

Public services

National report

January 2007

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# Crossing borders

Responding to the local challenges of migrant workers

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Summary	2
1 Introduction	4
2 Understanding the changes	6
3 Addressing local issues	19
4 Improving local responses	34
Recommendations	38
Appendix 1: Study methodology and advisory group members	43
References	45

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# Summary

## Migration for work is increasing rapidly, bringing economic benefits...

- Foreign nationals made up 3.5 per cent of the workforce in 1996, but 6 per cent in 2006.
- Most migrant workers are young and few bring dependants, so their need for public services is low.
- The accession of ten new states to the European Union in 2004 greatly increased both the scale and pace of change.
- In 2005/06, 662,000 new national insurance numbers were issued to foreign nationals, almost twice as many as in 2002/03.
- Migration for work has been welcomed by the government, the Confederation of British Industry and the Trades Union Congress, as well as by local employers.

## ...and affecting different parts of the country very differently.

- Recent changes mean that areas with a history of immigration have seen an increase in the number of foreign workers.
- Migration for work has also made ethnic diversity a significant issue in other areas for the first time.
- The impact varies greatly across the country, depending on patterns of employment, housing and transport.
- The capacity of local public bodies to respond is not always linked to the scale or pace of local change; previous experience of diversity and community development is also important.

## Local authorities need to take a leading role in coordinating local responses...

- A wide range of issues can emerge, linked to employment, housing, communications, entitlements, education, law enforcement and local nuisance.
- Many public bodies are involved in responding, and they need to work jointly.
- They also need to work alongside those who often have the best links to migrant workers: voluntary and faith organisations, and employers and landlords.

### ...and developing locally tailored responses to locally specific issues.

- Understanding how local populations are changing by analysing national and local sources of data and intelligence.
- Balancing enforcement of regulations with encouragement for employers and landlords to improve standards.
- Addressing language, advice and information issues.
- Minimising local tensions by dispelling myths, responding swiftly to emerging problems and maintaining contingency plans.
- Modifying services to meet the diverse needs of a changing population.

### The government and regional bodies could help local areas more effectively...

- Coordinating activity across government departments to support local areas in respect of data and information, and to prepare for future increases in migration.
- Analysing trends and demand for skills and training regionally, and coordinating regional information, advice and guidance.
- Developing a regional approach to address the issues raised by migrant workers in housing, planning and economic development strategies, and teaching English to adults.

**...and the Audit Commission will be working with Communities and Local Government and the Improvement and Development Agency in 2007 to help local authorities share good practice.**

# 1

## Introduction

- 1 Migration for work is not new, but the issue has gained prominence recently because of a rapid increase in the number of migrant workers coming to Britain. Overall, international migration is now the main driver of population change in the UK. In 2005, the Office for National Statistics estimated a net inflow of 185,000 (**Ref. 1**).
- 2 The enlargement of the European Union (EU) in 2004 led to a greater than anticipated increase in the number of migrant workers. This came on top of a steady rise in the number and the diversity of foreign nationals coming to the UK to work, including many foreign students. While future numbers are inherently hard to predict, economic and demographic trends make it likely that a high level of migration for work and for study will continue for the foreseeable future.
- 3 The focus has recently been on the national impact of the increased numbers of migrant workers, with both the government and employers emphasising net benefits to the economy. Some local areas have been particularly affected by recent changes. In areas with little history of population change and diversity, even a relatively small number of migrant workers can bring new challenges, and are more noticeable to existing local populations. The make up of the population, the nature and location of the jobs migrant workers fill, the speed of turnover and the housing they occupy all affect local impact.
- 4 Different areas of the country face a different combination of circumstances, and need to develop their own local responses. Currently those vary and can be led by voluntary associations, faith groups and the police as well as local authorities. Local authorities are well placed to coordinate responses, and there is an opportunity for them to demonstrate the value of their community leadership and place-shaping roles.
- 5 This report uses the term ‘migrant worker’ to cover foreign nationals who come to work in Britain, including those who may only stay for a few months. It focuses on workers in lower paid employment. Those in better paid jobs are more likely to be assisted by their employers, and to have the English language skills and financial resources that make it easier to move to a different country.

- 6 The speed and scale of change since May 2004 means that workers from the new EU states dominate recent arrivals in many areas, so the report focuses primarily on this group. However, migrant workers from other countries remain important and the diversity of the local workforce is a significant factor in planning local responses.
- 7 This report is intended to help local authorities and their partners manage local changes, by understanding better what is going on locally and developing appropriate strategies and services. It will be most useful for organisations in areas with limited recent experience of migrant workers. The report also suggests how national and regional responses could be better targeted to support local change.
- 8 Migration is an issue that cuts across many policy and service areas. Many of the issues and solutions discussed in this report will not be new to local authorities and other bodies that have long experience of community engagement and policies to support cohesion, diversity and social inclusion. Areas with recent experience of receiving asylum seekers and refugees under dispersal arrangements have developed arrangements to meet the needs of new arrivals. Such experience is helpful for those developing local responses to migration for work. The Commission is working with Communities and Local Government and the Improvement and Development Agency in 2007 to support shared learning between authorities.

# 2

## Understanding the changes

### The rapid increase in migration for work

- 9 In 2005/06, 662,000 foreign nationals gained a national insurance number in the UK for the first time, almost twice as many as in 2002/03 (**Figure 1**). The speed of change has been rapid: in 1996 foreign nationals made up 3.5 per cent of the workforce, but by 2006 they were 6 per cent. Many work part time while studying; foreign nationals comprise 10 per cent of the workforce aged under 35 (**Ref. 2**).

**Figure 1**

#### Applications for national insurance numbers by foreign nationals

An increasing number of migrant workers come from Europe, especially from the countries that joined the EU in 2004.

2002/03 (000s)		2003/04 (000s)		2004/05 (000s)		2005/06 (000s)	
India	25.0	India	31.3	Poland	62.6	Poland	171.4
Australia	18.9	South Africa	18.4	India	32.7	India	46.0
S. Africa	18.6	Australia	17.1	Pakistan	20.3	Lithuania	30.5
Pakistan	16.8	Pakistan	16.8	S. Africa	19.3	Slovakia	26.4
France	13.8	Portugal	14.0	Australia	16.6	S. Africa	24.0
Philippines	11.8	China	13.3	Lithuania	15.6	Australia	23.8
Spain	11.7	France	13.1	China	12.6	Pakistan	22.3
Zimbabwe	10.3	Spain	11.9	France	13.3	France	17.2
Iraq	10.1	Poland	11.2	Portugal	12.2	Latvia	14.2
Portugal	9.8	Philippines	10.7	Slovakia	10.5	Germany	13.3
Other	189.1	Other	213.6	Other	236.6	Other	273.3

Commonwealth      Old EU states      New EU states

**Source:** Department for Work and Pensions National Insurance Recording System<sup>1</sup>

- 1 New national insurance numbers are not always applied for in the first year of arrival, and do not always mean that the applicant takes up employment, but they give a good indication of the speed and scale of change. The figures do not show turnover, as there is no equivalent data on foreign nationals who stop using a number in any one year. Net migration to the UK in 2005 is estimated at 185,000. 565,000 entered the country; 380,000 left, of whom only 192,000 were UK citizens (**Ref. 1**).



- 10 While many workers still come from countries with longstanding links to the UK, particularly the Commonwealth, ex-Commonwealth and the Philippines, an increasing number come from Europe, especially from countries that joined the EU in 2004.

## National perspectives

- 11 The speed, scale and geographical spread of migration since 2004 exceeded expectations based on previous EU enlargement (**Ref. 3**). The arrival of migrant workers has been welcomed by the government, the Confederation of British Industry and the Trades Union Congress (**Refs. 4 and 5**). In all national and local surveys, employers are very positive about their economic contribution (**Refs. 6, 7, 8 and 9**). Recent macroeconomic studies consider that migrant workers are net contributors to the economy (**Refs. 10 and 11**) and have helped to keep wage inflation down in areas of skill shortage. One recent report (**Ref. 12**) credits a third of recent economic growth to accession state migration.
- 12 It is not just the private sector that has benefited. Some migrant workers directly support local public services by meeting demands for both skilled and less skilled positions that cannot currently be met in other ways, for example the recent expansion in NHS dentists and in social care. Labour Force Survey analysis shows an increase in care jobs over the past three years; migrant workers, including many from Africa, have filled half of these jobs. Between May 2004 and May 2006, at least 12,700 individuals from the new member states took jobs in social care.
- 13 The impact of migrant workers varies across the country. Before 2004 London, the South East and a few other urban centres attracted most newcomers, and still do. But citizens of the new member states are also moving to areas without recent experience of inward migration, some with little ethnic diversity. The rate of turnover has also increased, bringing different challenges.

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## Local perspectives

- 14 National and local agencies were unprepared for migration on such a scale. Areas with limited experience of diversity and change may have had limited arrangements for interpretation, and community organisations with little experience of providing relevant support. Local people may be more conscious of, and concerned about, rapid change where it is more obvious because it is new. Some areas with migration experience have faced unexpectedly fast change and new issues linked to the particular set of entitlements and arrangements that apply to accession state nationals.
- 15 During the research for this report many different issues were raised by local authorities, police forces, other local agencies, voluntary and faith organisations and migrant workers themselves. Local research and surveys raise similar issues (**Refs. 8, 9, 13 and 14**). The broad issues are similar across authorities, but their relative local importance varies:
- The lack of accurate numbers makes it harder for agencies to predict and plan for change. It can make it difficult to explain change to existing residents and to refute local rumours. It makes it harder to develop business cases for extra funding or redeployment of existing resources, which can delay operational and strategic responses.
  - While migrant workers are welcomed by employers, questions are often raised about potential competition in local labour markets, especially for job seekers with poor language and other skills.
  - Where there is a rapid expansion in the number of people needing affordable private rented accommodation and an increase in tenant turnover, there can be a material impact on local housing markets and local neighbourhoods. There are widespread concerns about housing conditions for some migrant workers.
  - The combination of open borders and a limited entitlement to benefits means that migrants who fail to find jobs, or who lose their jobs unexpectedly, can become homeless and destitute. The greatest impact has been felt in central London, where there has been an associated increase in rough sleeping.
  - Contacting and communicating with migrant workers can be particularly difficult where there is a high turnover of workers and where they may be wary of public agencies such as the police.
  - Some migrant workers speak little or no English. Local arrangements for teaching English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) rarely meet local demand. Interpretation and translation arrangements are not always adequate.

- There is widespread confusion about entitlements both among migrants and those who try to help them, with a general need for better advice, information and guidance.
- There can be misunderstandings about laws, regulations and community expectations, partly because of assumptions about service arrangements based on experiences in other countries. Road traffic officers have particular concerns. Minor misunderstandings, for example about refuse collection, can cause preventable problems and bring risks to community cohesion.
- Most migrant workers are young and have come without families, so they make few demands on the more expensive public services of health, education and social care. There can be localised pressure if families do arrive. Equally there can be hidden issues that are difficult to identify and deal with, such as children not on any school roll.

## Local area leadership: the role of local authorities

- 16** Local authorities cannot control migration, but they have an important community leadership role in managing the consequences of change for the benefit of the whole community so that:
- new arrivals can integrate with local communities;
  - employers, recruitment and employment agencies and landlords comply with minimum legal standards;
  - local difficulties and tensions are minimised; and
  - the diverse needs of new residents are met, if necessary by modifying services.
- 17** Issues often cross service and geographic boundaries, so solutions require effective cooperation between multiple public, private, faith and voluntary agencies which local authorities are well placed to coordinate. All these partners, as well as local police, fire services, the NHS and local branches of national services such as Jobcentre Plus, have important contributions to make.
- 18** There can be significant local challenges, but there is much that local authorities and other public bodies can do. In particular, they can:
- establish effective links to local employers, employment agencies and landlords, to reduce the need for formal regulatory action, gain information and communicate more easily with migrant workers;

- strengthen relations with local voluntary and faith organisations; these are often a support agency of choice for migrant workers, and so an effective way of making contact;
- engage with migrant workers, to identify their concerns and ensure that available information and advice meet their needs and help them be self-sufficient;
- monitor issues that may cause community tensions, solving minor problems quickly and taking more robust action where necessary; and
- watch for changes that could generate demands for health, social care and education services, and plan appropriate action.

**19** Local agencies need to develop and maintain a picture of changes in their local population of migrant workers and in relevant local issues, by analysing national data alongside all the different local intelligence they have. The limitations of national data mean that this is not easy.

## Understanding local populations

- 20** The availability of jobs is the main driver of change, but similar jobs can bring varying patterns of settlement and different pressures on local areas. For example, in Cornwall and Herefordshire, agricultural demand is still mainly seasonal. There is little cheap housing available in the towns and villages and travel can be slow, so many migrant workers live on local, seasonal caravan sites. However, in the Fenland area, modern techniques have extended the growing season, there is rented housing available in Peterborough and other towns, and straight roads mean workers can more easily be bussed to jobs throughout the area. The different housing patterns affect neighbourhoods very differently. For example, caravan sites can be isolated, while migrant workers living in rented housing have more contact with neighbours.
- 21** Migrant workers might initially arrive in large numbers in a neighbourhood because of the actions of one local employment agency, employer or large landlord. Once established, communities tend to attract other people of the same nationality. Local history and local connections can make one area more of a magnet for a new community than another apparently similar one. West London has had a large Polish community since the 1940s, so many new Polish arrivals have settled there since 2004.

- 22 National data show that migrant workers are mainly young (a majority are aged under 29) and concentrated in jobs at the higher and lower ends of the wage scale. Eighty per cent of registered accession state workers are at the lower end and in 2005/06 earned between £4.50 and £6.00 an hour **(Ref. 15)**.<sup>1</sup> Many of their jobs are in agriculture, food processing, manufacturing, cleaning and hospitality, and some businesses in these sectors depend heavily on migrant workers for their success **(Ref. 16)**. Other major areas of employment include retail, construction, and health and social care.
- 23 Migrant workers often have qualifications and skills beyond those needed for the jobs they are doing. For example, a study of migrant workers in Breckland, Norfolk **(Ref. 17)** found that around 20 per cent had a university level qualification, although they were mainly employed in low skilled work. This skill mismatch can be due to language barriers and to workers' willingness to take any available jobs. It can also be because employers do not recognise foreign qualifications. Many migrants would like to find jobs where they could use their skills more fully. Many employers also want to increase their workers' skills. Understanding how and where overseas qualifications meet UK requirements and getting them recognised, or following conversion courses, can be difficult.
- 24 Migrant workers are often prepared to travel further for work than other low paid workers. For example, Kingston upon Hull has attracted many newcomers from the accession countries, not only because of its affordable housing and available jobs, but also its good transport links to other centres of employment **(Figure 3)**.

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<sup>1</sup> The minimum wage at that point was £4.25 for 18-21 year olds and £5.05 for older workers.

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## Data sources for local use

- 25 Migrant workers are often transient; knowing how many there are in a local area at a particular time, and predicting future change, is inherently difficult. Accurate and detailed data on all migration is limited (**Refs. 18 and 19**). The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has plans to address current weaknesses through an Improving Migration and Population Statistics project (**Ref. 20**). If agreed, the planned improvements will take between one and five years to implement. Although some changes will be made to the local population estimates in 2007, detailed local data on the number and characteristics of migrant workers will not become available quickly from national sources.
- 26 Two national data sources give an indication of the speed and scale of change in migration for work, at national and local authority levels. It is therefore possible to make some comparison between areas and identify some trends. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) records national insurance numbers given to all foreign citizens, while the Home Office Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) provides more detail for new arrivals from eight of the 2004 accession states. In addition, pupil census data collected at school level for the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) show the ethnicity of children and the number who speak a language other than English at home. This can be used as a proxy for family arrivals.
- 27 All these sources have weaknesses. The DWP and WRS figures do not record when any individual moves around the country or leaves it, so arrival figures cannot be treated as cumulative, even within one year. Pupil census figures only cover those families with children of school age, and do not always specify home language.
- 28 National insurance records provide some indication of the comparative speed and scale of local change (**Figures 2 and 4**). Rapid change can be as difficult to manage as volume, especially when an area has not had previous experience of similar population changes. The shaded area in Figure 4 shows those 62 authorities where both the relative speed and the scale of recent change are above the national average. The speed of change has been above average in a further 22.



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- 29 The speed and scale of change is high in many London boroughs, centres near to London such as Luton, Reading and Slough, and a few other urban centres including Manchester, Southampton and Leicester. These authorities all have experience of migration and diversity. There has also been rapid change for a group of rural districts in East Anglia, Lincolnshire, and other horticultural and food processing areas, and a group of districts around manufacturing towns including Crewe, Northampton and Corby. Most of these had relatively small black and minority ethnic (BME) populations at the time of the last census and limited experience of rapid population change.
- 30 National data are not a good enough base for planning local policy responses. Current local population projections and diversity data do not fully reflect the recent increases in migration for work. There is little evidence on who stays where or for how long, and limited information on the intentions of migrant workers, especially those from the accession states.
- 31 Since national data are poor, local partners need to research their own new arrivals if they are to respond appropriately, but this is not straightforward. Local administrative records are poor at tracking transient populations (**Ref. 21**). Some migrant workers will not appear on any local databases (**Ref. 22**). They do not all register with GPs or go on electoral registers, even if entitled to do so. Only those using education services will definitely be recorded. Schools record new arrivals and colleges should have information on their students and on waiting lists for English courses.
- 32 To understand what is happening locally, agencies need to use intelligence from a variety of local sources:
- The most up-to-date local intelligence is often that held by major employers, employment and recruitment agencies, and private landlords with employer or agency links. Relationships between these groups and local authorities can be weak, and developing them requires persistence. It can be particularly difficult where migrant workers live a distance away from where they work. Some local authorities have engaged with local employment agencies, and a number have successfully surveyed employers.
  - Police forces are usually the first local services to notice and respond to change. They will have records of the use of interpreters, although these may not be as helpful as they might, since the systems have generally been created to generate invoices rather than management information. Police forces are using interpreters more frequently, in part for migrant workers (**Figure 5**). Health and local authority interpretation records are less informative, because migrant workers use their services less and because they often use informal and unrecorded interpreters, including families and friends.

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- Other front line staff and local councillors who deal with the general public, rather than with specific service recipients, also pick up early signs of change. Environmental health, planning and neighbourhood staff may receive complaints about unlicensed caravan sites or problems linked to private renting such as noise, refuse removal or parking. Librarians often notice increased use of their internet terminals.
- Voluntary and faith organisations can have better information than public services. Many individual migrant workers contact local churches, mosques or temples soon after they arrive, both for faith reasons and because religious centres are often important for social support and networking at home. Charities that work with the

poorest people, such as the Salvation Army or night and day shelters for the homeless, can identify emerging problems. Existing relevant community groups may be contacted by new arrivals. For example, although there have sometimes been tensions between existing long-term settlers and newcomers, the 68 existing Polish churches in England and Wales and associated communities have been a source of support for new arrivals, and may have information about changing local needs and concerns. Community advice services find that they quickly start to get cases from migrant workers, which can indicate emerging local issues.

- 33 Historically, some migrant workers have settled, started families or brought over dependants. In these circumstances, their need for local public services will change, as it has for Portuguese families now settled in areas including East Anglia, Somerset and Cornwall. However, there is not yet enough evidence to predict settlement patterns for citizens from the accession states. The increase in numbers does not necessarily mean that there will be an equivalent increase in longer-term settlement. The Labour Force Survey shows that length of stay among migrant workers is decreasing, while research on the intentions of migrant workers from the new European member states shows that there is a high level of uncertainty about how long individuals intend to stay (**Ref. 23**). Migrant workers from outside Europe (**Figure 1**) may be more likely to stay for longer. The cost of travel to the UK is greater, making short-term migration for low paid work less viable.
- 34 Authorities can best monitor family settlement through local registrations of births, health visitor and school records, and, over time, GP records and applications for social housing.
- 35 Neither national nor local data sources provide a comprehensive picture of the movement of migrant workers. Despite this, it is possible to develop a reasonable local picture (**Refs. 13, 17, 24 and 25**) and pick up emerging issues quickly by combining them. This requires inter-agency collaboration, and may require links to be made across traditional geographic and service boundaries.

# 3

## Addressing local issues

- 36 Collaboration between agencies can take a number of forms. At its most basic, this involves pooling information and intelligence on migrant workers, but it should include joint action to engage constructively with newcomers, employers and landlords.
- 37 Local bodies should also work together to identify areas of joint concern and target enforcement activity at premises or organisations where they believe that migrant workers may be at particular risk.

### Labour markets

- 38 Migrant workers are attracted by the availability of employment. Responsibility for regulating employment, including health and safety and assisting the unemployed, primarily rests with national agencies, but local authorities have a general interest in the economic development of their areas as well as specific responsibilities in respect of trading standards and environmental health.
- 39 None of the areas visited as part of this study could quantify the impact of migrant workers on their local labour markets. Local employers generally welcome migrant workers, saying that they often take jobs that have been difficult to fill. It is also possible to point to new enterprises started by migrant workers, including shops and cafes catering for the new communities.
- 40 There are often concerns that new arrivals compete with others at the bottom end of the labour market, especially those with poor English and low skills. Once migrant workers acquire better English they can compete for more skilled employment because of their higher existing skill levels.
- 41 Local partners involved in regeneration, economic development and skills training need to understand whether migrant workers affect job opportunities for other local people. If job opportunities are changing, this may mean that support offered to local people seeking employment needs to change. Local Jobcentres Plus and regional development agencies (RDAs) are well placed to take a lead in researching such issues and providing relevant information to local partners.

## Employers

- 42 Some employers and business organisations actively support their migrant workers. They can arrange good accommodation, help with bank accounts, part-fund community support workers and arrange ESOL lessons. The Home Office gives a series of case study examples on its website ([www.employingmigrantworkers.org.uk](http://www.employingmigrantworkers.org.uk)). Possible ways for employers to support foreign workers are included in a voluntary code of practice on employing migrant workers / overseas staff in Northern Island ([www.bitc.org.uk](http://www.bitc.org.uk)).
- 43 There is evidence of exploitation of some migrant workers. It cannot be quantified, but examples have been catalogued in a series of reports (**Refs. 8, 9 and 26-28**). There is evidence from criminal cases about the activities of some labour providers, including the gangmaster who employed the Chinese cockle pickers who died in the Morecombe Bay disaster. This led to the formation of the Gangmasters Licensing Authority. The Low Pay Commission, the Health and Safety Executive (**Refs. 29 and 30**) and the Home Affairs Select Committee have all raised concerns about poor employment practice during 2006 (**Ref. 31**).
- 44 Problems include agencies charging workers illegally for finding jobs, overcharging for transport, both to Britain and subsequently from home to work, illegally high rents, failure to provide contracts or pay slips, and paying below the minimum wage. Health and safety rules have apparently been breached, but investigations and possible prosecutions are hampered since accidents are often not reported. Research shows that injured employees without benefits often return to their home countries, and so are not available for interviews during investigations (**Ref. 30**).
- 45 Records kept by advice services show that employment issues are often raised by migrant workers themselves. They are rarely in a position to take effective action for fear of losing jobs and associated housing. Union membership in the sectors concerned is low. Workers most at risk of exploitation are those with limited English and those who are in the country or working illegally. Local authorities and their partners can empower workers with information and publicity about their rights, and support advice givers.
- 46 Relevant employers and employment agencies are the drivers of much local change, and therefore both potential sources of information and channels for communication. Local authorities can find it difficult to engage with them. Recruitment and employment agencies do not have to get involved, and may see few benefits in closer links with authorities. Traditional economic partners in local chambers of commerce and

Jobcentres Plus may not represent or have good links with these agencies or with the major local users of migrant labour, so authorities may need to be proactive in building relationships. Some employment agencies that have offered to engage in local issues feel that they are treated as villains by other local partners.

- 47 There are particular problems in large urban areas, where there can be a lot of small employer agencies and employers, or where the main ones are based outside the authorities in which migrant workers live. It may be better to address employer involvement in such areas sub-regionally.
- 48 Involving employers and employment agencies locally may not be easy, but success brings dividends. For example, Crewe and Nantwich Council (**Case study 2**) now has meetings twice a year with its main local employment agencies. Devon and Cornwall Constabulary plans to contribute to the induction arrangements of larger local employers. In West Lancashire and Cornwall, welcome packs are distributed through employers, which can be cost effective and timely. The migrant worker task group in Cornwall (**Case study 1**) is looking at a local responsible employer scheme that will involve kitemarking those employers who meet agreed standards. The advantage for employers will be a better public profile and reputation. Consumer and peer pressure may encourage employers to join.
- 49 Local agencies should work together to raise employment standards where necessary through enforcement as well as encouragement. The fire service inspects for fire safety and can take associated action including closing premises. Police can stop, check and take action about unsuitable vehicles. Local partners can also involve other national regulators, particularly the new Gangmasters Licensing Authority or the Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate. Some local bodies have successfully taken joint action where they believed that individual employment agencies or employers were breaking regulations.

### Public bodies as responsible employers and commissioners

- 50 Migrant workers are likely to form an increasing part of the future care workforce. While surveys and individual interviews show a general satisfaction with the quality of care staff recruited abroad, there are associated risks that need managing. These include checking claims of adequate English. In its reports on registered homes, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has noted the difficulties for some residents in communicating with care staff whose levels of English are poor. References are particularly important as the equivalent of police criminal record checks may not be readily available.

- 51 Additional induction training may be needed. For example, while qualifications and references can be checked in advance, attitudes are difficult to assess because they are more culturally based. Providers that run homes for people with learning difficulties have found this a particular issue. Different healthcare systems can have different expectations of independent decision making and leadership from nurses and care assistants.
- 52 Local coordination from social services and health authorities can encourage good practice in recruitment, induction and training to help to reduce risks and training costs in this critical area. The Improvement and Development Agency, the Department of Health and the General Social Care Council have developed a new good practice charter for recruiting social care staff from abroad ([www.sccir.org.uk](http://www.sccir.org.uk)). Public sector purchasing and commissioning power can be used to promote this code to private as well as public sector employers.

## Housing

- 53 Agencies and employers often arrange initial accommodation for migrant workers. While this often works well, there are problems with some tied accommodation. These include overcrowding, high rents and poor conditions and there is evidence that minimum standards on caravan sites and in rented accommodation are not always met. Tied housing and sub-letting both limit security of tenure, and complaints about housing or work may lead to the loss of both. Few migrant workers have access to out of work benefits or legal aid, so they cannot easily take court action. Statutory agencies are better placed to put pressure on poor landlords to improve standards. However, there is little evidence of an increase in inspection or enforcement activity to match the increase in the number of houses in multiple occupation (HMO).
- 54 The impact on neighbourhoods and wider local housing markets varies with local circumstances. For example, housing market renewal areas have a concentration of housing for which there is low demand, and local authorities have been given extra funding to address the issues this creates. Some of these areas are now finding that local demand has picked up because of migrant workers, helping to raise prices and reduce the number of empty properties. Potentially this can affect demolition and renewal plans.
- 55 In other areas, cheap private rented housing has become available because of recent increases in purpose built student accommodation or because contracts for providing accommodation for the National Asylum Seeker Support Service have come to an end. In such areas, an increase in migrant workers has less effect on the rest of the housing market.



- 56 In areas of housing shortage, such as East Anglia and London, migrant workers add to the demand for affordable rented property. Councils in East Anglia report particularly rapid growth in HMOs. For example, in 2002 Breckland District Council regularly inspected around 40 HMOs; by summer 2006 they had a database of 480. In London 10 per cent of all privately rented households are now overcrowded and this is rising rapidly; on present trends the sector will overtake the social rented sector as the most overcrowded by 2007 (**Ref. 32**). There have been examples of gross overcrowding, including the use of illegally converted attics, sheds and outbuildings. Figures on HMOs are difficult to compare nationally since the data are unreliable, though some authorities have locally comparable records.
- 57 Migrant workers with hotel based jobs often live in annexes, so their impact on the wider local housing market is more limited. In areas with a lot of seasonal agricultural work, individual caravans, caravan sites and converted farm buildings can be the only practical option for workers and employers. Poorly managed and unlicensed sites can be health or fire hazards.
- 58 Poor management and maintenance of privately rented properties can adversely affect the appearance of a neighbourhood, leading to complaints from other local residents. Concerns about the impact of privately rented housing are not new, but where the number of such properties occupied by migrant workers is increasing, problems can become more obvious and may be blamed on tenants rather than landlords.
- 59 Local agencies can mix encouragement and enforcement to raise standards in housing, as well as in employment. Local authorities have regulatory powers in housing and environmental health and can promote voluntary accreditation schemes for private landlords. Since April 2006 there have been new licensing requirements applicable to some HMOs which local authorities can apply to extend to all.
- 60 Current ways of estimating housing demand often fail to reflect the needs of migrant workers (**Ref. 33**), who are not considered in most local and regional housing and planning strategies. A strategic approach to the private rented sector is not always a high priority (**Ref. 34**) – housing inspections by the Commission of this aspect of local authorities' responsibilities typically result in lower scores than those awarded for other housing services.
- 61 Few recent migrant workers are offered social housing tenancies, since many come on special schemes, visas and permits and have no rights to it. Communities and Local

Government (CLG) figures show that only 110 accession state nationals have been offered social tenancies since 2004. However, once EU citizens gain residency rights, they become eligible for assistance under homelessness legislation. They will also be eligible to join other local tenants and residents on waiting lists, increasing demand for affordable housing.

## Destitution

- 62 Many migrant workers have limited entitlement to public funds. The few who fail to find accommodation or work, are made redundant, or become the victims of domestic violence and leave their homes, may not be entitled to housing benefit. Because hostels often depend on this, they may not be able to accept such people. Voluntary day centres and church-run night shelters can provide support since these are not as dependent on public funds, but individuals can drift into squatting, rough sleeping and street drinking. There is also a small, but growing, incidence of substance abuse (**Ref. 35**).
- 63 While destitution and rough sleeping can occur anywhere, they have been most noticeable in London. Accession state nationals now comprise up to half the recognised street drinkers in Hammersmith and Fulham and one in five of the rough sleepers in Westminster. Half the beds at the rolling night shelters run by central London churches in the winter of 2005/06 were taken up by accession state nationals.
- 64 Westminster City Council has used a government Invest to Save grant of £297,000 and a DWP secondee to help some accession state workers into employment, and to work with the police to repatriate others who lack the resources to be self-sufficient. CLG provided an extra £140,000 in homelessness grant in 2005/06 to London boroughs facing particular pressures. It is providing Westminster with an additional £100,000 through the homelessness budget for 2007/08 and is in discussions with DWP regarding future Jobcentre Plus involvement. However, rough sleeper numbers at the June 2006 count had increased compared with 2005 and numbers using available night and day shelters remain high. Responses in London will need to be coordinated across boroughs.

# Crossing borders case studies

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## Case study 1

### **Improving living conditions in Kerrier**

Kerrier District Council is a largely agricultural district in Cornwall. Employers rely increasingly on migrant workers to fill labour shortages in agriculture, food processing and hospitality. An estimated 3,000-4,000 foreign workers are now living in the area, mainly in caravans.

Early in 2005, the Council began to receive complaints from the public about unauthorised caravan sites and in March they set up a migrant worker action group (MIGWAG). This included officers from local police, fire and probation services, as well as council staff from environmental health, housing, planning, community safety, benefits and the legal team.

#### **Successful enforcement action**

The group set up a joint database of sites, properties and numbers of caravans and occupants, which was updated following visits or complaints. This was used to identify priorities for inspection and to help monitor numbers. Two warrants were obtained for an inspection of a site of particular concern, using the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA) as well as the Housing Act 1985.

Officers from environmental health, housing, the senior council management team, the fire service and the police, accompanied by Polish and Russian interpreters, arrived unannounced in the early morning. A questionnaire was distributed to all occupants, asking about how much rent and tax individuals were paying, and about health and safety conditions. Media reports highlighted the need to secure the welfare of legal workers, who support the Cornish economy. The operation led to 11 abatement notices under the EPA requiring the site owner to improve living conditions, which covered spacing between caravans, damp bedding, overcrowded conditions, lack of fire precautions and a lack of heating. A recent inspection has revealed that standards have improved to an acceptable level.

Poor employment practices were also uncovered: contracts of employment, staff handbooks and safety regulations had only been supplied in English, which most workers could not read. Polish police were given information from the questionnaires, enabling them to close down a recruitment agency in Poland that had exploited people seeking to work in the UK.

#### **Local improvements in standards**

Six more low-key joint inspections followed, and one further abatement notice was issued. Letters with guidance about standards have gone to all site owners, promising an inspection within the year. Site owners have started to raise standards in advance.

An interim policy now allows temporary permissions for caravan sites on farms as long as minimum conditions are met. A policy on these lines will be introduced in the new Local Development Framework that will replace the old local plan. The Council is also investigating the adoption of bye-laws under the Public Health Act 1936 to set minimum standards for temporary accommodation for travelling agricultural workers.

The partners in MIGWAG also belong to the Migrant Worker Task Group of the Cornwall Strategic Partnership. This is taking a wider strategic approach to migrant worker issues across Cornwall.

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## Case study 2

### **Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council: responding to change**

#### **Background and early concerns**

Many accession state workers, mainly from Poland, started coming to Crewe in 2004 to fill low-paid vacancies in packing, distribution and food processing. There are now an estimated 3,000, making them the largest local minority.

When migrant workers first arrived, the Salvation Army, the Council and local police identified concerns about exploitation and poverty. Local residents complained about perceived anti-social behaviour from newcomers living in crowded HMOs (homes in multiple occupation) such as noise, rubbish collection and early morning shifts that were disruptive for neighbours. More serious complaints had been made about students who had previously occupied the properties, but the Council was concerned about the potential for increased community tension. In September 2005, 90 children joined their parents and asked for places in local schools. Myths circulated locally, blaming this for concurrent plans for a reorganisation involving school closures.

#### **Coordinating an early response**

Senior council officers and members responded rapidly, to help workers and prevent tensions from escalating. They called an open meeting with other public agencies to share information, identify needs and separate rumours from fact. Links were established with recruitment agencies, to gather intelligence about future arrivals. Issues were identified around cohesion, translation support and access to services. Community development took lead responsibility, with issues mainstreamed as appropriate.

To establish links with the new community and provide advice and information, the Council found a Polish newcomer to help with translation and interpretation on a voluntary basis, whom they later employed part-time. This included offering schools short notice interpretation for pupils and families, and translating advice and information leaflets.

Mediation was used to resolve neighbour tensions. Community wardens spoke to new arrivals about refuse collection if complaints were made. The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership identified potential flashpoints. For example, when England played Poland at football, CCTV was installed in relevant pubs and funding was provided for interpreters in the local A&E department.

Action was taken to tackle rumours and myths as they arose. One rumour about migrants moving straight into council housing was addressed by talking directly to community groups and briefing local staff.

### **Longer-term strategy**

Council members have provided support through a cross-party working group. The Council has now set up a Polish Association with new arrivals, helped by a three-year Invest to Save grant of £316,000.

The Association aims to encourage self-help and aid integration. Work includes improving access to services, signposting information and providing a translation service. Tailored English classes are provided. Three weekly drop-in sessions are offered in the Association building, deliberately shared with other local groups. Eventually the organisation intends to apply for its own funding and work for individuals of all nationalities.

In schools, Polish volunteers help with interpretation and translation, and introduction packs have been created for new children and parents. The Council and Association hold discussion sessions on topics such as employment rights, education and childcare. Up to 50 people attend each one. The messages are then published in newsletters which are given to employers and the Citizens Advice Bureau to distribute.

The police force has had to build trust within the community. A part-time interpreter has been employed and a hate crime answer machine has been set up, to encourage more crime reporting. Concern over training for commercial heavy goods vehicle drivers prompted police to offer sessions on English driving regulations at local depots. The force has invested in 15 hand-held speech devices to improve immediate communication.

The Council and police now have links with publicans, employers and local employment agencies. These links give advance intelligence of change, and alongside a database of members of the Polish Association and information from school records, the Primary Care Trust and HM Revenue and Customs help inform estimates of numbers and profiles. Employment agency activity is also monitored.

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### Case study 3

## Lancashire County Council and Hyndburn Borough Council: responding to a crisis

### Background and context

Hyndburn in East Lancashire has a long tradition of industrial manufacturing: 30 per cent of work is in this sector. There are labour shortages in factories for lower-skilled and paid jobs. In 2001, the ethnic minority population was 8 per cent.

In January 2006, an employment agency recruited 200 Polish workers for an Accrington factory and housed them in private rented accommodation. A local Catholic priest noticed an increase in his congregation, made contact with the newcomers and advertised for interpreters to discuss concerns about rent levels. The workers had been promised 12 months' work. After 13 weeks the factory terminated contracts, leaving 200 people unemployed and threatened with homelessness, but with no eligibility for benefits. Many still owed the agency for travel to Britain. Scare stories circulated claiming that the police would evict tenants who did not leave. Some Polish workers were found sleeping rough.

### A joint response: help with employment, housing, information and self-help

The County Council brought together a multi-agency group. The local housing association, the county partnership officer, the district council, Jobcentre Plus, the Catholic church and the police were involved.

Jobcentre Plus and a local volunteer helped 70 per cent of the workers find a new job within five months. The housing association found 20 houses through private sector leasing and helped some of the workers become association tenants.

The church provided information, advice and a hall for meetings. The priest and volunteers explained employment rights and countered myths about the police force. Workers set up Parasol (Polish for umbrella), a self-help social group. This started translating information and rights advice into Polish; it now produces a fortnightly bulletin. Advice on credit unions and housing came from residents' groups in the Hyndburn Community Network. A Polish teacher at the college volunteered to hold extra classes to help meet the demand for ESOL.

### Building longer-term links with new migrants

Local police officers wanted to build up trust. A Polish relative of the police beat manager provided initial translations and acted as a contact. The police now attend Parasol meetings and regularly provide information. Safety alarms have been issued to female workers on late shifts, and a translator provided at local self-defence classes. The police intend to recruit a Polish representative for the Police and Communities Together panel, which is part of the local community cohesion partnership.

Agencies are now more aware of the issues facing new migrants, and can monitor these through meeting Parasol, now the first port of call for migrants requesting information. Lessons learned have also been dispersed across the county at district partnership officer meetings.

## Community safety and community cohesion

- 65 There is little evidence that the increased numbers of migrant workers have caused significant or systematic problems in respect of community safety or cohesion. Despite this, community perceptions about migrant workers can be inappropriately negative. They are often confused with asylum seekers and refugees, and the tone of some national and local papers can encourage hostility. While British papers worry about the number of people coming to Britain, Polish papers blame their government for allowing so many skilled youngsters to leave.
- 66 Issues can arise that cause concern in the local communities where migrants live and work. Police officers are usually the first to recognise them, because they monitor incidents and emerging tensions. In particular, they have noticed an increase in incidents linked to vehicles and, with some Eastern Europeans, to alcohol.
- 67 Road policing officers highlight the need to educate some migrant workers about road safety and vehicle regulations. Their concerns include:
- the roadworthiness of some vehicles, both those owned by migrant workers and those owned by some employers for transporting workers;
  - a lack of seat belts and child seats;
  - inadequate documentation and insurance, sometimes because of misunderstandings; and
  - poor driving, including driving when overtired, speeding, and drinking and driving.
- 68 Migrant workers can be victims of crime, with much reported crime internal to new communities. Overcrowded and physically insecure rented accommodation, where individuals are sharing with others they may not know, makes theft easier and increases tensions between individuals, which can in turn lead to assaults. Poor English makes some particularly vulnerable. Some of the individuals involved in the worst exploitation of new workers are also involved in criminal activity.
- 69 There is also evidence of racist views and hostility towards migrant workers in some areas (**Ref. 36**), and some migrant workers hold racist views too. Police report isolated examples of hate crimes, but there is no regular or widespread disorder.

- 70 Some migrant workers may not trust the police in their home countries and so treat British police with suspicion. Differing assumptions can include expecting the police to require bribes. Such expectations hinder crime reporting and intelligence gathering, making prevention and cohesion activities harder.
- 71 Local police, especially diversity officers, are striving to make links, understand migrant workers' needs and improve trust, often alongside more trusted groups:
- In Cornwall and Cumbria police attend some employer induction talks and work alongside union representatives.
  - Police may collaborate with local authorities and others to set up and support local migrant worker groups.
  - Some forces use ESOL classes as an opportunity to meet migrant workers and talk about issues such as personal protection and road safety.
- 72 Police-led work to educate migrant workers about life in the UK includes providing small cards with visual reminders about road safety and simple leaflets covering basic laws and regulations (**Ref. 37**). Some are promoting additional driving training for those recruited abroad as heavy goods vehicle drivers.
- 73 Cohesion cannot be taken for granted and small tensions can develop, which can fuel local resentment. These include noise and disruption when large numbers of migrant workers leave for work early in the morning, noise linked to increases in the numbers living in individual properties, street drinking, failures to understand local refuse and recycling systems, tensions over other residents' parking spaces if HMOs do not have adequate parking, and migrant workers appearing to monopolise the internet in libraries.
- 74 A number of local authorities and their partners have moved quickly to address such minor local frictions as part of wider work to promote locally cohesive communities. Concentrations of poorly managed HMOs are a particular concern, making work with landlords (including enforcement if necessary) important for cohesion as well as tenant safety. Responses include targeted information leaflets for basic issues such as refuse collection arrangements, and adding new languages to recycling bin signs. Informal and often personal initial contact, using community wardens, mediators, environmental health officers and refuse staff can deal with many concerns. Library services have provided more terminals and introduced pre-booking systems. There may be a continual need to repeat and reinforce messages because of high turnover.



- 75 Policy changes and appropriate enforcement may be necessary for some complaints, for example badly sited caravans or increases in street drinking and rough sleeping. Local dispersal orders were used in Hammersmith to control the large crowds of accession state nationals who had taken over pavements outside a particular newsagent, where cards in the shop window had offered employment and housing. Concentrations of street drinkers and rough sleeping in parks are understandably unpopular with local communities. The City of Westminster works with its local police to manage the particular problems associated with the number of people who arrive every day at Victoria coach station.
- 76 Building longer-term links between communities and addressing tensions requires understanding on both sides. Such work should be part of other activity to promote community cohesion.<sup>1</sup>
- 77 Local media can influence the tone of the debate by selecting particular stories and letters and writing editorials. Building good relationships with local editors, involving relevant media in discussions and identifying and promoting positive stories to local media can help ensure a more balanced tone.
- 78 Local agencies can also help counter myths among local residents. This needs to be handled with care; forthcoming research by the Commission for Race Equality shows that generic material can sometimes reinforce a negative attitude by reminding people about the myths it was intended to dispel. However, front line staff and volunteers need accurate information to help refute myths and rumours. In Peterborough, one of the local New Link project's schemes seeks to address rumours and tensions directly, with staff offering training and talks to a range of organisations and local tenant and resident groups.

## Improving communication

- 79 The need to improve communication and mutual understanding is widely recognised. There is confusion about entitlements; advice, information and guidance for both front line staff and for migrant workers can be limited. Local arrangements for teaching English to adults rarely match local demand. Interpretation and translation arrangements are not always adequate.

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<sup>1</sup> Detailed guidance on community cohesion has been produced by the Local Government Association in conjunction with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Home Office, Commission for Racial Equality and the Inter Faith Network for the UK ([www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk)).

## Advice and information

- 80 Migrant workers can find it hard to get trusted advice. Long working hours, poor English and no knowledge of where to go all limit access. In more rural areas, transport is an additional barrier. Many areas report considerable unmet demand, with heavy use of those advice services that are offered. It can be difficult for local public and voluntary agencies to find the right information on benefits and entitlements, and staff may feel constrained by a lack of training or readily accessible and relevant translated material. Where interpretation is needed, the time taken to advise migrant workers can be double that required for other clients.
- 81 Many areas have developed local information packs for newcomers, which can be useful if properly targeted and used to educate employers and agencies as well as individual workers. Areas that do not yet have local packs need not develop them from scratch since they can now use appropriate sections from a number of existing examples.
- 82 Websites and word of mouth can also be effective means of communication. A number of faith and community groups run talks and information sessions for migrant workers attended by service providers and others, which allow for tailoring to the audiences' concerns. These can then be written up and distributed to other groups and individuals **(Case studies 2 and 3)**.
- 83 Information to help local agencies train and support front line staff is also available, with the best often coming from voluntary groups. The National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux has its own internal information system for advisors, and a group of advice agencies has just published a handbook for working in the UK which includes information on entitlements **(Ref. 38)**.

## English

- 84 An ability to speak English is not essential for all jobs, but it is important to individuals and for self-sufficiency. It can help reduce accidents at work, reduces the danger of exploitation by making it easier to find out about rights and entitlements, and is a cornerstone of wider integration and cohesion. It can also reduce the need for public bodies to use expensive interpretation services. While many migrant workers speak adequate or good English, some do not. For many, better English is a pre-requisite for better jobs.

- 85 Spending on ESOL doubled in the five years to 2004/05, with the Learning and Skills Council spending £279 million, mostly from the core skills budget. A core curriculum has been agreed and recognised qualifications put in place.
- 86 There is no national policy that takes account of all the reasons for encouraging different groups of migrants to learn English, including refugees and those wishing to take up citizenship, and considers how the needs can be met. Equally, there is no reliable way of assessing either the demand for or the benefit of improved language skills.
- 87 Migrant workers can find it difficult to access English classes because of shift patterns and the peripatetic nature of their work. Changes to funding arrangements from mid 2007 are likely to make access harder for many of them. The government has reduced the numbers of potential students automatically eligible for free lessons; European migrant workers in their first year in the UK will not now receive a full fee reduction.
- 88 There are two reasons for this funding change. The Learning and Skills Council has a policy of encouraging greater employer contributions towards the cost of skills training. In addition, the government wishes to prioritise access to ESOL for those on low incomes who have already been in the country for more than a year and are seen as longer-term settlers, which includes refugees. English is now a requirement for citizenship.
- 89 Money and class availability are not the only issues. Local agencies and migrant workers raised other concerns during the research. These are supported by a recent report on ESOL teaching by the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE) which queries the quality and cost effectiveness of much current work (**Ref. 39**).
- The subject is traditionally taught by part-timers and rarely has a strong voice in colleges, often meaning there is no clear local strategy.
  - There is competition between groups for a limited resource.
  - Classes can be large and diverse. While this can help with cohesion between newcomers, it makes it harder to tailor approaches to learners' backgrounds and previous educational experience, although this is known to improve outcomes. The needs and backgrounds of refugee groups can be very different to the backgrounds of young migrant workers from the EU.
  - The funding and assessment system favours examination classes over entry level English, and there is often a lack of local understanding about what can be funded.

- Current courses and examinations are not always tailored to the needs of those who cannot guarantee regular attendance for several terms, because of shift work or moving around the country for short-term contracts. One result is a high drop out rate, a particular concern given the extent of waiting lists.
  - There is a shortage of experienced teachers.
  - Courses are not always linked to job needs.
- 90 There is no simple solution to these issues. However, improvements can be made at a regional and local level through better coordination and greater clarity of purpose.
- Some regional learning and skills councils (LSCs) are considering how they might take a more strategic approach to ESOL. In the South West, partners have applied for additional European funding.
  - A number of employers support staff to learn English; many already provide classrooms and give employees paid time off to attend lessons. Where provision can be coordinated across similar employers, resources can be better used.
  - Local strategic partnerships (LSP) need to involve employers and partners from adult education, colleges and community education in reviewing existing local provision, identifying gaps and creating local solutions. For example, local authorities and voluntary groups have locations for classes such as libraries and community centres that are easier for workers to access than colleges, especially in more rural areas.
  - Migrant workers who have teaching skills can be given relevant training to allow them to teach others, especially at basic levels. Some voluntary organisations and migrant worker groups already run similar sessions.

## Translation and interpretation

- 91 Inevitably there has been increased demand on public bodies for translation and interpretation services. This has put pressure on budgets and existing interpretation services.
- 92 There is a need to provide material translated into appropriate languages. While there are signs that this is improving, no national service exists and there is little evidence that national agencies are systematically providing relevant foreign language material on their websites or taking a proactive approach, for example by translating material into Romanian or Bulgarian. Local agencies make their own arrangements in the light of patchy national provision, with the risk of duplication and poor value for money.

- 93 Front line staff must be able to communicate with new arrivals. Police force initiatives to improve their ability to do so include flashcards of basic phrases in common local languages, so that police and others can point to the requisite questions or answers. A focus on limited words and visual communication is critical where there is an immediate health and safety concern. A similar flashcard approach has been used in Norfolk by the primary care trust (PCT) to support pharmacists. Cheshire Constabulary has tested preprogrammed electronic translators. It has found them particularly useful for planned operations, for example when traffic officers have stopped heavy goods vehicles found on restricted roads.
- 94 In some circumstances, interpretation services are required. The four most common ways of providing such a service are to rely on families and friends; to use a telephone-based service; to employ or train appropriately skilled staff; or to employ professionally qualified interpreters. Sometimes qualified interpreters are necessary for legal or other reasons; police forces need them when interviewing a witness or suspect. There is limited evaluation evidence for the cost effectiveness of different translation approaches. A study for the DWP in 2004 recommended, on balance, the use of the most expensive professional interpretation for helping people into work (**Ref. 40**).
- 95 Some authorities and their partners have developed and improved local interpretation services. One example of a service that has grown over recent years is INTRAN (Interpretation and translation for Norfolk). Run jointly by a group of public agencies including the local authorities, police, PCT and major housing associations, it provides a full range of translation and interpretation services. Users get a consistent service. It supports local people to qualify as interpreters so they can provide a face-to-face service which avoids high travel costs. It also trains front line staff to use translation and interpretation more cost effectively.
- 96 Some local agencies offer services at a specific time and place, to maximise the use of an available interpreter. In Kingston upon Hull, local agencies combined to offer advice sessions intended for migrant workers, sharing interpreters. Other authorities have run special open days and service fairs with interpreters available as a way of promoting information and sharing costs. In Westminster a free phone number with answerphone allows Polish speakers to report concerns to police that are then transcribed, translated and followed up as appropriate.

- 97 Employing staff or using volunteers with skills in relevant languages helps to build understanding between public agencies and migrant workers. Some authorities and voluntary groups provide training for volunteers with language skills. Cambridgeshire Constabulary has targeted new communities, including migrant workers, in recent campaigns to recruit community support officers.
- 98 Advice for Life and Keystone Trust will soon be launching a migrant worker to migrant worker telephone advice service. It will have an out of hours answerphone, a website and internet discussion facility. It is funded by the East of England Development Agency.

## Schools

- 99 Few migrant workers are accompanied by their families, at least initially. When they do bring dependants, the main impact on education services is related to language, though in a few cases the numbers involved have affected the planning of places. Language barriers and shift hours often mean face-to-face contact between schools and parents can be limited.
- 100 The need to teach English as an additional language (EAL) is an issue in an increasing number of schools and local education authorities (LEAs). Recent pupil censuses show that over 10 per cent of all maintained school pupils (and over 50 per cent in Inner London) have a first language other than English. Teachers may lack the necessary experience and expertise, schools may be unaccustomed to change or lack the capacity to manage the numbers effectively, and LEAs can find that their central support for schools is too small and inexperienced at dealing with the current numbers and rate of turnover.
- 101 Schools receive additional funding per pupil, and new arrivals without English count towards extra funding under the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG). This grant is distributed to authorities by a formula, with locally determined formulae devolving at least 85 per cent to schools. The grant was £174 million in 2006/07. Grant levels were fixed for three years on the basis of the 2004 pupil census, to give more security for funding decisions, meaning that it does not reflect the large increases in some areas since then. The DfES has allocated some additional short-term funding for in-service teacher training and materials, and will consult with authorities and schools on future arrangements during 2007.

**102** Planning schools places can become more difficult. Unexpected arrivals can put pressure on places in particular schools and introduce a need to explain admission and appeals procedures despite language barriers. The numbers now wanting Catholic education may become an issue for school reorganisation in some areas. In Slough, the Council pays for an assessment centre which takes all new non-British children for a week and produces a detailed report that helps schools. This has meant that all the local secondary schools are now prepared to offer them places. The additional cost of £90,000 has been drawn from the general council budget.

## Health services

- 103** Most migrant workers are relatively young and healthy, and move frequently. Many go to accident and emergency (A&E) departments if they need medical care, as they would in their home countries, and see little benefit in signing up with GPs.<sup>1</sup> There is no evidence that migrant workers attending A&E cause a specific problem for hospitals.
- 104** When dependants join migrant workers there are likely to be issues for health services from doctors' practices, pharmacists and acute care providers, as pregnant women, children and older people are more likely to use health services. Issues include differing expectations, for example around maternity care; the impact of particular social trends, such as higher levels of smoking by some nationalities; and a need for interpretation to ensure diagnoses are accurate and patients understand when and how to take medicines.

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<sup>1</sup> Recent focus groups held in Slough, for example, showed that none of the new Polish workers had registered or sought to register with a GP, unlike new arrivals from Somali, Indian or Pakistani communities.

# 4

## Improving local responses

- 105** The unexpected speed and scale of change since 2004 means that migrant workers will continue to be an issue in an increasing number of areas, including those with little recent history of ethnic diversity or rapid population change. Managing this for the benefit of all local residents requires local leadership, and responses that coordinate the resources of local public agencies, community and faith organisations, and employers. Local authorities are well placed to provide this.
- 106** This report has described many of the issues created by the pace and scale of change, and provided examples of how they can be addressed. Local responses can be sparked by a crisis, for example, caravan sites identified as prejudicial to health in Kerrier, or mass redundancy without notice in East Lancashire (**Case studies 1 and 3**). Elsewhere, one local agency, often the police, may identify emerging issues and initiate discussions.
- 107** There is no single pattern for successful coordination. Some areas have set up specific task groups which report to their LSPs. In East Riding the Council's cohesion group is taking the lead. In Cornwall the LSP has agreed a statement on improving conditions for migrant workers in the Local Area Agreement (LAA). Its task group developed from joint work on social inclusion. Sheffield and Bradford have added migrant worker issues to the remit of joint strategic and operational groups set up to coordinate local responses to the dispersal of asylum seekers. Some areas are now considering underpinning their joint work by developing agreed outcome targets as part of LAAs.
- 108** Wherever the impetus comes from, it is important to understand and tackle the full breadth of potential local concerns. The framework in **Figure 6**, which is based on current successful approaches, can be used to identify where improvements are needed.
- 109** There is no single pattern for successful coordination. Initially, most groups focus on improving local intelligence and providing advice, guidance and information about entitlements, responsibilities, local services and sources of help, both for migrant workers and for local agencies. Other priorities are more locally driven.



PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



**110** However, the most successful joint approaches share certain characteristics. These are illustrated in the case studies.

- There is senior-level support from officers and councillors. Authorities approach change positively, recognising the need to manage some aspects of change, but not treating migrant workers as a problem.

- Public bodies find ways of engaging with migrant worker groups and individuals, involving them in developing responses. Where there are no existing community groups that can act as centres for newcomers, community development work is seen as a priority to establish these and promote self-help.
- Relevant local employers and employment agencies are also involved.
- A planned response is agreed and coordinated between agencies.
- There is a focus on improving inadequate standards in employment and housing, using formal and informal enforcement action.
- The concerns of local people are recognised and tensions addressed as part of wider local work on community cohesion. Emerging tensions are monitored and joint contingency plans maintained in case they escalate.
- There is a focus on improving communication. This includes working with local media and addressing language issues, including translation, interpretation and English teaching.
- Migrant workers are recognised as another diverse group of local residents, needing specific new arrival strategies and adaptation to relevant services as necessary.
- While task groups and specific projects are often appropriate initially, responsibility is mainstreamed as soon as practicable through existing service delivery and partnership arrangements. In urban areas where migration for work is not new, responses to recent increases and changes are mainly managed in this way.

**111** In all areas of the country it is important for public agencies to recognise the significance of their own roles as direct employers, commissioners and purchasers. Training and informing front line staff is one way of communicating with the wider public about change. The demographic profile of local populations in general, and some groups of employees in particular, also means that migrant workers will become increasingly important as deliverers of public services.

## The regional and national dimensions

- 112** Local economies and travel to work areas are often regional or sub-regional, so some issues are best addressed at a regional level. For example, the East of England Development Agency paid for regional research into migrant workers and is taking a lead in responding to identified needs. Regional LSCs, RDAs and strategic health authorities are coterminous and should pool information, agree policies and work jointly. Regional observatories are well placed to lead on the analysis of available national and local data; the South West Observatory has already done some local work (**Ref. 41**), Government offices potentially have a role in coordinating regional work and brokering inter-authority networks, for example to develop welcome packs and other advice and information.
- 113** Nationally, at least six departments of state<sup>I</sup> have a direct interest in migrant workers. There is no lead department looking at the local impact and coordinating responses.<sup>II</sup> CLG has close links with regional government offices and local authorities, and now it has a lead role on community cohesion. It should take a national lead in reviewing the local impact of migrant workers, involving all relevant national departments and acting as a focal point for regional developments.

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<sup>I</sup> The Home Office (including the Immigration and Nationality Directorate), Communities and Local Government, the Department for Education and Skills, the Department of Health, the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

<sup>II</sup> The Home Office has a lead role over border control, but future arrangements for deciding on numbers of entries under the Managed Migration policy will not include movement within the European Union.

# Recommendations

## Joint local working, with regional and national coordination

- 114** Local authorities should work through their existing local partnerships to identify emerging local issues and coordinate responses.
- Areas facing particular change should use LAAs to set out desired outcomes.
  - Areas with a history of diversity and change should review existing arrangements to ensure that they are appropriate for the rapidly changing mix of nationalities with differing entitlements carrying out low paid work.
- 115** Regional assemblies should review whether housing, planning and economic development strategies take proper account of the recent increase in migration for work.
- 116** RDAs and regional LSCs should review the impact of migrant workers on their regional and sub-regional economies and adjust local skills training, both for migrant workers and for other local people.
- 117** Government offices should identify gaps and duplication in existing regional and sub-regional information, and in advice and guidance to migrant workers. They should broker arrangements for joint developments in future.
- 118** CLG should take a national lead in reviewing the local impact of migrant workers, involving all relevant national departments and acting as a focal point for regional concerns and developments. It should coordinate short- and longer-term national policy responses, including ensuring that:
- basic information on government websites is available in appropriate languages and takes full account of the complexity of entitlements; and
  - local population projections are improved.

## Sharing and improving data and intelligence

- 119** Local authorities and their partners should:
- pool and analyse all relevant national and local intelligence, and administrative data;
  - work with relevant employers, employment and recruitment agencies, and private landlords to improve local information on migrant workers; and

- improve knowledge about the nationality and first language of newcomers, for example by extracting management information from interpretation records, encouraging schools to record named home language for pupils in areas where this is not yet policy, or identifying other local administrative records that could be a cost-effective data source.

- 120** The Home Office should make data available to local authorities on a regular basis, in a format which enables local analysis and comparison, from both WRS and new arrangements for workers from Romania and Bulgaria.
- 121** Local Jobcentres Plus should provide local authorities with timely information on new national insurance applications from foreign nationals at a local level.<sup>1</sup>

## Building links with new communities and supporting self-help

- 122** Local authorities and their partners should:
- support new migrant worker community organisations or help appropriate existing groups expand; and
  - develop ways of consulting with migrant workers that fully recognise the diversity of nationalities and needs.
- 123** Local, regional and national government should:
- support voluntary sector or faith groups to address local issues, where they are better placed than statutory agencies; and
  - support schemes to train volunteers from migrant worker communities so they can help provide advice and guidance, act as interpreters and teach basic English.

## Improving communication

- 124** Local authorities and partners should tailor existing material when developing welcome packs and information for migrant workers.
- 125** CLG should develop material to highlight core differences in migrant workers' expectations, comparing the different practices and service configurations in England and relevant European countries.

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<sup>1</sup> Annual national statistics broken down by local authority area are now available.

**126** Government departments should prepare for possible future migration, for example by translating core information into Romanian and Bulgarian.

## English teaching

**127** The DfES should:

- monitor the impact of the recent decision to reduce free access to ESOL classes;
- act on the NIACE report recommendation for a national advisory group on ESOL – such a group should consider the community benefits of improved levels of basic English alongside the needs for citizenship and skills for employment;
- promote schemes which enable migrant workers with relevant skills to be accredited to teach basic English; and
- support alternative learning options, such as industry linked English teaching materials and distance learning, and monitor their effectiveness.

**128** Regional skills partnerships should develop a strategic approach for deploying existing resources for English teaching and for encouraging greater financial contributions from employers.

**129** LSPs should:

- map existing ESOL provision in their areas; and
- change the location, timing and content of courses on offer so they meet the needs of migrant workers and their employers, identifying new resources if necessary.

## Translation and interpretation

**130** Local public bodies should review the cost effectiveness of translation and interpretation arrangements to support front line staff, share expensive resources, use language skills in existing staff better, recruit local volunteers and make fuller use of technology.

## Standards in employment and housing

**131** Local partners should share intelligence about housing and employment standards, using enforcement powers as part of a joint, risk-based strategy.

**132** Working with local fire authorities, housing authorities should:

- ensure private sector housing strategies and policies for caravan sites are up to date;
- ensure that information and advice on housing is relevant for migrant workers' tenancies, particularly around tied housing and subletting;
- promote good practice among local landlords, providing training and running accreditation schemes; and
- use the new powers available since April 2006 for regulating all HMOs in areas of concern.

**133** CLG should:

- support learning between areas facing similar problems; and
- support pilot action to use new Housing Act powers better for managing private rented properties in areas with high concentrations of migrant workers.

**134** The Department of Trade and Industry should:

- publicise how authorities, advice agencies and community groups can report serious breaches of regulations by local recruitment and employment agencies; and
- report on action taken against recruitment and employment agencies whose activities are a particular cause for concern.

## Local service development

**135** Local public bodies should:

- take account of migrant workers and their dependants in future strategies, including housing and school place planning;
- understand the diverse needs of their migrant workers, including less visible concerns such as safety for women and child poverty;
- tailor service arrangements to address these needs as part of diversity planning, including translation and interpreting arrangements; and
- give front line staff appropriate training, including about the entitlements of different migrant worker groups.

**136** Government departments should ensure that all service guidance includes and clarifies entitlements as they change.

**137** CLG should lead on behalf of government to address issues leading to destitution, including working with local authorities and voluntary agencies to reduce rough sleeping by migrant workers who fail to get jobs, or who lose jobs before they are entitled to relevant benefits.

### **Minimising local tensions, improving community cohesion**

**138** Local authorities and their partners should address any tensions around migrant workers as part of wider strategies on community cohesion. This should include:

- ensuring they have a system for monitoring local tensions and contingency plans to respond;
- responding quickly to minor causes of tension, for example about refuse arrangements or street drinking;
- dispelling myths and addressing inaccurate rumours rapidly; and
- promoting better management and maintenance of private rented property and seasonal caravan sites as part of local private sector housing strategies.



# Appendix 1

## Study methodology

The study was conducted under section 33 of the Audit Commission Act 1998. Section 33 places a duty on the Commission to undertake studies to support recommendations aimed at improving the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of council services. Our report draws on six principal sources of evidence:

- desk-based reviews of available literature, policies and strategies at a national and local level;
- statistical analysis of available data;
- interviews and focus groups with a range of national, regional and local stakeholders and information from a number of local and regional seminars;
- the local knowledge of Commission inspectors and auditors and the findings of relevant local inspection reports;
- a learning day with a range of people involved at a local level that helped identify issues to probe in fieldwork; and
- fieldwork visits to discuss a range of local concerns and responses in fourteen local areas. Interviewees included council officers, police officers, members of voluntary and faith organisations, employers, local health staff, school and college staff and members of migrant worker organisations. Shorter visits to discuss a particular issue or project were made to a further six areas.

An external advisory group assisted with developing the research framework and the findings. They were consulted on early report drafts. The Commission thanks all who were involved. However, the views expressed in this report are those of the Commission alone.

## Advisory group members

Ambrose Quashie	London Borough of Haringey
Joan Emerson	Norfolk County Council
Matt Jukes/Mark Kinsella	South Yorkshire Police (Association of Chief Police Officers)
Neil Costley/John Ball	Trades Union Congress
Neil Stott	Keystone Development Trust
Professor Mark Johnston	Mary Seacole Research Centre / Institute for Community Cohesion
Ronald Morton	Commission for Social Care Inspection
Sarah Heywood	Employability Forum
Steven Gallacher	Government Office East
Will Somerville	Commission for Racial Equality
Andrew Brown	Home Office
Jonathon Duke Evans	Home Office
David Jones	Communities and Local Government
Emma Stone <sup>1</sup>	Joseph Rowntree Foundation

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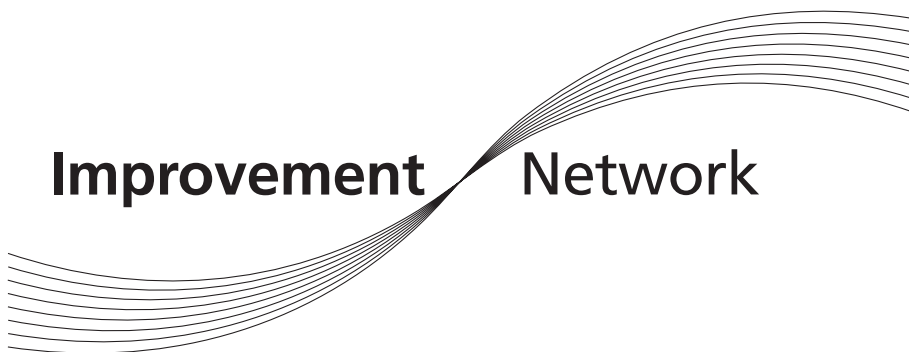
<sup>1</sup> Members unable to attend a meeting who kindly contributed comments.

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