85 Migrant workers were employed in each of the sectors studied in the research. Different industry sectors were associated with the employment of different migrant types and had different reasons for choosing to employ them. Broadly speaking, the reasons for employing migrant workers tended to relate either to a lack of willing workers in the UK (classed as resource issues) or a lack of the relevant skills in this country (classed as skills issues). Industries would recruit migrant workers for either or both of these reasons.

86 **Environment and land-based** employers tended to employ economic and aspiring migrants. There were no obvious skill shortages, so the employment of migrant workers was attributable to resource issues.

87 Environment and land-based employment is acknowledged as being at the mercy of seasonal conditions which in turn meant that many employers could not offer the stability in hours or contracts that UK workers demand. Furthermore, the work was seen as heavy, generally low paid and often temporary. The migrants hired for these jobs were generally used to working in tougher conditions and were willing to work the land in difficult, remote locations. However, they would often expect and require accommodation.

88 **Engineering and manufacturing** employers tended to employ economic and aspiring migrants to fill the employment gap left by skill and resource issues in the sector.

89 Manufacturing was felt to be tough in the UK, with very fierce competition from abroad in terms of low-paid, skilled labour. Migrant workers were seen as particularly useful for filling the skills gaps in the rag trade such as seamstresses and pattern-cutters. The lack of willing UK workers was partly attributed to a perceived lack of relevant apprenticeships and partly because UK workers were generally unwilling to take on the boring or monotonous jobs such as those offered on a production line:

Good seamstresses are hard to find. Everybody now looks abroad for this skill – it's dying in the UK but not in India.

There is a shortage of joinery skills these days. The UK workers I get might have very, very basic carpentry qualifications but certainly no real skill.

90 **Construction and trade** employers tended to employ economic and aspiring migrants. There was seen to be a significant boom in migrant workers in these industries, especially in the South East region, to account for both skills and resource issues.

91 Undertones of racism or a protectionist agenda was found behind reluctant employers in this sector who resented that migrant workers have driven down

prices and taken jobs from UK nationals. However, the construction and trade sector remained a popular route of work entry into the UK with a long-standing tradition among foreign workers. While many migrant workers have established their own businesses, the tendency was that even aspiring migrants would be placed in the lowest or low-skilled roles. There was, however, the opportunity for those with strong English language skills to take positions of responsibility over their compatriots by acting as supervisors and translators. Some migrants did secure skilled positions, but there was a general preconception that the migrant skill set was lower than the UK equivalent. Economic migrants could also over-state a range of skills in an attempt to secure work, which could impact on health and safety as well as the quality of work.

- 92 Not having the relevant accreditation was a barrier to employment or higher skilled employment as the industry is very heavily regulated and becoming more so. Health and safety in particular was a key concern due to the language barrier as well as the fact that migrant workers can lack the awareness of health and safety issues that their UK counterparts possess.
- 93 **Transport and distribution** employers tended to employ economic and aspiring migrants. The recruitment of migrant workers in these industries tended to relate to resource rather than skill issues.
- 94 Driving and working in distribution centres were seen as obvious areas of work for migrants, although a lack of skills in the English language was sometimes seen as problematic, especially in roles such as taxi-driving. Written language was also seen as important when dealing with orders in a warehouse and speaking ability for telephone communications.
- 95 Migrants looking for work in transport needed a driving licence and experience of driving in the UK and with these could even work towards skilled positions, for example as an HGV driver. Beyond these qualifications, the main requirement was willingness to work in a male-dominated industry with long and anti-social hours spent away from friends and family. In distribution, there

was a tendency to place migrant workers in the lowest skill roles such as packing or warehouse operations.

96 **Hospitality, catering and leisure** employers would tend to employ economic and aspiring migrants. There were no obvious skill issues relating to this industry and migrant workers were hired to compensate for resource issues.

97 Employers mentioned a high turnover of staff (especially for UK workers) as a problem, possibly caused by the negative image the hospitality sector has as comprising low-paid, hard jobs with limited career prospects. Migrants were therefore perceived as fundamental to the successful continuation and growth of this sector. A strong work ethic and being prepared to work long and anti-social hours were seen as critical within the service industry. The attitudes typically associated with migrant workers such as being willing, polite, obedient and respectful were therefore naturally suited to customer service roles.

98 Migrant workers in customer-facing roles were often a popular and essential part of the workforce. Aspiring migrants were especially appreciated by employers in this sector as they were generally well-educated and able to interact well with customers. There were some problems if the migrant worker had poor English, but this was usually mitigated by having a fluent English-speaking worker available on the same shift to translate or work opposite customers. As an added benefit, multi-lingual workers were able to speak, relate to or attract some non-English-speaking customers. However, there were also some problems with migrant workers talking among themselves and in their own language, which was received negatively by customers who saw this as rude. Some employers also stated that hygiene and cleanliness presented a training need because further explanation of personal hygiene was required.

99 **Retail and wholesale** employers tended to employ economic and aspiring migrants to cover both skills and resource issues.

- 100 Staff retention was an issue across these industries as many of the jobs are seen as fillers by employees who could easily be lured to other companies by higher wages. Employers were therefore reluctant to offer full-time, permanent positions in an effort to minimise costs. In contrast to UK employees, migrant workers were seen as flexible, undemanding and didn't seem to expect to have rights or benefits.
- 101 Strong English language skills were a necessity for customer-facing roles as staff had to be able to interact with customers (on tills, or at customer service desks for example). While some employers feared that the 'foreign' manner of staff could be seen as abrasive by UK customers, such willing workers were nevertheless beneficial in being able to interact with some non-English-speaking customers.
- 102 **Professional** employers tended to hire only global migrants. Migrant workers were hired in professional positions to account for skills and resource issues.
- 103 This was seen as an important and growing industry sector due to increases in technological advancement. Employers acknowledged that they have to remain attractive to skilled workers from a global market.
- 104 The skills and resource shortages included a lack of IT bespoke programmers and high-level finance positions. There were also resource gaps in positions such as auditing or telesales, which were often seen as too boring or repetitive for UK graduates. Many of the IT roles were not customer facing, so language was less of an issue in the industry, although there was reluctance from some employers to put migrant workers in front of the public. There was some keenness apparent from employers to invest in the training of skilled employees even beyond necessary language or 'introduction to the UK' courses. However, additional developmental training was not often required as global migrants were typically more highly skilled than UK employees.
- 105 **Public sector** employers tended to hire economic and global migrants. As public sector employers tended to follow the principles of equal opportunities

stringently, migrant workers were recruited if they were the best person for the job. Migrant workers were employed to account for skills and resource issues.

- 106 Migrant workers filled a key resource gap in roles such as cleaners, hospital porters, ward hostesses and restaurant or catering assistants. They were also seen as bringing some specific skills or willingness to engage in the less glamorous parts of the medical profession such as histopathology. There were however some problems relating to language or identifying equivalent qualifications for nurses.
- 107 Migrant doctors were generally perceived as very willing to learn, knowing their theory very well and being conscientious in their adherence to procedure. They often had to adjust to stricter practices or specific NHS protocols. Employers also reported a tendency by these employees to return to their home country once trained in UK practices.
- 108 Language was a key issue for doctors and catering workers as it impacts on health and safety. Respondents said that catering workers in particular really struggled with tests conducted in English such as tests in food hygiene.

Recruitment and assessment

- 109 Recruitment and assessment issues vary between migrants being taken on to fill resource gaps (the majority of the sample in this study) and those recruited to address skills shortages.

Recruitment

- 110 For low-skilled or unskilled jobs, one option was for workers to be recruited through an agency. This was popular among the larger organisations in particular. Agency recruitment offered benefits to the employer such as background checks and often a trial period with no subsequent obligation to hire them. Agencies could also be cheaper for employers if for example they did not have to offer paid holidays and if they could reclaim VAT. Some of the agencies used were non-UK based and would train workers in groups of 10 for employment in a single company.

- 111 A recommendation by word of mouth from present employees was a popular, cheap channel of recruitment that required little effort. It was used for low-skilled workers where turnover was high, for example in hospitality and in smaller outlets. Furthermore, potential employees would often seek out the company in person either following adverts in windows and local papers or by literally knocking on the door of an employer.
- 112 For skilled roles, the process was quite different. Employers actively sought employees or head-hunted individuals if they were searching for specific skills. The skilled or semi-skilled workers discussed in this research were often directly recruited in their own countries, for example at industry fairs, through seminars, using the internet or through university networks. Some were recruited through an agency. For skilled roles, employers tended to go to the employees rather than vice versa.

Assessment

- 113 Again, a distinction must be made between lower and higher skilled positions. In lower skilled jobs, assessment was used mainly to determine the attitude or willingness of the applicant and whether they had basic English skills. It tended to involve at least some oral references. In higher skilled jobs, assessment was much more focused on formal elements such as a CV showing details of relevant experience and qualifications.
- 114 For skills at both ends of the scale, employers preferred applicants to have a basic level of English. Indeed, establishing the applicant's level of English was often a vital part of the process across all skill levels. This was mainly assessed at the interview stage through initial dialogue with the applicant.
- 115 Typically, if candidates could understand and make themselves understood, their English language skills were deemed acceptable. However, even this basic level may have been waived where supervisors were available in the organisation who could speak the candidate's language. Candidates for low-skilled work may not have needed to be able to speak English at all when

joining. The standard procedure, however, seemed to be that at least basic English was required.

- 116 The required standard of English varied according to the job, and broadly speaking was dependent on whether the work was customer facing or non-customer facing. In some cases, the worker without English language skills was acceptable, but only in cases where a straightforward, non-customer-facing role was being filled, and a translator was available. Basic English language skills were therefore generally enough for roles such as cleaners, porters, factory workers, fruit-pickers or farm workers for example.
- 117 However, for those working in customer-facing roles (for example, in an office, bar, on a retail shop floor or as waiting staff), a good understanding of English was generally required. There were also some roles where fluent English was required, such as managerial positions, doctors or in telesales. Even fluent English-speaking migrant workers would sometimes find that a foreign accent could be a limiting factor for some of these positions.
- 118 Some employers would not take CVs as evidence of language capability and requested that application forms be completed on the premises without cheating or assistance from friends.
- 119 However for most, reading and writing skills were less of a concern than spoken English, which was generally seen to be more important.
- 120 While English ability was a key part of assessment, a good attitude towards work and willingness were also crucial and possibly the most important criteria for assessing suitability for lower skilled work. Previous experience of such work was an advantage and physical appearance could also be a factor if it was relevant for the role, for example being clean and presentable in customer-facing roles or physically strong in the case of farming work.
- 121 For skilled and semi-skilled work, relevant experience and/or qualifications were the key requirements. Willingness to work was still very important, as was a good level of English language, although this may have been less of a

factor if the applicant had a valuable skill. Personal manner, including a professional attitude and sensitivity to British cultural values, would be more important than appearance in skilled work positions.

122 Where there was a lack of mandatory qualifications or a failure to recognise qualifications from overseas, some problems arose. In construction, for example, migrant workers did not have the same industry accreditations such as Corgi or a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCC) card as in the UK. Employers in this sector in particular had concerns about an apparently increasingly litigious culture. In some professions such as finance and law where migrant workers may have arrived in the UK already qualified, there was a general belief that they would be unfamiliar with the UK system and would need to convert their knowledge and skill set before they could secure jobs that matched their potential. This validated what is already happening with the provision of help for employers to align overseas qualifications and specific skills to allow them to compare applicants like for like.

123 Therefore, the assessment of migrant abilities was often much the same as for UK employees. Some employers would set tests that were specific to the job role. For industries where qualifications were less of an issue (such as retail, hospitality and catering), applicants for less skilled jobs such as waiting or bar work may have been set a straightforward practical test of relevant skills such as serving a drink. Other than these tests, English language skills and manner were the main areas of screening. Assessment for more skilled jobs may also have involved some sort of practical test, such as programming skills for an IT position, as well as providing a CV.

124 Because of issues relating to poor English language skills or qualifications not being recognised in the UK, it is clear that some migrants were very overqualified for the jobs in which they were employed, at least on paper. The consensus was that some job roles and managerial positions in particular were completely off limits to migrants, at least initially.

Attitudes to training migrants and the training they receive

- 125 The employers in this research tended to see training as either a cost to be avoided or an investment. For low-skilled or unskilled workers, there was little perceived need for further external training as far as the employers were concerned. Furthermore, while developmental training was considered for more skilled roles, in practice it was rare as these workers were already relevantly skilled.
- 126 For lower skilled or unskilled roles, workers would typically learn on the job, sometimes known as 'sitting next to Nellie'. Mandatory training was conducted as a matter of course for all. For these jobs, employers did not see any shortages in terms of skills training because additional skills were not typically required. It was the perceived attitude deficit that was the main motivator to employ from outside the UK workforce pool. Employers could also feel that they wanted to avoid the hassle or complications of additional training; they simply wanted receptive employees to come with the right attitude to work.
- 127 Poor English language skills meant that any training of migrant workers could take a little longer. For mandatory training such as health and safety, assistance was often required in the form of translators or pictures and they sometimes needed to cover the basic elements such as hygiene in more detail for waiting staff where cultural standards differed.
- 128 Employers recognised that migrants could pick up spoken English quite quickly when they integrated, but the development of reading and writing skills was seen as much slower. This is because reading and writing typically require more active study rather than the simple absorption by interaction. Indeed, employers felt that writing and reading skills presented the greatest challenge because of the need for active study and their potential significance in the context of increasing health and safety legislation. Paper trails for even quite menial jobs, such as recording the temperature of a fridge-freezer, can be required.

- 129 For the most part, however, and especially for lower skilled workers, employers saw the onus of improving standards of English language skills on the employee themselves since the worker would be the prime beneficiary. This being so, employers were rarely keen to finance such study. Some migrant workers had gone to the lengths of putting themselves through language courses such as English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), especially those aspiring migrants in or aiming for customer-facing roles. A minority of employers had supported employee language development through conversation and reading sessions in lunch hours.
- 130 Developmental training was certainly considered in more skilled roles, but was quite rare in this research. Employers, in particular employer advocates, were willing to support workers if they were believed to be worth the investment, such as IT programmers with weak English language skills. The employer would essentially perform a cost–benefit analysis when contemplating training for migrants with financial cost to the company weighed up against the potential for the company to gain and the likely duration of the employee’s time there. Developmental training was decided on an individual basis, although the transient nature of migrants seemed to have a bearing on the likelihood of it actually occurring.
- 131 Training investment was claimed to be no different whether it were in relation to UK or non-UK workers, although it is possible that there was a gap between what was said and the reality. Many employers claimed that training was allocated fairly and equally to those who needed it and that they treated everyone in the same way. At the same time, there appeared to be a latent impression that British workers were less likely to move abroad or that it was harder to develop migrant workers through the company.
- 132 Employers may also have claimed that they would invest in people if they showed a dedication and potential value to the organisation or if they had a willing attitude and wanted to prove themselves. However, employers still appeared to prefer to take on and train people who live in and were part of the community. The research suggests that there did appear to be both residual

prejudices against migrant workers and loyalty to UK workers, especially in the context of more skilled workers.

- 133 Across all skill levels, most employers struggled to identify further external training needs. When pushed, some suggested language skill development courses, although there was a perception that there is training provision already available especially with reading, and also writing to some extent. Others suggested ideas such as:
- a course on British culture and way of life
 - a citizenship approach, covering culture and customs
 - courses on living in Britain covering bank accounts, the tax system, accommodation laws and tenancy agreements.
- 134 The majority of employers were unwilling to finance any such courses. In fact some non-employers of migrant workers suggested that the worker's own country should finance 80 per cent of the training cost, with 15 per cent covered by the Government and the remaining 5 per cent by the individual themselves.
- 135 Other ideas suggested for further training included health and safety courses in foreign languages, basic computing courses and basic office skills or qualifications, although these would only be effective for migrants who had progressed reasonably well with their reading, speaking and writing of English. This led to the question of whether this training would be any different from what was already available.
- 136 A minority of employers felt that there might even be a need for skill provision at a higher level, such as protocol training in the NHS rather than the usual shadowing period, training in UK financial regulations and a UK conversion in law. This is much more specialist training, which was not the focus of this research.

Annexes


Annex A: Stimulus Materials

Pre task

What, in your view, are the main pros and cons of employing workers who were born & brought up outside the UK and who have been in this country for less than 2-3 years?

Pros

Cons



Opinion cards

A

Migration from outside the UK is good for the country; it has the potential to address labour market deficiencies, especially in key professions and some unskilled jobs. It also offers a potential solution to compensate for our falling birth rate as a country.



B

Migration from outside the UK is bad for the country; migrant workers do not have better skills than UK workers and we should focus on employing UK employees. It can also put strain on our country's resources in terms of housing, access to employment, etc.



C

They need less training.



D

The UK workforce just doesn't have the skills I need.



E

These workers are cheaper to employ and have a strong work ethic.



F

These workers are only good for low-skilled jobs, that's why they get paid less.



G

They are hard to integrate into the workforce because of language and cultural barriers (e.g. health and safety).



H

They're reliable, determined to please, harder working and willing to work long hours.



I

They're highly ambitious & motivated to succeed. Skilled in the trade they profess to. Pleasant to work with. Punctual and well mannered. Willing to learn and improve their skills.



J

They want to work. They don't cost as much. They do not have the prejudices and self-righteous expectations that many British staff have. They want to get on in this country.



K

Language is an ever present challenge. Arranging accommodation is also a bind. Other than the above no problems, generally speaking.



L

They tend to be nomads and only stay for short periods and have no firm base. This is in part due to accommodation shortages and separation from family/friends. Language skills are lower down the scale.



M

They have poor customer service skills so aren't great for customer facing roles.



N

They're a danger in the workplace as they have little understanding of health and safety best practice.



O

They come here, work hard and then send money back instead of putting it back into the UK economy, which is annoying.



P

The economy could not continue at present level, let alone expand, without them. However, we need to distinguish between the majority who want to, and will work and those who come for the benefits.



Annex B: Invitation Letter to Potential Respondents

working with the Learning and Skills Council



Leading learning and skills

Date/Time of Appointment:

You will be meeting:

[Date]

Dear,

Research for the Learning and Skills Council

You have been invited to participate in some valuable research with us for one of our clients; thank you for agreeing to take part.

Directions Research & Marketing is an entirely independent market and social research company; we are not part of any government or legal organisations. Our work is extremely broad; we conduct numerous research studies for a wide variety of clients; from looking at advertising campaigns, to identifying new product opportunities through to understanding customer needs for Valentine's Day gifting.

This research is entirely confidential, and its purpose is not to 'check up on' employers or individuals. Its main aim is to explore the role and integration in the workplace of workers born and raised outside the UK and who have been in this country for under 3 years. Your contribution will help shape government policy in respect of this. Your participation is strictly on an anonymous and confidential basis – we will not attribute any comments you make to you individually or to your company in the findings we report to our client.

Our client for this project is the Learning and Skills Council (LSC – www.lsc.gov.uk). The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. Its single goal is to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to make sure we have a workforce that is of world-class standards. It is responsible for planning and funding

high-quality vocational education and training for everyone. Its vision is that by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a fiercely competitive workforce.

The research interview you attend will be an informal discussion where you will meet one of our researchers who will discuss your views/experiences and those of your company. We will not be asking to look at any company records or files, etc, but are simply interested in hearing of your views and experiences (whether positive or negative) of employing workers who have come from outside the UK.

All of the work we carry out for clients adheres to the Market Research Society's strict code of conduct, on which you can find more information on its website at www.mrs.org.uk. We are also members of the Association of Qualitative Research (www.aqr.org.uk).

Please feel free to visit our website at www.directions.uk.com/lsc, where you will be able to find out more information about our company and verify that this research is genuine. If you do have any questions about the research at all, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sally".

Sally Nicholson

Director

E lsc@directions.uk.com

Annex C: Negative Press Slide from Presentation

indeed, press coverage tends to be negative even alarmist

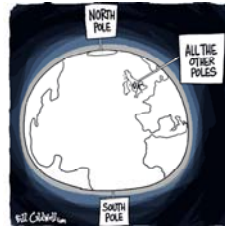
SOCIETAL VIEW

Biggest migrant influx in Britain's history

(The Telegraph 23/08/06)

Four out of five migrants 'take more from the economy than they put back'

(The Daily Mail 29/08/06)



Flood of migrants causing UK wages to plummet

(The Daily Mail 15/08/06)

Migrant flood changing UK

(The Sun 30/08/06)

Time to stop it?

(The Mirror 23/08/06)



£64000 a year to detain a migrant

(The Daily Mail 02/10/06)

Britons want migrant worker curbs, says survey

(Press Association 04/09/06)

Soaring cost of translating for foreign crooks – Police blame a surge in migrant workers and asylum seekers

(The People 24/09/06)



Annex D: Migrant Workers: Depth Interview Guide

DL2084

August 2006

This document serves as a guide only to the flow of discussion during the research session. Quality is key in all Directions research, so moderators may digress from or re-order sections in this guide to ensure value and depth of insight to meet the research's objectives. All timings are approximate and some techniques may not be used if moderator does not feel they are appropriate.

N.B. Throughout the discussion, the moderator will allow respondents to answer less directly and deflect questions by projecting their answer (i.e. give 'the company's' opinion or the view of 'companies in general') so as to avoid any unwillingness/discomfort in responding honestly and openly. Respondents will also be asked to draw on specific case studies throughout to illustrate their answers with examples. Where necessary, we will probe on the differences between types of migrant worker (e.g. length of residency, country of origin, etc) and probe on differences between migrant and non-migrant workers.

If the respondent has never employed migrant workers, some questions within this guide will be re-phrased and posed on a hypothetical basis.

Introductions

10 mins

Objective: to reassure of the purpose/confidentiality of the research and also to warm up respondents ensuring they are comfortable to talk openly and honestly. Additionally to allow moderator to gain a brief (as covered in post-task, naturally elicited throughout) overview of the migrant employees in the company to provide context to comments through rest of discussion.

Moderator / Directions introductions:

Impartiality – Directions is an independent research company working on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). As a company, we are independent of government authorities but the results from our research will be fed back to government, neutrally and completely anonymously. We conduct numerous research studies on anything from retail space to advertising to product testing. Our role is to be neutral on the issues discussed and we are therefore interested in your honest views.

Purpose of Research – We are looking to understand what a broad range of employers perceives as the benefits and drawbacks of employing workers from outside the UK. The ultimate aim of our research is to understand issues around the skills these workers can and can't provide so that the Learning and Skills Council can meet the needs of these employees and their employers in the future. Its purpose is not to 'check up on' employers or individuals.

Confidentiality – The purpose of this research is NOT to uncover bad practice by employers or to make moral judgements of anyone's opinions towards the issue of migrant employment. As such, we will not be reporting any company or individual to any government authority on the basis of any comments made; nor will any of the comments be individually attributable – instead they will be reported back to the LSC alongside those of all of the other similar companies we're talking to.

Honesty – We are interested in your personal views **and** those of your company; the purpose of this research is not for us to pass judgement on those opinions.

Audio Recording – Inform of audio recording of interview (only if respondent comfortable with this).

Warm Up:

Tell me a little bit about your company ...

- What does it do?
- How long has it been going?
- What do you do here?
- Have you been here long?

As you know, we're interested in talking to you about your company's workforce and what training needs you may have....

Defining the subject (spontaneous):

Do you have any members of your workforce who were born and brought up in a country outside the UK?

Have any of them been in the UK for under 3 years?

What term would you use to refer to these workers as a collective? (moderator to use the respondent in question's term in place of 'migrant workers' throughout the interview).

What comes to mind when you think of these workers? (brief word associations)

(At this point the moderator should clarify the particular types of migrant workers the research is to focus on (i.e. either EU citizens (EU 15 & Accession 10) or Non-EU refugees.)

Company Context:

Do you have many migrant workers?

Are they a big part of the overall workforce?

Are they all quite similar or very different? (probe: differences to gain an overview understanding, e.g. sex, country of origin, type of migrant, type of contract, areas of business, job roles, type of work, level of responsibility/seniority etc.)

Attitudes & Perceptions

10 mins

Objective: to elicit underlying attitudes & perceptions to employment of migrants

What do you think of your company's use and balance of migrant workers? Good thing/bad thing? Too many? Not enough?

Company Perspective:

What do you think **the company's** attitude towards employing migrant workers is?

What is **their view** on the issue of immigration in general? (What are the benefits/concerns?) (Moderator to stress that this is to be a brief view as we are not specifically interested in this broader issue.)

What do you think the perspective of different people in the business would be? (e.g. HR, Line Managers, Managing Director, etc).

What is the industry's perspective, and how does this differ if at all?

Rationale:

Why do you think your company employs/does not employ migrant workers? (probe: advantages and disadvantages.)

Why do companies in general employ migrant workers?

Extremes:

What would be the consequences of employing more or fewer?

What if your company had no migrant workers?

What if your company had 90% migrant workers?

Personal Perspective:

What is your **personal** view on the employment of migrant workers?

What is your **personal** view on the issue of immigration in general? (What are the benefits/concerns?) (Moderator to stress that this is to be a brief view as we are not specifically interested in this broader issue.)

What do other people in the business/your friends think?

How do you think your company's attitudes/perspectives towards migrant workers differ from those of other companies? (smaller/larger, different industries, different areas of the country).

'Other people said': (to be used if necessary to prompt debate and encourage respondent to be forthcoming with views).

Show or read out 'other people said' opinion cards to prompt brief debate and gauge reactions (probe: right vs wrong).

Media Perspective:

What do you hear from the media on the issue of migrant workers? (Do you agree/disagree with this?)

Recruitment

10 mins

Objective: to understand how & why companies employ migrants and any barriers to employment.

Start by asking about company's perspective...

UK Labour Market:

Are there any particular roles within your company that are hard to fill with British nationals? (probe: which, why?)

Are there any skills gaps in the UK labour market that migrant workers make up for?

What do you think of the potential pool of migrant workers the country currently has? (probe: how has this changed over the years? (e.g. since accession nations joined the EU).

Do migrants have the right skills to fit into the UK labour market?

Typical Recruitment Scenario:

Why would your company be considering employing a migrant worker?

Are there any barriers or concerns to employing migrant workers? (Check language barriers.)

What do businesses gain from employing migrant workers? (i.e. what is the business benefit?)

Where do you seek migrant workers from? or How do they apply to your company? (e.g. direct applications, employment agencies, advertising in specific media, etc.) – how is this different from non-migrant employees?

Are there any employment roles where you tend to receive more applications or conduct more interviews with migrants?

What do you look for as an employer when you receive a migrant worker's CV or application? (probe: is there a checklist of requirements in addition to those for a non-migrant?)

Are there any particular types of migrant workers that you would not consider employing? (probe: Why? Is language a barrier?)

What are you looking for as an employer when you interview a migrant worker? (probe: further checklist.)

In general, do you feel that the migrant workers in your company are at a level that matches their skills? (probe: is there anything holding them back?)

How do you feel about your company employing migrants who are over- or under skilled for their position?

What things would an employer want/need to know about employing a migrant worker before doing so? (probe: legal issues, skill set, etc.)

Legal Issues:

What are the legal requirements of employing migrant workers? Would you have any concerns about the legality of employing migrant workers?

Qualifications:

How about qualifications? (probe: attitudes towards and understanding of foreign qualifications.)

Employee Needs:

Why do you think migrant employees come here to work?

What do migrant employees need/demand from the company as an employer (and vs non-migrant workers)?

Do they know their rights?

How do migrant workers' expectations change over time? (i.e. once they've been assimilated into the role/workplace for a period of time).

Probe around personal perspective on these issues (using 'other people have said' style questioning if necessary/valuable).

- contribution to the country
- impact on the UK

In the Workplace**10 mins**

Objective: to understand company's individual use of migrant workers and to establish specific experiences of working with/integrating migrant employees

The Facts:

(All below to be as an estimate if unknown)

How many migrant workers does your company employ?

Moderator to probe on make-up of migrant workers amongst workforce:

- percentage of the total workforce
- balance of males vs females
- type of migrant (i.e. EU citizens, Non-EU refugees)
- countries/regions of origin
- contractual terms of employment (i.e. full-/part time, permanent/temporary/seasonal)
- areas of the business operating in

- o roles within (probe: responsibility, type of work, seniority, etc.)

Start by asking about company's perspective...

Role in the Workplace:

Tell me about how migrant workers are within the working environment (e.g. their behaviour, attitude, contribution, etc.) (probe: attitude to work / attitude to learning / desire for progression, training, development / integration in the workforce / relationship with colleagues vs UK nationals / cultural differences, etc.)

Do you think their behaviour/attitude/contribution, etc. differs based on their status as a migrant worker? (i.e. their length of residency in UK, country of origin, English competency, method of entry (e.g. EU, asylum).

Colleague Relations:

What effect do migrant workers have on the workplace as whole (if at all)? (probe: inter-relation with non-migrant workers, company culture, etc.)

Do you feel that migrant workers face any racism or any other form of prejudice/harassment in the workplace? (probe: affect on access to training, career progression opportunities, etc.)

Probe around personal perspective on these issues (using 'other people have said' style questioning if necessary/valuable).

Training & Development

15 mins

Objective: to understand attitudes to investing in migrant employees & their perceived training needs.

Start by asking about company's perspective

Skill Needs:

In your experience, what are the skill short-falls for migrant workers? In which areas do they need training in general? (e.g. language competencies, skills related to job, etc.)

Are there any particular areas that the company is less willing to invest in?

Training Offer:

What sort of training/development do you generally offer migrant employees (probe: training for new starters, inductions, on-going developmental training, training for particular skills, internal, external, qualification gained, level of training, who funds it, formal vs ad-hoc, when, where, etc.)

Does this differ for non-migrant employees? How?

Does the company have Investors in People status or is aiming towards it?

(If appropriate) What have been the benefits for your company of offering training to migrant workers?

Willingness:

Is the company willing to invest money in training for migrant workers? (vs what realistically company does and will do; specifically what type of training the organisation is willing to devote time/money to (e.g. practical job skills, language development, etc.)

How much does this 'willingness' differ if the migrant worker is only to be in the role or the UK short term?

What factors can make an employer reluctant vs more willing to train migrants?

Are there any barriers to offering migrant employees training for your company?

Are there any areas of training that you feel are beyond the responsibility of the company? (probe: If so, what? Who is responsible?)

Probe around personal perspective on these issues (using 'other people have said' style questioning if necessary/valuable).

Learning from Experience

5 mins

Objective: to draw conclusions from interview and uncover priority issues for employers of migrants

What 3 key learnings have you made from your experience of employing migrants? (probe: for both positives and negatives)

What one key message would you pass on to other employers about the employment of migrant workers?

Would you recommend employing migrant workers to other employers? Why/why not?

If you were to communicate the benefits of employing migrant workers to other employers, what do you think the key messages would be?

Moderator reminders...

Post-task:

Give respondent post-task, and check willing and able to complete and return to Directions.

Follow-up Interviews:

Is there anyone else in the company who has a role in either the employment or training/development of workers who it may be useful to speak to? Capture name and contact details.

Thank and close.

Annex E: Bibliography

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