



Research Study

1. Migration of high-skilled workers – opening new channels

Final report
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1. Introduction

In May 2006 the Working Lives Research Institute (WLRI) responded to a formal tender from Cambridgeshire County Council to conduct two small-scale research projects on:

- Migration of high-skilled workers – opening new channels
- Equity and access – skills shortage in growth areas and the potential of economic migration

This report covers the first research project on Migration of high-skilled workers. A separate report covers the second research project on Equity and Access. In both reports there are some common elements, particularly the section that relates to the city/region itself. However, for ease of reference the data has been set out in each report so that they can be read as separate studies.

In the first Phase of the project we conducted the literature review, participated in a workshop in Cambridge, participated in a visit to Riga and made some initial contacts for the project. These were documented in the Initial Report, submitted to Cambridgeshire County Council in early October. In late November we submitted an Interim Report, which documented the research interviews already concluded.

This final report fulfils the research commitments for Phase three of the research. It documents all of the research that has been undertaken and sets out the main conclusions arising from the research project.

We would like to record our thanks to the many individuals who assisted in the project, to the employers, trade unions and advice centres who gave up their time to assist in the research.

1.1 Facts and figures about the city/region

Cambridgeshire County Council lies within the East of England, a region that encompasses the counties of Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk, as well as Cambridgeshire. Cambridgeshire is a rapidly growing county, with population growth of over 20 per cent since 1981.¹ Population is forecast to grow by another 10 per cent over the next decade. The City of Cambridge, the heart of the County, has a population of 130,000.

The East of England region has a population of 5.4 million people, with a total labour force of 2.6 million.

Table 1: Employment in the East of England's main sectors²

	No.	%
Agriculture; hunting and forestry	49,009	1.9%
Fishing	638	0.0%
Mining and quarrying	5,457	0.2%
Manufacturing	373,155	14.5%
Electricity; gas and water supply	16,223	0.6%
Construction	196,461	7.6%
Wholesale and retail trade	445,887	17.3%
Hotels and restaurants	107,418	4.2%
Transport; storage and communications	191,252	7.4%
Financial intermediaries	149,883	5.8%
Real estate; renting and business activities	343,264	13.3%
Public administration & defence; social security	133,066	5.2%
Education	189,274	7.3%

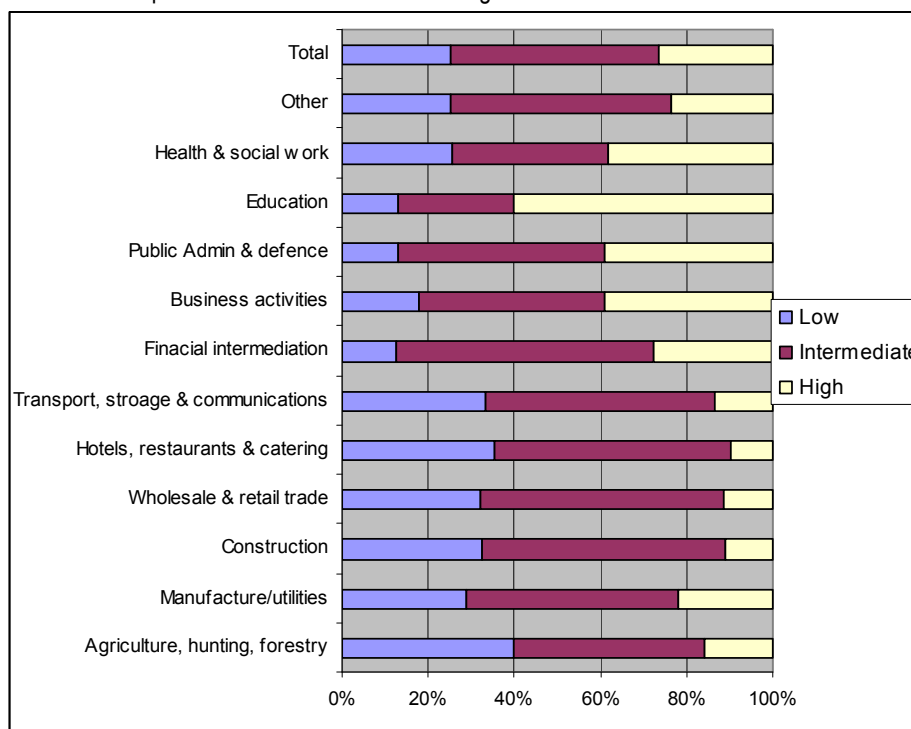


Health and social work	249,776	9.7%
Other	128,616	5.0%
All	2,579,379	

Source: 2001 Census, ONS

As can be seen from the chart below the region benefits from a high skill workforce, particularly in business activities, education and financial intermediation. Much of the region's high skilled workforce is clustered within the Cambridgeshire area. The presence of the university and a major teaching hospital together with the high tech industries located within the science park areas of the outer city, is the reason why, in general, high skilled workers are drawn to the area and why it is also a prime UK destination for high skilled migrant workers.

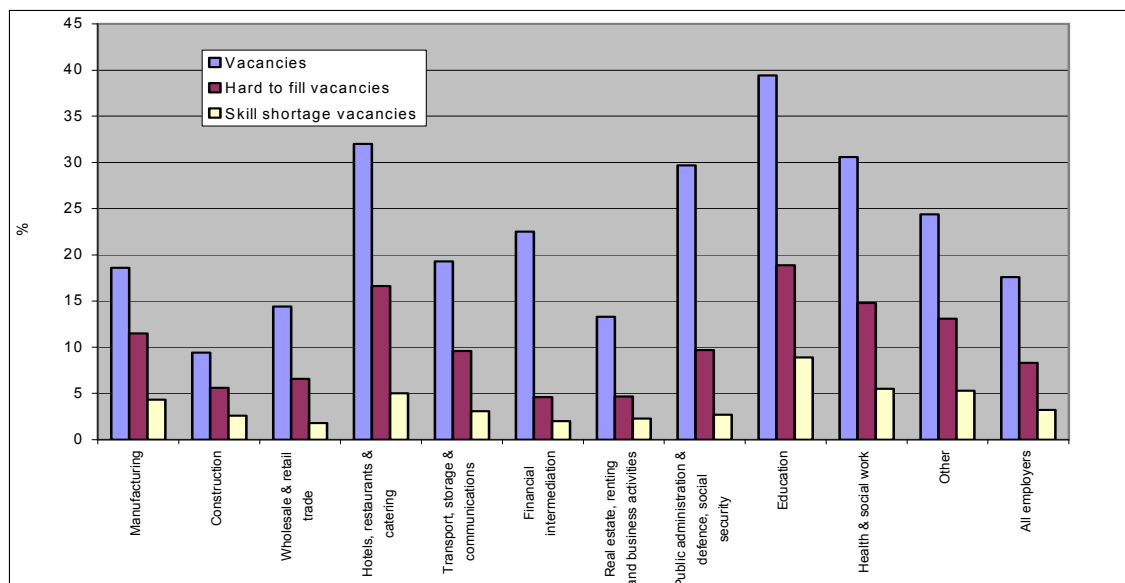
Chart 1.1 Skills profile of sectors in the East of England



Source: ONS LFS, Spring 2003. Base: Workforce in Work.

The region is also experiencing skills shortages and has high vacancy levels, particularly in some of the highly skilled sectors, like education, public administration and defence and in health care and social work.

Chart 1.2 Vacancies, hard to fill vacancies and skills shortage vacancies in the East of England



Source: LSC National Employer Skills Survey 2003. Note: Figures do not include self-employed people or businesses with only one employee.

The unemployment rate within the region at the beginning of 2005 was 4.1 per cent, lower than the UK average of 4.8 per cent. However, the regional labour market has slackened in recent months, with employment falling by 30,000 in a year³. As shown in Table 2, drawn from the Census 2001, 93 per cent of the population residing in the East of England was born in the UK.

Table 2.1 : Country of birth of residents in the East of England

Country of birth	No.	%
United Kingdom	5,010,654	93.0%
Ireland	46,792	0.9%
Channel Islands and Isle of Man	2,648	0.0%
Western Europe	79,478	1.5%
Central and Eastern Europe	17,854	0.3%
Africa	52,221	1.0%
Middle East	13,647	0.3%
Far East Asia	33,378	0.6%
South Asia	58,672	1.1%
North and Central America	38,019	0.7%
Caribbean and West Indies	13,770	0.3%
South America	4,860	0.1%
Oceania	13,598	0.3%
Other	2,546	0.0%
All	5,388,137	

Source: 2001 Census, ONS

1.2 Background to the issue or problem being described

In the UK, the highly skilled migrant programme (HSMP) allows foreign workers outside the EEA to enter the UK in order to seek work, without already having a job with a UK employer. It has been one of the ways the UK government identified as a means of addressing the skills gap. Acceptance into the HSMP is based on the following criteria:



- Educational qualifications
- Work experience
- Past earnings
- Achievement in the worker's chosen field
- The husband's, wife's or unmarried partner's achievements

According to the Home Office Departmental Report 2003/04, 6,500 applications had been successful since the introduction of the scheme in 2002. The number of applications received for the top five nationalities were: India: 832, United States of America: 751, Nigeria: 454, Pakistan: 381, South Africa: 319.⁴

*Knowledge Migrants*⁵ assessed the influence of factors that affect a skilled individual's decision to migrate to work in the UK. It focused on four professional groups: information technology and communications, financial services, hospital consultants and biotechnologists. It found that many skilled migrants in the UK are from developed countries and the key motivations to migrate were for career advancement and personal development (including experience of a different culture). While prospects for economic improvements were a significant factor for those from developing countries, it was not an overall dominant factor. As such these migrants are considered 'knowledge migrants' rather than economic migrants. A relatively high proportion intended to extend their stay, with 30% saying they would apply for an extension and 14% saying they would apply for settlement. Those with the strongest intention to stay were in the Health Sector, with South Africans being the most likely to consider applying for settlement and British citizenship.⁶

*Investing in Communities Cambridgeshire, Business Plan 2007-2011*⁷ notes that Cambridgeshire, with a population of some 553,000 residents, has a dynamic and diverse economy with a wide range of incomes and socio-economic environments. Unlike the most recent growth of migration in the region generally, where the focus has been on migration to low skilled jobs, the area has historically hosted a highly skilled migrant population. Highly skilled knowledge migrants have occupied posts within the Cambridgeshire area for many years. However, it should be noted that many of those recent migrants who have come to the area to fill low skilled jobs bring with them high skills which are not utilised in the UK, as the barriers presented by migration and employment policies prevent them from working at their skill level.

While the region has historically benefited from highly skilled migration, much of this migration is temporary in nature. Individuals come to the area to work on fixed-term contracts for a period of time or for a period associated with completion of a task. They then move on to third countries or return to their home countries. Many such workers possess skills that are globally valued and therefore can 'select' where they chose to work, in a way that migrants occupying low skilled posts cannot.

1.3 Aims of the project or study

The aims of this project have been to consider how knowledge migrant workers can develop and maintain channels between their host country and country of origin during their period of migration. Specifically the project aimed to:

- Contribute to a greater understanding of the migration of skilled professional workers;
- Identify the causes of migrant labour within the Cambridgeshire economy;
- Identify the consequences of migrant labour within the Cambridgeshire area; and



- Recommend an employment, skills and support strategy for employers, recruitment agencies, voluntary sector agencies, community groups and for migrant workers themselves within the Cambridgeshire Area.

The development of such channels cannot just contribute to the well being of the knowledge migrant worker during the period of migration, but can also contribute to the building of longer-term links between countries of origin and countries of destination. An additional aim of the project is to explore the extent to which highly skilled migrant workers are integrated into the communities where they are located during their period of migration, to make the experience of migration a richer one, but also to bring the organisational and knowledge skills of migrants into local communities, to enrich them also.

1.4 Relevance of the issue to the city or region

Cambridgeshire's high skilled economy operates on an international level. The ability of the area to attract highly skilled migrants is dependent on it being able to offer an environment for work that is attractive to highly skilled knowledge migrants and which is at least comparable to that which they could be offered in other places of the world, most notably in North America and in the leading industrial economies of Europe. Additionally, as economic growth in the developing industrial world gathers pace, the region will need to compete also with the attractions of these new economies if it is to succeed in maintaining its world class reputation in the areas of education, healthcare and information technology.

1.5 Actors involved

In the course of collecting the research data for this project, the research team has involved key actors, including trade union representatives – both full-time paid officials and local representatives; employer representatives including - human resource managers, diversity managers, employer and industry representative bodies - community organisations, advice bodies, regional and local authority bodies, as well as individual knowledge migrant workers. The researchers have engaged with these key actors by face-to-face interview, by telephone, by attending relevant meetings and by consulting documentation and research supplied by them. The key respondents formally interviewed for the project include:

- A representative of the area Chamber of Commerce (Employer Representative A);
- A diversity officer in an educational institution (Education A)
- A management representative from a high tech company (Tech A)
- A head of HR in an IT company (Tech C)
- A chief financial officer of an IT company (Tech D)
- A director of a recruitment agency (Agency A)
- A director of a recruitment agency (Agency B)
- A representative of a recruitment agency (Agency C)
- A recruitment consultant (Agency D)
- A regional director for the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (Recruitment A)
- A trade union representative at a high tech company (Trade union A)
- A representative of Jobcentre Plus (Jobcentre A)
- A representative from the library services (Library A)
- An adult education specialist (Adult learning A)
- A development worker in a local advice centre (Development A)
- A CAB worker offering specialist advice to migrant workers (Advice B)



- A CAB generalist advice worker (Advice C)
- A director of a race equality council (Equality A)
- An advice worker in a local advice centre (Advice A)
- A worker in a community organisation (Community A)
- A focus group made up of international workers⁸ (Focus A)

In addition the researchers conducted a large number of informal interviews, mainly by phone. These were aimed at identifying individuals for formal interview and also at providing a context to migrant employment in the sector and in the area.

Throughout the project the researchers have maintained their commitment to liaise closely with the County Council. This close collaboration does not mean that the County Council influenced the direction of the research, but it does mean that the researchers were able to access targeted contacts with the assistance of the County Council. This method of working with public bodies funding research may often open access to important key actors who otherwise might not be available to researchers.

1.6 Methodology used

a) Literature review

A literature review was undertaken, to identify any relevant recent national or international research on knowledge migrants, on the contribution of migrants to host and countries of origin and on the utilisation of migrant worker skills.

b) Workshop

The researchers participated in and facilitated a workshop organised by the County Council

c) Interviews

- Interviews with 20 stakeholders within the knowledge sectors
- A focus group consisting of high-skilled migrant workers, in the health, university and manufacturing and high tech sectors.

d) Case studies

Two case studies of organisations demonstrating good practice.

2.1. Rationale behind the methodology

The methodology was primarily qualitative and was based on face-to-face interviews, supplemented by telephone interviews where it was not convenient for the respondents to be interviewed face-to-face. For the interviews with knowledge migrants we chose a focus group method. The decision to choose that methodology for that group of respondents was because we wished to explore the general experiences of migration for this group and because the experiences we were focusing on related to their involvement in organisations, rather than their experiences within their individual work environment. The



focus group was considered the best method of drawing out these more general experiences of interaction with communities.

Qualitative methods were chosen as the optimum methodology for a detailed exploration of experiences, expectations and processes. Through the use of responsive questions and follow-up probes these allow the interviewee the opportunity to describe the situation in the manner that best accords with their understanding. It allows the interviewee to develop the argument organically. When exploring subjects which are highly sensitive or politically debated, the methodology allows for the gathering of rich research data and for the exploration of subject areas in more detail than can be obtained through quantitative analysis, particularly since, in the area of migration, the quantitative data is limited and sometimes non-existent.

2.2. Instruments used

The key instruments used were the interview topic guides. These were developed by the research team and provided to the County Council for comments prior to their use. The key respondent topic guide is attached in Annex B⁹. For the focus group we drew up a separate topic guide. This too is attached in Annex B.

2.3. Data gathered

Quantitative data, mainly in the form of published statistical data, was gathered in Phase one of the research. The analysis of the data was included in the literature review, included as Annex A to this report. The review also covered recent government and academic research on the subject of migration, and looked in particular at migration and high skilled workers.

An advice centre working with migrants provided some statistical data. This data has been used to inform our research findings.

Additionally qualitative data was collected in interviews with key respondents, in the two case studies and from the focus groups. Interviews were taped and the researchers produced detailed field notes on each interview.

2.4. Problems encountered and solutions used

Migration has become an area of hot political debate within the UK. Despite the generous assistance of the County Council, the researchers still experienced difficulties in securing access for the interviews. It was particularly difficult to secure agreement for the case studies and as a result the fieldwork phase of the research project took up much more time than had originally been anticipated. Although access eventually was achieved, the amount of work that was involved in securing it was more time consuming than we had projected.

One case study could not take place until late November, due to pressures of work on the part of the case study subject. We also originally wished to target a particularly important and large high tech employer in the area and although initially the response was positive, it eventually proved impossible to arrange. As a result we had to begin fresh negotiations with another employer, adding to the delays. Another case study was identified, but the nature of the institution meant that, in the view of those whom we had approached – the HR officer and the equality and diversity officer – information on the employment of migrant workers did not lie at their level, but was something that each department of the



institution dealt with. As an alternative we sought to interview department administrators, but again this added delays to the process.

Other difficulties mainly were in relation to pressures of time on the part of the interviewees. This meant that interviews were sometimes cancelled or postponed at a late stage, in some cases after the researcher had set off for the interview.

Results obtained

3.1. Main results

The research undertook to conduct two case studies in companies/organisations that employed highly skilled migrant workers. Although we had wished, if possible, to conduct one case study of a public sector employer and one of a private sector employer this proved difficult within the time constraints set by the project. In the end although both case studies predominantly are in the public sector, we have, through the key respondent interviews, been able to build a fairly robust picture of high skilled migrant workers within the geographical area covered by the project.

Case study A

Case study A is a large hospital located within the Cambridgeshire area. The case study is based on interviews with seven parties:

- A Human Resources Project Manager, also involved in the Equality and Diversity Group;
- A Recruitment Manager
- An union representative
- A Training Advisor also responsible for delivery of ESOL classes
- An advice worker based inside the hospital
- A minority ethnic worker
- A high skilled migrant worker

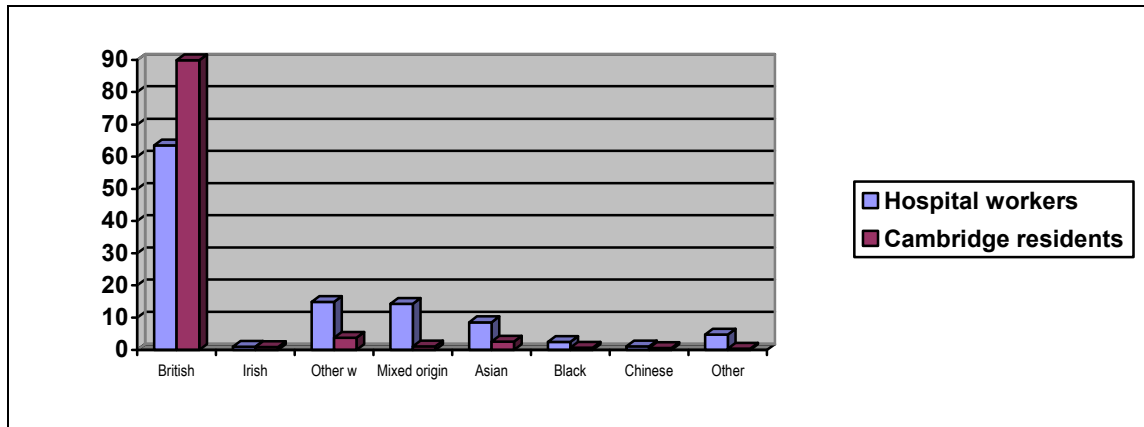
The Trust recruits from overseas and sources healthcare professionals via 'campaigns', targeted on a planned destination and organised to recruit a determined number of staff. It may also recruit 'ad hoc' staff who come to it through commercial recruitment agencies. The hospital adheres to the Department of Health Code of Practice for International Recruitment (2001). This means that it:

- Does not actively seek to recruit from developing countries without the agreement of the government concerned;
- Does not recruit from those countries that have a known shortage of the same professional group;
- It only recruits from counties where education and training for overseas healthcare professionals is recognised as 'fit for purpose'.

The hospital is part of a foundation trust that has a developed system of monitoring its staff by ethnic origin and produces a statistical analysis of employment by ethnic origin, comparing the proportions within the workplace with the local resident population. The data shows that minority ethnic workers are over-represented among the workforce, in comparison to their proportions within the resident

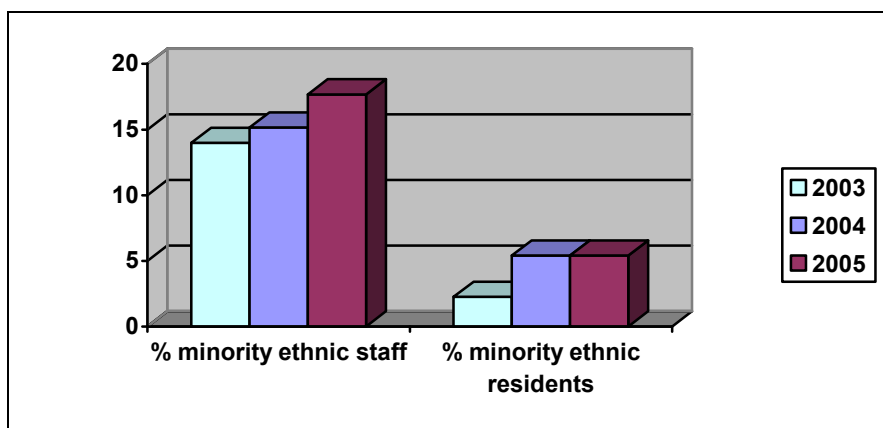


population. While 63.5 per cent of the workforce is described as white British, the white British population within the geographical area is 89.8 per cent.



The figures demonstrate that, for the hospital, recruiting from beyond the local community is an imperative, if posts are to be filled, bearing in mind the data shown in Chart 1.2 revealing that healthcare has a vacancy rate of around 30 per cent; a hard to fill rate of around 15 per cent; and a five per cent skills shortage. However, some key respondents believed that this situation might change, as cuts in budgets were likely to lead to a cut back in recruitment from overseas. The data also shows that the proportion of non-white and non-locally resident employees is growing, with an increase of 1.19 per cent in the last year.

Statistics are collected about ethnicity rather than about length of stay or the immigration status of workers and this means that the Trust does not know what percentage of its workforce is made up of migrant workers and which comes from more established minority ethnic workers. But, according to the HR manager a high proportion of the 17 per cent medical and dental staff – consultants - are likely to have been directly recruited from overseas. Recruitment drives for nurses have focused on the Philippines and India, in particular, but there has also been the recruitment of high skilled migrant workers from China and Spain. The hospital's recruitment team has in the recent past made regular trips to the Philippines and to India. These recruitment drives started in 2002 with concentration on Philippines but the last one was in early 2005 where 50 nurses recruited from India. Fifteen years earlier staff shortages at the hospital had been filled by nurses from Ireland, demonstrating that the employment of migrant workers in the Trust is nothing new. Furthermore, ethnic minority employment has been increasing over the last few years, as the chart below demonstrates.





Note: there are no figures for minority ethnic residents in 2003; the figure given comes from the 1991 Census. Thus the minority ethnic population in the town doubled in the ten-year period.

A union representative also agreed that the majority of professional workers, in particular nurses, were from the Philippines, Mauritius and India, although the hospital also employed migrant workers, as domestic staff, from Spain and Poland.

The Trust has developed a number of policies aimed at promoting equality and diversity. In a recent statement on 'Language Policy Use' it notes that 'The Trust is increasingly becoming more diverse, mainly due to international recruitment campaigns' and its language policy statement is aimed at minimising communication difficulties between both staff and patients. The Trust offers English Speaking as another Language (ESOL) classes. However, although these are free for citizens from EEA member states, there is no funding for non-EEA citizens. The classes had been introduced in 2002 when the Trust gained money from the Department of Health's 'Positively Diverse' fund, to provide ESOL classes in house. Although those recruited had passed their ILETS¹⁰ exams, they still needed English language support and practice and support / training on idiomatic language, colloquialisms, local interaction language, as well as scientific and clinical terms. Initially the staff used a language school near the hospital, however, it was felt that the provision would be more valuable if it was provided in-house, and a 12-week course was constructed around shift timings as either a day or evening slot. However, the experience was that the most highly skilled professionals did not attend these courses and it was not clear whether this was because they felt they did not need the additional language support or because they felt it would not be appropriate to attend the same classes as those whom they managed at work. While the nature of the courses was informal, staff were free as to whether they attended or not and one respondent suggested that this informality may have caused some workers to perceive the classes as having low value, leading them to skip classes.

It was clear from some of the interviews that there was not necessarily a clear view from all respondents of which staff were migrant workers and which were minority ethnic workers. This confusion could mean that all workers whose ethnicity was not that of the majority were viewed as 'migrants' and were not really perceived as being part of the majority resident and working population. This has important consequences for employment policies because it may have made it more difficult to construct and target policies towards new migrants.

The question of relationships between migrant workers and local communities was raised in the interviews. There was a general acknowledgement of some hostility from the local population. The Trust has a harassment and dignity at work policy and it is accepted that this needs to be reviewed regularly to ensure that there is no under-reporting of incidents, due to workers' reluctance to report them. Importantly, while the management respondents made no specific reference to problems of racism within the workplace, a union representative did suggest that there were some difficulties. Although it was not felt that social relations between migrant and local staffs were a problem - as long as migrants were perceived as 'competent' there were no tensions - when local staff formed a view that incompetent staff had been recruited frustrations did emerge. However, the main problem with racism and harassment was from patients and their families or carers. Some respondents did report problems of racial abuse of staff by patients

From the interviews with migrant workers in the hospital it was clear that many had high levels of academic qualification but that they tended to be employed in those sections of the hospital that were more poorly graded. Thus while there was no question of migrants being paid less than UK workers, job segregation could result in them earning less than comparable UK workers. There was also a



perception of there being better jobs in the private sector (for example in medical research) but that migrant workers rarely could access these, mainly due to problems over recognition of qualifications. It is of note that at least one worker with a PhD from overseas was beginning a new university course in the UK, in an attempt to break through this barrier. A union representative also stated that migrant workers felt that they were not always considered for promotion, although it was noted that the situation was improving as a result of the hospital's work around equality and diversity issues, together with a policy of positive action, which was improving the representation of BME staff within senior management.

The hospital had published a guide for overseas staff that explained what accommodation they would be provided with on arrival; how to set up a UK bank account; what their terms and conditions would be; and which gave general guidance on the Cambridgeshire area. New arrivals were also given a 'welcome pack' containing some kitchen essentials and foodstuffs. The guide explained that the hospital has an equal opportunities policy and sets out how that will guide its employment policies. Furthermore it gives guidance on how to undertake 'adaptation' programmes for recognition of qualifications. Important to this research, the guidance provides some advice on wider community involvement. It provides the details of places of worship, although this was limited to information on a range of Christian religions. There is no information on non-Christian religions; for example, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Judaism are not referred to. There is information on where to buy foods, for example, Chinese/oriental/Indian. There is also information on trade unions and how to contact them. However, it should be borne in mind that none of the migrant workers interviewed had any contact with the trade union. They expressed the view that information about the unions should be made more prominent in the induction process. Since the guide for overseas staff did give details about the unions in the workplace it seems that providing information in this form may be insufficient.

The guidance, however, does not cover wider community issues. There is no information on how local government is conducted, nor, for example, anything on school governing bodies; on local campaigning or community organisations, other than a reference to a Filipino community association, about which there is further information on the hospital website. But there is a Minority Diversity Group that meets regularly to discuss issues around cultural and religious diversity. However, again its main focus is on matters relevant to the workplace.

In relation to accommodation, the Trust has pursued with the government the fact that the home starter pack for key workers appears not to apply to workers recruited from overseas. This problem had been raised by a migrant worker who had applied to work for the Trust, having heard of the key worker scheme but was then told that she did not qualify. A union representative stated that, due to the high costs of housing, the majority of migrant workers rent accommodation but both rental costs and the deposit cost is very high. This respondent also stated that there were cases of abuse by local landlords who ask for very high deposits, of as much as six months' rent in advance.

Additional to its guide for new staff, the hospital also has produced detailed guidelines for managers to help them recruit overseas healthcare professionals. This notes that for overseas professional workers moving to work in a new country can be 'unsettling' and recommends a system of mentorship to reduce feelings of isolation, together with 'shadowing' by senior staff during the first period of the worker's time in employment.

In the view of the Trust management induction into the organisation is absolutely critical so that migrants feel welcomed from the start. There is also a need to monitor career progression.



One of the union respondents noted that at least among the Filipino nurses there were good support networks and that they met regularly to support each other. Union membership is said to be about the same amongst migrant nurses as it is among local nurses and although attendance at union meetings in general is low, migrant nurses are amongst those that are most likely to attend the meetings.

Case study B

Case study B is a large educational institution. An initial interview was held with a senior member of the Personnel Division. The organisation has had a long-standing policy of attracting and recruiting overseas professionals, and has developed and refined procedures to apply for the appropriate documentation.

There was no data on the size of the international workforce, as employment matters were devolved to individual departments and no overall records were kept. But what is known is that there are 8,500 workers of whom around a quarter are contract workers, many of whom will be overseas workers. According to one senior manager. *“There is no sensible way of picking them out, department from department, it really depends on the definition applied”*. At the last count, about the time of the last census, the institution employed over 40 nationalities.

Certainly over the last twenty years, the migrant community and representation in the workforce has grown. This is in part attributable to changes in the way that work is undertaken, with the development of research teams made up of workers on short-term contracts.

Case study B recruits globally and targets specific skill sets - workers are recruited at least at graduate level and the norm is a PhD. There is very little local recruitment, as the institution is recognised as a global industry operating within a global labour market. Highly qualified overseas workers are a highly mobile group and will normally have a undergraduate degree awarded in their home country and post-graduate / PhD level qualifications from another country.

The organisation usually receives more applications than it can handle. There are many applicants for each post and the organisation also receives a significant number of speculative applications – because of its international reputation many people world wide aspire to work for it.

Individual departments handle recruitment in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the organisation. Work permits are ‘an integral and embedded part of the recruitment process’ although on occasion they can become very complicated to process. The organisation will always apply for a work permit if the skills set is right, although there may be a preference towards candidates who do not require work permits, such as those from the UK or from EU states.

The bulk of highly skilled migrant workers are concentrated into contract research (overall around 2,500 posts), but the organisation does occasionally recruit migrant workers into permanent posts. The work is carried out in teams, all on short research contracts and it can be two or three years before individuals on such contracts can even begin to aspire to a permanent post. Consequently there is a high turnover of staff within that group.

All departments are mindful of the need to be consistent with the job application and recruitment process, whilst balancing that against the need to ensure that applicants have good written and spoken English. As scientific research is international, the organisation finds that in general language or



communication is not really an issue. With regards to accreditation of qualifications, this tends to be an issue handled by individual departments.

At present the institution is focusing on race equality and has recently conducted a survey on the issue, whose results are pending. Anecdotally, it appears that the survey has not revealed issues of unfair treatment, but there are occasional individual cases where it does arise.

Welfare matters are handled at departmental level. There is also a staff development programme and a language centre providing language support in improving language skills.

One issue raised was in relation to employer strategies which were often developed in isolation from the views of migrant workers and it was considered helpful if steps could be taken to ensure that migrant workers had a way of 'tapping into' the strategy, otherwise there was a gap between the individuals targeted and strategic thinking and direction. There also was felt to be a need for stronger lines of communication between major employers like this one, and the County Council, particularly when strategy issues were being examined or developed.

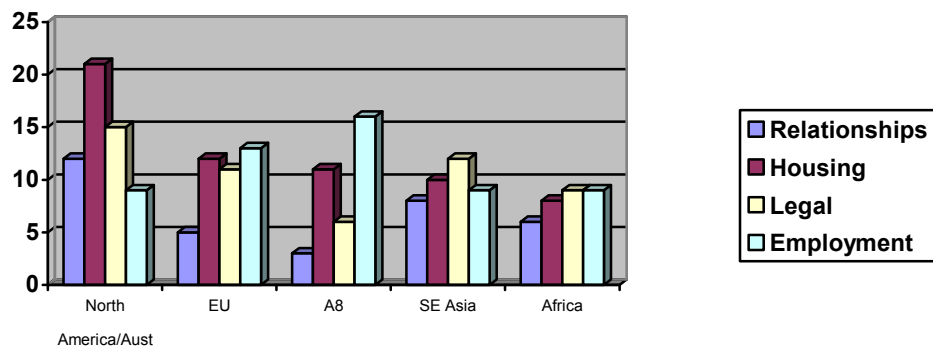
Data on migrant worker cases

The Cambridge Independent Advice Centre provides advice and support to migrant workers, as part of the overall advice service it offers. The Centre was able to provide a breakdown of the number of cases it has dealt with on behalf of migrant workers. This shows that 85 initial contacts were made, of which around a third were by telephone and around one in eight by email. The largest number of enquiries came from Wisbech (42 cases) followed by Cambridge (24 cases). Huntingdon had the third highest number of cases (12).

The data shows that the majority of cases came from A8 country workers (52 cases), followed by EU workers (18 cases). Few workers from outside the EU had accessed the advice centre's services. Most cases concerned employment matters (43 cases) with benefits' issues (10 cases) the second highest and housing (9 cases) the third concern. The Centre report notes that translation and interpretation services were provided in 12 cases, suggesting that around one in seven individuals were not sufficiently fluent in English.

We were similarly provided with a breakdown of cases dealt with by the Citizens' Advice Bureau within Cambridgeshire County and Peterborough. The data, covering six months between 1 April 2006 and 30 September 2006, is broken down by country of origin and shows that the Rest of Europe (excluding the A8 states) represents the largest single proportion of the 5,516 clients handled by the bureau. The data is able to show the type of query raised by country of origin. Clients from the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand were more likely than any other group to be seeking advice about relationships (12 per cent) and housing (21 per cent) suggesting that these groups, which are also over-represented among highly skilled professionals, identify with problems that are more likely to be associated with long-term residency.

Chart 3.1: Problems taken to CABs 2006



Source: CAB Migrant worker statistics, September 2006

3.2. Other results

In addition to the formal case studies detailed above, the project also, through the interviews that it has undertaken, has been able to study a number of other organisations that are involved with high skilled migrants. Here we provide their descriptions, based on the interviews conducted. Because the study was a small one we aimed to select a small sample that could represent different aspects of migrant professional employment. Thus the interviews that are documented below reflect both the views of different actors and take experiences from different types of skilled professional workers.

3.2.1 The interviews with employers and employer bodies, including recruitment agencies

We conducted interviews with ten employer bodies employing or recruiting high skilled professional workers. Employer Representative A represents employers throughout the Cambridgeshire area. Tech A is a leading technology development and licensing company, with a primary objective to create new business based on advances in technology. It operates internationally, with more than two thirds of its business being for clients outside the UK. It employs 280 workers in the Cambridgeshire area, of whom 30 are of international origin. Agency A is a specialist recruitment agency working with leading high tech companies in the electronics industry. Tech C is an engineering company in the Cambridgeshire area. It employs around 170 people, mostly engineers and database analysts. Most of its employees are UK based, but it has sales, support and implementation teams throughout the world. There is no trade union representation. Tech D is a high technology company with some links to the university sector. It employs around 40 staff. It recruits internationally to a large extent. There is no trade union although there is a health and safety committee. The respondent described it as 'a very small company, open and people can talk if they need to'. Agency C is a recruitment agency dealing with commercial and managerial staff, although more recently it has filled industrial vacancies.

Demographics and numbers

Employer Representative A discussed the extent to which Cambridge's migrant workforce differed from that of the rest of the area. In particular highly skilled professional workers in Cambridge were perceived as being educated to university level, although he thought that this perception might be drawn from the fact that those who were most vocal among the international workforce were highly educated. There was however, little hard information about the numbers or origins of international workers in the area, as the emphasis of much research had been on low skilled migrants. Tech A stated that the majority of its knowledge migrants arrive unaccompanied. They are generally single men, aged in their 20s to 40s.



Most arrive to take up permanent employment The company does not actively seek out international workers but finds that many of the best candidates come from outside the UK. Most are in the UK under the HSMP, although around one in ten are in the UK under the work permit scheme. The company prefers the former method, since it is the prospective employee who makes the claim under immigration laws. Work permits it regards as a more 'laborious process' and the amount of paperwork required, particularly for the renewal of work permits, did not in their view, in many cases, justify the additional work. Many of its software/IT specialists and engineers come from India and China, but they also have workers from the EU, New Zealand, South Africa, Japan, Taiwan, Russia and Australia. Tech A recruits through a number of recruitment agencies and also attends recruitment events. Although it does not formally monitor where applications come from, the HR manager responsible for working with recruitment agencies and universities, to attract suitable candidates, estimates that about 99 per cent of applications are from non-UK nationals. Agency A describes international workers as generally male, single and in their late 20s/30s, although more recently it has been receiving an increasing number of applications from women, many of whom have initially arrived with a partner with a work permit. At any given time Agency A will be recruiting for 20-25 companies in the Cambridgeshire area and about half of those registered with it are international migrants. Recruits are mainly identified through Internet job boards and applications come from all over the EU, both old and new states, but also from India and China. Chinese migrants are usually already in the UK, having generally come to study for PhDs. Workers from India are more likely to have already been working in the sector and often are already in the UK under a work permit. Agency C stated that highly skilled workers come from anywhere in the EU/ world and for skilled roles the agency will seek to get a work permit or HSMP.

Agency B supplies permanent and temporary staff for the engineering and scientific sectors and supplies staff to companies within a 40-mile radius of Cambridge. Some recruits require work permits or HSMPs. It will only register those who already have a work permit and who are already in the UK, and also suggested that employers favoured candidates who had a reasonably long time to run on their permits, to avoid the employer having to make a fresh application for permission to employ them. Consequently most of their recruits are the dependents/spouses of work permit holders or are on working holidays. Tech C staff are predominately young with nearly half the workforce under the age of 40. It recruits most of its overseas workers to permanent posts and says that most workers arrive on their own; few arrive with families. The majority of its workforce in Cambridge is young. The company recruits mainly through agencies and although a majority of its applicants are male, it is increasingly receiving applications from women. Applicants mainly come through the work permit scheme. Tech D employs workers from around ten countries, mostly from the EU, but also from the USA, India, Mauritius and Malaysia. All are aged under 40 years and are employed as scientists and engineers. The workforce is predominantly male and normally arrive unaccompanied. The company does apply for work permits and uses a law firm to process the paperwork. It finds the procedures cumbersome and time-consuming. Due to the fact that its skilled workers have to travel abroad a lot, getting the immigration status right is important. It does not use the HSMP.

Skill shortages

Agency A described 'desperate shortages' within the electronics sector, causing employers to increasingly look further a-field. Most international workers had a minimum degree level but the norm is usually a Ph.D. Agency B also confirmed this. Tech C also said that its engineers and IT analysts were 'at the very least' degree holders. Tech D said that around one in three employees will have PhDs. Recruitment is often by word of mouth through existing employees but it also uses some recruitment agencies. Agency C pointed out that, for example, the pharmaceutical industry in Cambridge is breaking new ground and does attract the world's best. With the international reputation of Cambridge, companies are able to attract the best candidates from all over the world.



Employment issues

Employer Representative A thought that there were no barriers in the workplace in relation to highly skilled migrants and that indeed they generally had higher earnings than those of the local population. Skilled professional workers within the high tech companies were very sought after and those who employed them 'guard these people with their lives because it is so difficult to replace them'. Agency C said that most highly skilled workers worked in a mix of short-term contracts and permanent posts and that in terms of salary, highly skilled migrants usually earned £25,000 upwards. However, Agency A referred to a case of an international professional worker being paid significantly less than the going rate, simply because she had not realised what local workers were paid and had accepted an offer which was around 50 per cent of the actual rate. According to the respondent in Tech A, workplace relations are good. The organisation is non-hierarchical and individuals are encouraged to communicate with one another. However, there is no trade union nor is there any workplace representative structure. Neither is the company part of a European Works Council, even though the numbers employed throughout Europe are sufficient to call for the establishment of one. Instead there are informal Friday night meetings where individuals can raise any subject of their choice. The interviewee mentioned recent discussions on global warming, hobbies or projects.

'So always the opportunity to stand up and talk. But we don't have trade union representatives or employee representatives – people know they can have them, but people feel they haven't needed that or want it.'

Tech C also described workplace relationships as 'healthy'. The company was 'used to diversity' and had worked hard on cultural differences and on integrating new workers,

'Rather than expecting people to automatically adapt and change to UK culture, there is a good acceptance of human diversity.'

Employers were more likely to identify strict immigration rules as the source of major difficulties in relation to the recruitment of international professional migrants and this, according to Agency A, often led to employers avoiding those who did not already have a work permit. In general the HSMP was preferred by employers and was described by Agency A as making 'life an awful lot easier'. However, Tech C preferred work permits.

Recognition of qualifications

Tech A has established systems for identifying the comparability of qualifications. These included seeking information about the quality of the qualifications, from existing staff of the same country of origin. They also referred to university websites and contacted university tutors about the content of courses. Although it required of all its staff that they are proficient in English, it would provide additional assistance in the case of well-qualified candidates who just needed assistance with developing their presentation or language skills. Agency A also referred to problems regarding recognition of qualifications, describing some employers as 'pretty elitist about the reputation of universities and degree classifications' although it was felt that within the electronics sector there was less of an emphasis on having specific qualifications. Tech C tested qualifications through a software programme and also used its employees worldwide to provide information on the validity of qualifications. Tech D said that it generally did not have issues over recognising qualifications, as most of its international staff had conducted at least some of its education in the UK. Agency C stated that as a minimum their clients would have a graduate qualification but that there had been issues over the recognition of overseas qualifications. The agency was responsible for undertaking checks of qualifications and this would involve checking with the academic institution from which the individual gained her/his qualification. Employers that the agency dealt with were cautious or indeed suspicious of qualifications gained in overseas countries and Agency C gave an example of aerospace engineers, where employer suspicion



over the validity of the qualification, means that most workers need to retake it in this country, if they are to get work.

Language issues and provision

Agency A suggests that fluency in English is generally not an issue for professional migrant workers, in general only those who have an extremely good standard of English apply and are recruited. In some cases the agency conducts a telephone interview to assess English. Agency B also viewed language as an issue that only was problematic for low skilled workers, highly skilled professional workers 'speak perfect English'. As with Agency A, Agency B assessed language skills through interview and verbal communication. Tech C said that most training in engineering was conducted in English and that therefore most workers did not have problems in communicating and were accustomed to writing technical reports. Tech D also said that most recruits had good levels of English and this was tested through a telephone interview.

Racism and discrimination

In the opinion of Tech A there was no racism in the workplace:

'Racism, harassment? It really doesn't. It's just colour of skin. You know you go on holiday and you get a tan. Never heard of anything that's racist or anything like that at all. It's just not that type of organisation. I suppose it happens in manufacturing or factories where people are not highly intelligent, that perhaps might be different. But people working here never have had issues like that.'

Tech D also stated that there were no issues regarding racism, sexism or harassment – 'certainly not here, not that kind of company'. It described the science community as international and 'its norms were that everybody mixes with different nationalities'.

General service provision

Tech A supported its international workers with what the respondent described as a 'generous relocation package'. This included assistance with setting up bank accounts and providing cash advances where individuals could not get access to funds. Tech C worked with a relocation organisation that assisted workers moving to the UK. It too produced an information pack for new workers. Tech D also offered help with relocation but stated that the majority of its younger international workers did not need help and coped very well in their move to the UK. Where there were problems it was with opening bank accounts and getting mortgages, where either individuals were denied these services or were charged excessive interest. The respondent also mentioned problems that workers had if they wished to marry and therefore had to submit their passports that were held for some time. This meant that work travel could not take place during that time.

3.2.2 The interviews with trade union representatives

Trade Union A was the senior trade union local representative within a high technology company based in Cambridge. According to the interviewee the company did not have an equality department or an equality of opportunity agenda. Although there was trade union representation, workplace grievances were dealt with on an 'ad hoc' basis by the HR department.

Demographics and numbers

The company employs some high skilled workers from the Philippines and this arrangement went back over some years. There were currently 250 Filipino workers in the workplace, although the numbers fluctuated throughout the year. Workers were brought in to carry out specific tasks and then returned to their county of origin. They were usually employed on short-term contracts, of six to 12 months. Most were recruited through a specialist recruitment agency that provided workers for that particular sector



only. Those employed covered a wide range of ages, from their early 20s to their late 50s. All were male. The interviewee was unclear as to what their skills or experiences were and suggested that this lack of information had also contributed to certain hostility from local workers towards internationally recruited workers.

'Those on the shop floor have no insight as to why they are here and why they come. But it's not their fault and workers are sympathetic and you can understand why they are here because it's good money.'

When the union representative had enquired about their skills he was told that it was 'none of their [the union's] business'.

Employment issues

Although it appeared that the union was not involved in the representation of international workers, Trade Union A was aware of their being paid less than the going rate for local skilled workers, but had not taken the issue up with the company.

Racism and discrimination

According to the interviewee there was no racist abuse in the workplace, although he did admit to there being 'banter', with UK workers creating nicknames for the Filipino workers. Additionally it was accepted that there were tensions and hostilities between host and migrant workers. Issues over workload, the distribution and provision of overtime were referred to and there was an additional reference to some local workers being unwilling to work alongside migrant workers. Due to the nature of the company, which experienced frequent peaks and troughs in work, there was also a perception among the host workforce that when work diminished it was they who were more likely to be selected for redundancy. Since the international workers were employed on fixed-term contracts and had pre-arranged travel and housing arrangements they were perceived as being less likely to be selected for redundancy, since the employer only needed to wait for their contracts to come to an end.

3.2.3 The interviews with respondents from government agencies

Although we conducted three formal interviews with government agencies, they were unable to provide much information that was specific to high skilled professional international workers, as in general government services had focused on low skilled migrants. For example, Jobcentre A had no information on high skilled professionals, although it was pointed out that, more recently, higher skilled jobs were being advertised through Jobcentre Plus and that EURES, its EU equivalent, did work with the NHS to recruit skilled workers for the NHS. Some national groups were identified with particular jobs; for example, skilled dentists were said to be coming from Italy. However, in general there was no co-ordinated service response with respect to highly skilled professional migrants and it had been assumed that they generally inserted themselves more smoothly into the local area. However, there was no data to support such an assumption .

3.2.4 The interviews with advice workers

We conducted five formal interviews with advice and equality agencies. Advice A works in a local advice centre and has a specific remit to work on an integrated migrant workers' programme. Unlike other interviewees in his view the gender breakdown in relation to migrant workers was more like 55 per cent men and 45 per cent women, although this was for all sectors and not just for the highly skilled professionals. Advice B is an advice centre that holds specialist advice sessions for migrant workers. The centre had limited information on high skilled professional migrants. Very few clients who could be defined as highly skilled used its services.



Advice A had supported a couple of high skilled workers in the sector who had come to the UK with skills which they were desperate to get recognised but the costs of doing this had been very high. In his view employers were missing out on good employees by failing to tackle the issue of accreditation.

For Advice A issues of job segregation had kept professionally qualified migrants from moving into jobs that were equivalent to the skills they possessed. He also believed that there were prejudices that meant that individuals were denied employment, sometimes just on the basis of their name.

3.2.5 The highly skilled focus group

We conducted a focus group of highly skilled workers. LD is a female materials engineer from France who had arrived with a partner and had been working in Cambridge for around four months. JJ is a male Chinese migrant with a qualification in electronic engineering. He obtained his PhD in the UK and had been living in Cambridge for around five months. LL is also Chinese and also has obtained a PhD in electronic engineering in the UK. She was intending to move to the USA to take up an academic post there, having been unable to obtain employment at her level of qualification in the UK. MM is a marketing co-ordinator and has a BSc in Economics from Poland and ten years' experience in business. She has been in the UK for almost 18 months and initially could only get work as a care worker. Although she then obtained work in local government, it was still below her skills' level. GB is Mexican and has a PhD in a science based subject. She had been working in an academic institution in Mexico and has had some casual work in the UK, but has not been able to find more permanent employment. She is married to an EU national who is employed in the hospital sector.

Demographics and numbers

We asked participants about their longer-term plans. LL planned to move to the USA and JJ might consider this if employment prospects did not improve. GB planned to return to her country of origin. MM stated that her move from her country of origin was permanent, even though she might not remain in Cambridge, similarly LD, while at the moment happy in Cambridge, would consider a move to another region if the opportunities were better. Thus for most their stay in Cambridge was seen as temporary, in part because of their difficulty in accessing work that matched their qualifications.

Skill shortages

Most of the focus group participants felt that there were certain areas, for example, bio-chemistry and civil engineering, where it was relatively easy for overseas applicants to get work, due to severe skills' shortages. But otherwise there were no skills' shortages that assisted easy entry into employment for overseas workers.

Employment issues

Most of the focus group participants felt that they had been held back from accessing jobs that were equal to their qualifications. Issues of gender together with nationality made their paths into appropriate work particularly difficult, as LL noted, comparing the situation in the USA, where she had recently secured employment, and the situation in the UK:

'They [the USA] have an open door [immigration] system and they have more industry vacancies than here. Unlike EU students, as a person with a Chinese passport I need a work permit and so students like me will always be at the bottom of the list.. I also need to consider that I'm female, looking for work in engineering. I really want to stay in Cambridge as I have been here for seven years, but no job and no food on the table in such an expensive country, so that's why I have given up.'



She viewed her situation as not being unique and knew of many other overseas students who had qualified in the UK and who had not been able to find work, leaving them with the choice of either returning to their country of origin or moving on to the USA.

When asked about training one of the participants said that as a temporary worker she had no access to the training available to permanent staff.

Recognition of qualifications

MM too had experienced difficulties in obtaining appropriate employment in the UK, mainly due to difficulties in getting her overseas qualifications and experience recognised. LL felt that it was almost impossible for someone based outside the UK to access employment within engineering, as there were so many applicants already resident in the UK. All focus group participants held the same view; that difficulties in getting skilled jobs were exacerbated if you were based outside the UK. There was perceived to be a steady supply or even over-supply of UK/EU students/applicants already based in the UK and it was easier for employers to recruit them, thus avoiding relocation costs and work permit difficulties.

Language issues and provision

Language was seen as a potential barrier to appropriate employment. For example, LD felt that while she spoke English and had learnt it at school, her level of fluency was not sufficiently high to get the kind of job that she desired. Participants spoke of being laughed at because of their accent and of not necessarily having the level of technical language required in employment. One participant intended to take up English classes to improve her communication skills, which in her view were holding her back.

Racism and discrimination

Some participants stated that they felt that local residents had not really welcomed their presence. Two participants noted that while their work colleagues were friendly they were rarely included in out of work activities, such as going to the pub or a bar or going out for a meal. In their view they were perceived as foreigners and not really integrated fully into the workplace. General feelings of isolation at work were also discussed. At the same time, some participants were positive about their work environments and importantly stated that the experience of having worked in Cambridge was considered good for their future career prospects and that it would make finding work in their country of origin easier.

General service provision

In general focus group participants were positive about the advantages of living in Cambridge. It was perceived as an attractive and safe city to live in. Participants also were proud of having worked and/or studied in Cambridge, due to its international reputation. It was seen as a great area to come and work in and recognised as an international and diverse city, with an ethnic and cultural mix, which 'aids the feeling of being home'. Local amenities were described as excellent and specific mention was made of the theatres, fitness clubs, music, the botanical gardens, libraries, cinemas, refuse and recycling services and galleries. One participant had taken account of the high quality of local schooling in her decision to move to Cambridge. Another spoke of the region being 'good for families' although she also commented on the need for more open space play areas for children and the lack of play centres or their prohibitive cost which were unfavourably compared with those in other countries.

None of the participants had experienced difficulties in registering with a GP and in general there was satisfaction with medical services, although one participant had experienced difficulty when it came to needing emergency hospital treatment, but this was mainly because she lived outside Cambridge, in a town where there were no emergency weekend services. Educational services similarly were highly



valued. Although only two participants had used the local libraries, they also were described as excellent.

For those coming with partners there were acknowledged difficulties in finding appropriate work for both. Less attractive was the transport system and the fact that in more affordable areas of the city transport links were poor. People also spoke of some residential areas being 'very noisy' and of social disturbances. There were references to the drinking culture in the UK and that to 'fit in' there was pressure on individuals to drink. While local inhabitants in general were welcoming, for the Polish participant there was a perception of locals being more hostile to recent arrivals from Poland and most participants were aware of negative national headlines referring to the arrival of migrant workers from A8 countries. One participant also felt that this hostility was being generalized to all overseas people, including students in the city. More generally, there was little interaction between them and their neighbours and across the board participants said that they did not really feel part of or integrated into the local community, apart from those where there were local ethnic communities, like the Chinese or Polish communities that they could integrate within. In general participants felt that to 'integrate' they needed to have money to socialise, particularly since they were rarely invited to local people's homes so that socializing, such as it was, happened only in public places. Those who did not enjoy drinking found it difficult to socialize.

Most participants felt that work commitments made it difficult to participate more widely within local civic society but more particularly their feelings of isolation from the wider community undermined their ability to get involved locally. However, GB felt that she had got involved to some extent, particularly with her son's school and that local people had been welcoming.

The city was also seen as a very expensive place to live, particularly as far as housing costs were concerned. Although accommodation was available, rents were high and living costs were described as 'overtaking your career plans', as individuals were obliged to accept whatever work there was to meet their housing costs. MM described this as:

'I know there is a period I have to just go through and I am still positive about moving to the UK. It's not a complaint; I just need to find solutions. It is still better here than in Poland, despite the difficulties it's still ok'.

One participant commuted from Royston to Cambridge because housing was cheaper outside Cambridge and it was possible to consider buying a property there but not in Cambridge.

Discussion of the findings

In investigating skilled migrant workers the research suggests that there may be differences in migrant worker experience, dependent on the type of skills they carry. Generally high skilled knowledge migrants were welcomed by employers and were not rejected by local workers. Indeed they generally did not have the term 'migrant' attached to them and were more commonly referred to as 'overseas workers' or 'international workers', to separate them from 'migrant workers' a term that had negative connotations and was identified with low skilled work. However, the research also suggests that there is little engagement between service and advice providers and highly skilled knowledge migrants. They are perceived as being unproblematic, as having no difficulties in adjusting to their new environments and as generally representing a privileged elite. In reality, knowledge migrants themselves present a less positive picture of their migration experiences and this may influence decisions on whether to return to their country of origin or move to a different country. Thus if there are concerns and difficulties which are not being addressed, the risk is that the current in-flow of highly skilled migrants could be reversed,



particularly as new markets for their skills develop. The interviews also point to little evidence of employer encouragement of their wider involvement within local communities and structures.

4.1. Critical analysis of the findings

In any research, where the views of different actors are sought, the picture that emerges is not necessarily uniform and accounts differ dependent on who is providing them, what their relationship is to the issue under discussion and what implications the position they advance has for their peer group. In the qualitative interviews that we conducted, while much of the data gathered reflects or re-enforces the existing body of knowledge, as evidenced in the review of the literature, the value of qualitative research is that in its evaluation, data evidence can be triangulated.

In this research some issues were not contested. These include:

- That there are serious skill shortages for highly qualified professional workers. The main industries in the area – the university; the hospital and the IT industries – are all operating in a global market where there is a need to attract from a global workforce;
- Save in the public sector, there is no trade union organisation covering this group of workers and employment issues are raised and resolved informally; and
- There is a common consensus as to the demographic profile and make up of the international professional workforce.

a) Skill shortages

All of the respondents referred to skill shortages as a reason for the recruitment of international workers. But by skills shortages they did not mean that there was a shortage of local workers with the necessary qualifications and ability to do the job. Skill shortages were defined as cases where employers were seeking out those with the highest level of qualification, and as representing the best in the field. Many respondents made reference to the fact that large numbers of international migrants possessed high-level degrees, in particular PhDs. and had been selected for these reasons from a global labour market. Employers were not just trying to fill posts; they were interested in attracting globally the best, as this was the way that they could stay ahead of their competitors. They were seeking to establish and maintain centres of excellence that required them to fish new workers from the largest pools available.

b) Employment issues

Most respondents stated that there were no differences in the terms and conditions of work enjoyed by international migrants and those enjoyed by local workers in the sector. We were only provided with information on one instance where it seemed that an international worker had accepted a lower rate of pay, unaware of the going rate. However, there was some evidence of job segregation and of international workers being assigned to less attractive jobs. There was also a substantial amount of short-term and temporary employment, in part driven by immigration rules that do not allow the issue of permanent contracts under work permit and HSMP schemes. Additionally, the focus group discussion suggests that for some international workers there are particular difficulties in accessing appropriate employment

c) Demographics and numbers

Although there is no official statistical data on the composition of the international professional labour force in the Cambridgeshire area, the respondent interviews suggest that within the individual places of work more detailed information may be held. Employers generally were able to indicate the number of overseas workers they employed and their countries of origin. In general they categorised these workers as young, males mainly in their late 20s but almost all under the age of 40. They were generally



educated at least to degree level, but many had higher degrees. They came from a wide range of countries, in particular India, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, the USA, China and the EU were mentioned. Many had qualified in the UK.

However, in other areas, the views of respondents differed significantly, particularly in relation to:

- Racism and discrimination;
- English language knowledge; and
- Recognition of qualifications and work permits.

a) Racism and discrimination

In general most key respondents did not make reference to any local hostilities addressed towards international workers. Cambridgeshire was seen as an area that had hosted highly skilled workers for many years and they were accepted as part of the high skilled labour market. Employers, in particular, stated that all workers were equally accepted in the workplace. Trade union respondents appeared reluctant to address issues of racism and hostility in relation to highly skilled workers and claimed that there was none or that whenever minor issues there were had been resolved. However, advice agencies and the workers themselves suggested that the reality was more complex and that there was discrimination against overseas workers. Where there were different jobs available it was perceived that work of lower esteem were more likely to be filled by overseas workers. From the perspective of the international workers there was felt to be more hostility to their presence in local communities and furthermore this hostility was being fed by negative media descriptions of recent A8 migrants. It is also relevant to note that many respondents were unable to differentiate between black and minority ethnic UK workers and overseas workers. There was a tendency to 'bunch' both groups as one and this suggests ambivalence at the very least, in terms of their views on what made up host local communities.

b) Language issues and provision

In general it was agreed by all of the parties, save the workers themselves that there were no major issues of language and communication in the sector. International workers were perceived as usually being fluent in English and had often studied their subject in English. In some cases employers would test for communication skills, generally by a telephone or written interview. But in the main they aimed to employ individuals with high levels of English already. This meant that there was less focus on the need to provide English classes for international workers. However, the workers in the focus group were less confident about their abilities in English, even where they had studied in the language. This suggests that even for this group, there may be a case for specialist English language courses aimed at providing high levels of technical linguistic ability.

c) Recognition of qualifications

Employer interviews suggested that recognition of qualifications was not a major issue for highly skilled professionals as they made enquiries about qualifications before conducting interviews for new staff and all those employed had the required qualifications. However non-employer respondents suggested that there were issues over recognition of qualifications and that some workers felt obliged to re-take a qualification in this country, even though they already had it in their country of origin, as they were unable to have their original qualification recognised. There were differences of opinion between employers as to which migration route they preferred. Some only employed workers who already had a right to work in the UK – for example those whose spouses had a right to work and who therefore automatically gained the right themselves. These employers felt that the work permit scheme was too complicated and preferred not to have to apply for permits. Others recruited workers who did need work permits and applied for these, sometimes using the services of lawyers or other agents to complete the necessary documentation. Some preferred work permits and others preferred the HSMP.



4.2. Implications of the findings

The main implications to be drawn from the findings are that as far as highly skilled professional migrants are concerned, Cambridgeshire area employers are always likely to be drawn to employing overseas workers to ensure that they remain competitive. These employers identify themselves more as global than local employers. International professional workers also believe that a period of work outside their country of origin is an imperative for career progression.

Although some employers provide generous packages to attract the highest qualified workers and there are some examples of welcome and information packs to assist workers in settling in their new environment, less attention is paid to their situation beyond the workplace, for example to their social and personal needs. We were unable to uncover much information that addressed the wider needs of overseas migrants and although their demographics suggest that they may not presently have wider social needs, for example schooling for children and longer term accommodation, where these needs are present there is little by way of support in meeting them. For example international migrants had difficulties in setting up mortgages if they wanted to buy their own home and were likely longer-term to face challenges over pension entitlement, due to their having worked in different countries and not always for the same employer.

5.1. Main lessons learned

Migration into the Cambridgeshire area for highly skilled workers has been a feature of the knowledge sector for a long time and there was nothing to suggest that the rate of migration was likely to change significantly in the way that it had for those sectors employing non-knowledge workers. Indeed there may possibly be a reduction in overseas recruitment, for example in the health sector where there is a projected decline in the number of overseas recruited doctors and nursing staff. Furthermore the introduction of the new five tier points system for migrant work permission in the UK is likely to make it more difficult for some professional groups to gain entry to the UK labour market and the study suggests that where immigration rules are complex, employers will avoid hiring workers covered by such rules. Thus while international migrants will continue to be targeted for appointment by employers keen to attract the best talent, they may be more selective as to where they hire from. In turn this may reduce the pool of available workers and may limit the ability of the county to maintain its global employment profile.

At the same time the research has suggested that the wider ethnic composition of the highly skilled professional workforce makes it more difficult for agencies, both voluntary and government, to target provision to an increasingly diverse workforce and more importantly to differentiate between overseas professionals and UK black and minority ethnic workers and this may mean that the type of provision directed towards the former is not appropriate to their needs.

With regard to accommodation, in general employers appear to offer a substantial amount of assistance to newly arrived highly skilled workers and there was no evidence of highly skilled workers experiencing poor or inadequate accommodation, in the way that our study of the construction sector has revealed. However, the study suggests that there may be greater levels of racism and discrimination against international migrants than is generally acknowledged.



5.2. Applicability of the lessons learned to other contexts

Although some of the lessons learned in this research are specifically related to the knowledge-based sectors, there are others that are more generally applicable. International migrants in the knowledge sector have been coming to Cambridgeshire area for many years. As migration in the non-knowledge sector grows it is useful to consider the strategies that employers have adopted in attracting knowledge migrant workers. The fact that all the parties are open to presenting positive images of overseas worker recruitment in part explains the success of this recruitment strategy. It is thus useful to consider how the profile of international migrant workers has been articulated in a way that at least in the past had not fed into an agenda of hostility and racism from local UK residents. Highly skilled overseas migration may provide some useful examples of successful inclusion and cohesion.

5.3. Transnational aspects of the lessons learned

The Cambridgeshire area continues to represent one of the most important regional areas for the employment of knowledge migrants, certainly in the UK, but also globally. The research suggests that some of the measures undertaken to attract global recruits to the area, have been very successful. They have not only helped construct a highly skilled professional workforce, but have also assured that local residents value it. In other States with a focus on the development of an economy based on high tech industries, similar methods might be utilised to attract knowledge migrants.

The research shows that while there is little official statistical data on the composition of the international migrant workforce force, there is more general awareness of their demographic profile. But better data would allow more targeted service provision and would allow the sector to better estimate its future needs for workers.

Conclusions

The knowledge sector is characterised by low (or indeed non-) unionisation in the private sector but by relatively high levels of unionisation in the public sector. Although there is a strong incentive, among many knowledge workers, to seek a period of employment outside their country of origin, employment is often insecure consisting of short-term contracts only. Employers generally value knowledge migrants as highly qualified and essential to the success of their organisations.

Suggestions for further work

There are a number of issues raised by this research where we would suggest that there could be future work, including:

- The need for robust quantitative data on international migrants in the region;
- More qualitative data on international migrant pathways into the region and in particular information on their future career paths, and on longer-term decisions regarding residency and family reunion;
- More qualitative data on the reasons why international migrants come to and leave the region;
- More comparative data on how other regional economies, both inside the UK and beyond – for example Silicon Valley in the USA – attract international professional migrants. Information on their processes of integration would be particularly valuable.
- Research that explores in depth the experiences of international migrants through semi-structured interviews with a sample that is large enough to reflect the various professions and industries in which they are employed.



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Annexes

Annex A: A review of the literature

The review provided below has a wider focus than just one of exploring the literature relating to the two sectors the subject of this research. The literature review provides a broad overview of the scene in which the field-research will be conducted, it also informs on definitions, current statistics, reports on the labour market on the impact of migrant workers on the national and regional economy, and on current policy debates and legislation aiming to regulate grey channels through which migrants are exploited.

The review draws most of its sources from academic studies, newspapers, reports from non-governmental organizations, trade unions and government and statutory bodies, including:

- The Home Office
- The Trades' Union Congress reports
- Reports of the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)
- The UK Parliament and its Select Committees
- Reports from the Health and Safety Executive
- The Office of National Statistics
- Internet websites and media reports

1.1 Definitions

1.1.1 Migration and migrant worker

International migration can be understood as a sub-category of a wider concept of movement, 'embracing various types and forms of human mobility (from commuting to emigration)'. Further, 'migration streams are dynamic, involve different types of people and motivations, have different roles and different impacts in host societies, and are influenced and managed by different agencies and institutions' (Clarke et al, 2003). A recent report for the OECD for example, suggests that recent migration from the accession countries is characterised by 'new migration types' (Garnier, 2001), in which migrants make short term, short distance moves in response to difficult and uncertain economic conditions in their home country.

There is no single accepted definition of a migrant worker. The International Passenger Survey (IPS), on which much of the data collected on migration is based, defines a migrant worker as 'a person who has resided abroad for a year or more and who states on arrival the intention to stay in the UK for a year or more'. (Robinson, 2002) However, the problem with this definition is that it fails to capture the complexity of experiences of migrant workers in the UK labour market. It excludes seasonal workers who genuinely will not stay for a year or more. It also excludes those who on arrival do not intend to stay for a year or more but who then overstay. But most obviously it excludes those who enter with false documents or who avoid border controls.

As Clarke (et al 2003) comment, 'migration streams are dynamic, involve different types of people and motivations, have different roles and different impacts on host societies, and are influenced and managed by different agencies and institutions'. In order to capture this diversity, the agreed definition we have used for this research project is: 'workers are those who have come to the UK within the last five years specifically to find or take up work, whether intending to remain permanently or temporarily and whether documented or undocumented'.



This review does not use the term 'illegal migrant' when referring to those without permission to work and instead uses the term 'undocumented' or occasionally 'unauthorised' worker. This encapsulates both those who have entered the UK lawfully, but are working without permission, for example because they have overstayed or because their permission to work is constrained in some way and they are working outside these permitted constraints, by working more hours a week than permitted or by working in a job different to that for which they had permission to work. It also includes those who have entered the UK without any permission to work and individuals who have entered the country illegally. This category of undocumented workers may also include individuals who enter the UK with the intention to work, even though their visa status did not give them permission to do so. There is anecdotal evidence that some overseas students enter the UK under a student visa with the pretext of following a course of education but who never attend such classes. If their main intention is to work and they work more than 20 hours a week they would fall within the category of undocumented workers.

This review focuses on migrant workers and thus differentiates their position from that of refugees and asylum seekers who enter the UK other than for work reasons. Asylum seekers do not have the right to undertake paid work until their status as a refugee has been confirmed or until they are given permission to work through leave to remain on humanitarian or other grounds.

Definition of Highly Skilled Workers

There are a number of terms used to identify internationally mobile highly skilled workers including: qualified personnel, human resources in science and technology, scientists and engineers, IT workers, 'brains' (as in 'brain drain', 'brain gain' or 'brain circulation') or knowledge migrants (OECD, 2002). But despite the vast terminology, the question of who the 'highly skilled' are is problematic, as there is no agreed definition or concept of 'highly skilled' workers at an international level.

For instance, OECD (2002) identifies highly skilled workers as individuals in science and technology within tertiary education. While Salt (2005) uses broad occupational categories: professional, managerial and technical specialists. However, the Global Commission for International Migration suggests that 'the traditional distinction between skilled and unskilled workers in certain respects is an unhelpful one' and proposes the use of 'essential workers' instead (GCIM, 2005).

At an operational level, highly skilled migrants are usually identified using education and work experience as proxy indicators to differentiate between un/skilled and highly skilled workers. However, using this imperfect proxy can create substantial deficiencies and gaps in the statistical data available, making it difficult to grasp the complex international mobility patterns of highly skilled workers (SOPEMI, 2005).

1.2. Statistics on migrant workers in the UK

This section summarises statistics on migrants coming to the UK from different sources of data. Salt (2004) brings together data based on the International Passenger Survey (IPS), work permit applications and asylum settlement grants, as well as reports from the Labour Force Survey on occupations and industries employing migrant workers.

1.2.1 Immigration and emigration flows by source

The International Passenger Survey (IPS) collects information on the intentions of passengers at air and sea ports, from which the Office for National Statistics (ONS) produces adjusted flows statistics on immigration and emigration by British and non-British nationals¹¹. From Salt (2004), the overall trend since the 1990s has been rising overall net gains peaking at approximately 172,000 in 2001 then falling



to 151,000 in 2003. Rising net gains of foreign nationals has compensated for losses of British nationals in recent years – in each of the years between 2000 and 2003 the balance of non-British migration has exceeded 200,000. In 2003 this totalled 236,000. There has been a shift in the nationality make-up of the flows towards more New Commonwealth and Other Foreign nationals and less Old Commonwealth and EU nationals. Unadjusted IPS statistics for the balance of 181,000 non-British nationals coming into the UK in 2003 indicate 55% were men. Approximately 62% of the balance was aged between 15 and 24.

Labour Force Survey: The LFS is the only comprehensive source of data on migrants working in the UK, irrespective of their immigration status or route of entry to the UK. By regrossing the data, it is estimated that the foreign national population in the UK was 2.857 million in 2004, an increase of 4.2% from 2003. This represented 4.9% of the total UK population. Only a subset of this group would be recent migrants¹². The largest groups were Irish, Italians, Germans, French and Portuguese, many of whom are likely to have been in the UK for longer than five years. Europe overall was the largest source of foreign nationals (43.2% of the total in 2004). However, the arrival of people from Central and Eastern Europe has been growing rapidly in recent years to 184,000 in 2004, prior to the entry into the EU of the A8 States. (Salt, 2004)

Looking just at the 1.445 million foreign nationals active in the workforce, the regional distribution is very uneven. In 2004, Greater London accounted for 658,000, 45.5% of the total. The Southeast accounted for another 269,000 foreign workers (ibid). However, although the small sample size inhibits the statistics, the data from the LFS also suggests that incoming migrants are now spreading themselves geographically across the country more widely than was previously the trend.

Control of Immigration Statistics: In the year to mid-2005, there were an estimated 588,000 people migrating to the UK for a year or more. This was 59,000 higher than the previous mid-year period. Net international in-migration increased to 235,000. This was the highest estimate of net in-migration since the present method of estimating. The increase in migration since 2004 has been mainly due to a rise in the number of citizens coming from the eight accession countries (A8) that joined the European Union (EU) in May 2004.

National Insurance Numbers: There were workers from over 200 nationalities registered with the National Insurance records in 2000-01. However, over half of all migrant workers were from only 10 countries, most of them belonging to the EU or the Commonwealth group (Robinson, 2002).

1.2.2 Statistics of documented migrants in the U.K

Acceptances for settlement

The number of people granted settlement in the UK (excluding EEA nationals) has risen consistently in the last decade from 55,640 in 1993 to 141,490 in 2003, which represented an increase of 22% from 2002. The majority of grants in 2003 were to spouses and dependents (95,020 in total). Grants of settlement to persons recognised as refugees or under exceptional leave arrangements fell by 31% to 12,580 in 2003 (Salt, 2004).

Employment-related categories of settlement accounted for 16,020 grants in 2003, which was an increase of 46% from the previous year. These included employment with a work permit after four years in the UK, permit free employment for business and other persons of independent means and Commonwealth citizens with a UK-born grandparent, their spouses and dependants.



Overall, grants to nationals from all of the regions of the world have increased between 1997 and 2003, however there were small changes in the relative importance of each geographical area. In 2003, the respective shares were Africa (32%), Indian sub-continent (21%), Remainder of Asia (14%), the Americas (12%), Europe (11%), Oceania (5%) and the Middle East (4%) (Ibid)

Work permit holders

The Work Permits system has been the main mechanism for managing labour migration into the UK. It is also the primary means whereby highly skilled migrants enter the UK for work. In recent years it has expanded considerably, with several new schemes introduced. Over the period from 1995 to 2003, total applications (including work permits, extensions, changes of employment etc) rose every year from 38,617 to 161,699. The trend in approvals largely matches that of applications. Salt (2004) estimates that over the period from 2000 to 2004, health and medical services (25.9%), computer services (15.8%) and administration, business and managerial services (12%) have been the major industry groups accounting for applications. The breakdown of permits and permissions issued by nationality shows that Indian (9.3%) were the largest group. Other nationalities notable for large increases were Filipinos, South Africans and Malaysians.

In the UK, the highly skilled migrant programme (HSMP) was launched, initially as a pilot, in January 2002. The top five industries granted work permits (HSMP) were for health and medical services (24%), computer services (17%), administrative, business and managerial services (13%), educational and cultural activities (8%) and financial services (8%) (ibid). Professional and managerial workers accounted for the majority of the gainfully employed under the work permits scheme. Associated professionals and technical occupations account for at least half of the number of permits issued each year. In 2002, there were 103,000 non-British holding professional and managerial positions, while 57,000 non-British people were in manual and clerical occupations (ibid, pg. 57-59).

The sectors-based scheme (SBS) was introduced in May 2003 to address shortages in lower skilled occupations, initially in food processing and hospitality. The scheme is in the process of being closed down.

The seasonal agricultural workers scheme (SAWS) which has traditionally supplied migrant seasonal labour has also been much reduced also reflecting the fact that many of those coming to the UK under the scheme prior to 1 May 2004 were from A10 countries who now have a right to work without having to take employment through a scheme.

Working holidaymakers are a significant group in the labour market, numbering 46,505 in 2003. The source countries are predominantly the 'Old Commonwealth' of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa, but Asian numbers from India, Malaysia and Sri Lanka have grown. There are no statistics on the regional employment or occupations of working holidaymakers.

Worker Registration Scheme

When the eight East European countries (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Slovenia) joined the European Union (collectively referred to henceforth as the A8) in May 2004, nationals from there were immediately granted the right to work in the UK whereas the majority of other EU countries (the prior EU15) placed time-limits and restrictions on their migration to work. The Home Office has required workers from the E8 to be registered – only after 12 months work are they then entitled to benefits like Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Child Benefit, Housing Benefit, Income Support and Pension Credit.



Between 1 May 2004 and 31 March 2006, an estimated total of 392,000 applications for the Worker Registration Scheme were received (Accession Monitoring Report, May 2006). The report found:

A significant growth in the number of A8 nationals working in the UK. Individuals from Poland made up 61 per cent of those who have registered under the scheme; those from Lithuania made up 12 per cent; from Slovakia it was 10 per cent; and from Latvia six per cent;

Only six per cent of those who have registered since May 2004 had dependants in the UK;

One third of A8 nationals are working in administration, business and management, just over a fifth (22 per cent) are working in hospitality and catering; and 12 per cent are in agriculture.

The Institute for Public Policy Research explored the impact of EU enlargement and its effect on labour migration to the UK (IPPR, 2004). The report addresses questions on EU migrant rights, their effect on labour migration to the UK, how long migrants are likely to stay and the skills they are likely to have. It also contains a projection of migrants to the UK from 2004 through to 2030. IPPR (2004) concludes by stating that only a relatively small proportion of EU migrants will actually migrate to the UK and even fewer will do so permanently. It also suggests that, as and if conditions improve in their home countries, fewer will migrate and more will return home. It concurs that enlargement is likely to result in substantial economic gains for the UK.

1.2.3 Statistics of undocumented workers

Due to the very nature and mobility of undocumented workers, it is very difficult to calculate total numbers by region. Even general estimates are problematic and politically contentious. As Pinkerton, McLaughlin and Salt (2004) discuss in their review of methodologies for the Home Office on how to size the "illegally resident population", both direct measurements and indirect estimates have their problems.

As by definition, since undocumented or unauthorised migrant workers do not identify themselves to the authorities, there is scarce information on the scale of undocumented or unauthorised migrants. Vague estimates of their numbers can only be derived from existing indicators, such as the numbers of refused entries, removals of asylum applicants, apprehensions of undocumented migrants at the border or in the country, or numbers of arrests during regularisation exercises (CEC, 2004).

Numbers of undocumented migrants published or circulated are often police estimates that may be based on numbers of deportations or of regularisations. They may seriously underestimate total numbers in an illegal situation. For example, numbers of women in irregular, domestic and service-sector jobs are likely to be under-estimated because they are 'hidden' in private accommodation and employers do not reveal their presence (Salt, 2006).

Even so, estimates of annual inflows of undocumented migration into the EU are thought to reach over six figures. More precise figures cannot be considered reliable and such estimates do not add to the understanding of the complexities of undocumented migration and are open to misinterpretation. The scale of undocumented migration is nevertheless considered to be significant, and the reduction of undocumented migration flows is a political priority at both national and EU level (COM (2004) 412).

1.2.4 Statistical data for the East of England

The East of England encompasses the counties of Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk. The East of England region has a population of 5.4 million people, with a total labour force of 2.6 million. The wholesale and retail trade is the region's largest sector while agriculture has a larger proportion of the labour force than in any other region in England and Wales.



Table 1: Employment in the East of England's main sectors¹³

	No.	%
Agriculture; hunting and forestry	49,009	1.9%
Fishing	638	0.0%
Mining and quarrying	5,457	0.2%
Manufacturing	373,155	14.5%
Electricity; gas and water supply	16,223	0.6%
Construction	196,461	7.6%
Wholesale and retail trade	445,887	17.3%
Hotels and restaurants	107,418	4.2%
Transport; storage and communications	191,252	7.4%
Financial intermediaries	149,883	5.8%
Real estate; renting and business activities	343,264	13.3%
Public administration & defence; social security	133,066	5.2%
Education	189,274	7.3%
Health and social work	249,776	9.7%
Other	128,616	5.0%
All	2,579,379	

Source: 2001 Census, ONS

The unemployment rate within the region at the beginning of 2005 was 4.1 per cent, lower than the UK average of 4.8 per cent. However, the regional labour market has slackened in recent months, with employment falling by 30,000 in a year¹⁴. As shown in Table 2, drawn from the Census 2001, 93 per cent of the population residing in the East of England was born in the UK.

Table 2: *Country of birth of residents in the East of England*

Country of birth	No.	%
United Kingdom	5,010,654	93.0%
Ireland	46,792	0.9%
Channel Islands and Isle of Man	2,648	0.0%
Western Europe	79,478	1.5%
Central and Eastern Europe	17,854	0.3%
Africa	52,221	1.0%
Middle East	13,647	0.3%
Far East Asia	33,378	0.6%
South Asia	58,672	1.1%
North and Central America	38,019	0.7%
Caribbean and West Indies	13,770	0.3%
South America	4,860	0.1%
Oceania	13,598	0.3%
Other	2,546	0.0%
All	5,388,137	

Source: 2001 Census, ONS

The East of England has been the destination for a significant number of migrant workers for many years, in particular the agricultural and food processing sectors have traditionally recruited large numbers of seasonal migrant workers, originally from within the UK and recently from other European countries, now mainly the A8 countries.



1.3. UK immigration policy: rights of migrant workers

The 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their families entered into force in 2003. The Convention extends basic human rights to all migrant workers and their families throughout the entire migration process. It accords additional rights to documented workers, but also protects a core of human rights for all migrant workers, regardless of their legal status in the host country. However, U.K is yet to ratify this Convention. Despite government claims that its policies strike the right balance between the need for immigration control and the protection of immigrant workers, evidence suggests otherwise.

The rights of migrant workers in the UK largely have been tied down to the immigration policies followed by the UK. In the 1960's, a 'border police' approach to immigration was followed, with one of the aims being 'to severely restrict the numbers coming to live permanently or to work in the UK' (Flynn, 2005). In subsequent years, these immigration controls were gradually unwound, mostly with recognition of increased demand and opportunities for migration, as well as other pressures as explained by Flynn (2005). The 1998 White paper 'Fairer, Firmer, Faster' concentrated on the need to improve asylum procedures as well as administrative efficiency. However, the reassertion of national state control over all immigration procedures was the dominant element (ibid). 'Secure borders, Safe haven' was the government's second white paper, which emerged in 2002 (Home Office, 2002). This outlined a broad approach encompassing migration, nationality and integration issues. It framed economic migration as being essential for business strategy, with various schemes to open up channels for seasonal and temporary migration schemes to cater for labour shortages especially in sectors such as tourism, hospitality and agriculture. However, there was no mention of the rights of such workers who were admitted under these schemes, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

According to Morris (2004), the emphasis in the New Labour government's 'managed migration' plans turns not so much on the delivery of rights as the selective distribution of opportunities, the overall purpose being 'to manage legal migration in the interest of the UK economy'. Access to employment through various immigration laws, as well as the arena of family unification, access to social support systems and rights of asylum seekers show a system of 'stratified rights' for migrant workers. The cautious system of 'management and regulation' involves a limitation or contraction of rights for some categories of migrant workers, while for some others, provides eligibility for particular rights (ibid).

On 7 February 2005, the UK government released its five-year strategy for asylum and immigration. This plan has been criticised for potentially exacerbating the vulnerability of migrant workers and their families. The net effect of these proposals is to curtail legitimate labour migration routes: as the chief executive of the Immigration Advisory Service has argued, this will increase the likelihood that "more workers will be sucked into the economy via smugglers and traffickers, with appalling consequences of exploitation" (UNA – UK, 2005).

While organizations such as Joint Council for Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) and Institute for Public Policy research (IPPR) are advocating reform of these 'managed migration' policies in favour of according explicit rights to migrant workers, there remains a paucity of information on the numbers of migrant workers, their labour market experiences and the exploitation they are subject to. There have been individual acknowledgements from government ministers of the problems that migrant workers face, such as not being paid the national minimum wage and non-protection under the health and safety regulation (Gapes, 2002). The UK economy has been described as a 'paradox' (RSA Migration Commission 2005) in a report which criticises the current system of managed migration on the ground that it does not meet the economic requirements of the country and that it 'imposes intolerable levels of



abuse on many migrant workers, particularly low-skilled and irregular migrants'. This report concludes that while society is focussed on creating a high-skill economy and government policy on migration is directed to that end, the growth of this high-skilled economy 'seems to be accompanied by a growth in the demand for low skilled labour, which cannot be met by the domestic workforce'.

1.4. Migrant workers in the UK

1.4.1 General profile

Migrants have always been active in the labour market, with the Irish labour being a prominent feature of the Industrial revolution and of the trade union movement in Britain. Following the Second World War, migrants from Italy, and Eastern Europe joined those from the Commonwealth in plugging gaps in the labour force (TUC/ JCWI, 2002).

Gender

Changing labour market needs and immigration policies have restructured the female ratio of migratory flows. In the past women often migrated to join spouses and family members, but in recent years the numbers of females migrating independently as workers has increased considerably. According to the State of the Population Report 2006, women constitute almost half of all international migrants world wide – 95 million (UNFPA, 2006). Within Europe women were over-represented amongst migrant workers arriving from Eastern Europe (54% female and 46% male), while men are over-represented from the Southern EU states (55% male and 45% female), (Munz and Fassmann, 2004). However, when the numbers of undocumented and illegal flows are also considered, it is likely that both the numbers and proportions of women are much higher.

The international trend towards the feminisation of migration is clearly evident in the context of the UK, with increasing numbers of female migrant workers. Since the early 1980s, there has been a growth in the proportion of women amongst employed migrants; the ratio in the net inflow of migrants was six women to four men between 1983-1999 (Dobson et al, 2001). In 2005, over half of the migrant population was female (52.9%) although the gender balance varies by origin (Salt, 2005). Amongst the total migrant population, Europeans were more likely to be female (53.8%) – Germans (61%), Spaniards (57.4%) & French (56%). The male predominance amongst Italians has eased and there is now a balance between the sexes.

Those from the Americas also had a female predominance (54.2 per cent), especially from the US (57.5 per cent). The slight male excess among Africans that existed until 2002 has been reversed, with 52.3 per cent in 2005 being women. Asians were equally divided; Indians and Sri Lankans are more likely to be female and Pakistanis and Bangladeshis male. Women are now the lead sex among Australians, whereas New Zealanders continue to be the other way round. The male: female ratio amongst those who applied to the Worker Registration Scheme between May 2004 – July 2006 was 58% male and 42% female. However this proportion has varied from a ratio of 53: 47 in the first quarter after accession to 59:41 in Q2 2006 (Accession Monitoring Report, 2006).

Yet there is little data on gender divisions within skilled and professional labour (Iredale, 2001). The limited data available indicates there has been a positive trend in the proportion of women represented amongst professional and managerial workers between 1975-1999 (Dobson et al, 2001). However, female migrant workers continue to be prominent amongst several of the labour intensive 3D jobs (dirty, degrading and dangerous), in the domestic (as nannies, au pairs or cleaners), textiles, hotel and catering and agricultural sectors as well as in the sex industry (Dobson et al, 2001; Kofman, 2003).



Age

While the age structure of migration flows into Europe varies significantly between countries, according to the timing and the circumstances of migration, it is heavily skewed towards the working age population for most migrant groups. This reflects typical migration patterns where those who migrate tend to do so before they have children.

The percentage of migrants in the employed workforce was highest for people aged 25-34, followed by those aged 35-44, and lowest for 45-59 year olds (Green et al, 2005). According to Dobson et al (2001), the proportion of migrant workers within the total workforce aged between 25-54 fluctuates annually at around 75%. However the proportion of EU nationals in this age group tends to be lower than that of non-EU nationals. Overall the trend for EU nationals is, to a small degree, to be younger than non-EU nationals.

The trend towards younger migrant workers is consistent amongst A8 workers. Between May 2004-June 2006, 82% of registered A8 workers were aged 18-34. This percentage has been fairly consistent across the period, although there were more people in the 18-24 bracket from June - August (Accession Monitoring Report, 2006).

1.4.2 Skills profile

There is significant variation within the migrant population in terms of qualification levels. Migrant worker profiles are more polarised than those of the population as a whole (Glover, 2001). Many migrants are of working age, as they are particularly concentrated in the 25-49 age group. They are more likely to be highly qualified, with 19% holding degrees, compared to 15% of the UK born working age population. However, a greater proportion of the migrant group will also have no qualifications (19% compared to 16% of the UK born population (Haque, 2002)

Profile of Highly Skilled Workers

The patterns of skilled migration reflect wider patterns of international migration. Taking OECD countries only, it has been estimated that in 2000 there was a stock of 59 million migrants, of which 34.6% or 20.4 million were skilled migrants (Docquier and Marfouk, 2005). Within that total, 85% had migrated to just six countries: the US (around 50%), Canada (13.5%), Australia (7.5%), UK (6.2%), Germany (4.9%) and France (3.0%).

An analysis of migration policies within selected EU member states shows that most fast-track systems designed to facilitate the entry of highly skilled workers have been forged around the ICT sector, the public services, in particular the health sector, engineering and the sciences, for instance biotechnology (McLaughlan & Salt, 2002; Munz, 2003).

Within the UK, the HSMP has been operational since 2002 and has grown considerably in recent years. Over the period from 2002-2005, the numbers of applications received rose every year from 2,451 (2002) to 23,286 (2005). The positive trend in applications has been matched with that of approvals, with numbers increasing substantially from 1,155 (2002) to 14,129 (2005). A breakdown of approved applications by nationality shows that Indians were the largest group (58.3%). Other nationalities notable for large increases over the four- year period were Pakistani, Australians and South Africans

1.4.3 National origins

The nationalities of migrants are equally diverse. There were workers from over 200 nationalities registered with the National Insurance records in 2000-01. However, over half of all migrant workers were from only 10 countries, most of them belonging to the EU or the Commonwealth group (Robinson, 2002). With the accession of A8 countries to the EU in May 2004, the flows of migrants from east



Europe have become more important. The dominant nationalities in the Worker Registration Scheme applications in 2005/06 were Polish (62%) followed by Lithuanians (12%) and Slovak (10%) workers (Accession Monitoring Report, 2006). Other nationalities that have been noted in the various regions include: Portuguese in the East and South West (Taylor and Rogaly, 2004), Chinese and Ukrainians in the East of England (TUC, 2004a); Bangladeshis and South Asians in London and the North East, and Chinese and Somalis in South Wales.

1.4.4 Geographical distribution

Research by the TUC concludes that the geographical distribution of these new migrants 'marks a departure from earlier waves of migration, which were predominantly to urban areas' (TUC, 2004b). This points to the spread of migrants to rural areas and to small towns as well as to large cities all over the country. As the Accession Monitoring Report 2006 makes clear, Anglia has now overtaken London with 15% of all A8 registered workers; in contrast the proportion of workers, subject to the registration scheme, applying to London fell from 25% Q2 2004 to 9% Q2 2006.

1.4.5 Occupational distribution

Migrant workers engage in a variety of jobs, often restricted to certain categories and sectors by their immigration status. However, many migrants are concentrated in the industries and sectors where there are particular labour or skill shortages, such as in health, education, catering and agricultural labour.

This bi-polar occupational distribution is also evident amongst A8 nationals – between July 2004 and June 2006, almost 6,500 A8 nationals registered as bus, lorry and coach drivers and 12,700 as care workers. There were 1,500 teachers, researchers and classroom assistants; 600 dental practitioners (including hygienists and dental nurses); and over 2,000 GPs, hospital doctors, nurses and medical specialists (Accession Monitoring Report, 2006). The concentration of migrants in low paid and insecure sectors such as catering and domestic services is explained by the unwillingness or inability of natives to take up these jobs (Glover, 2001).

1.4.6 Immigration status

The different immigration policies on migrants, based on their different nationalities and status, have some bearing on their experiences as migrant workers, for instance the manner in which they enter the UK, their employment status, their relative vulnerabilities and their likelihood of being exploited and victimised by some gangmasters and employers. The more insecure a worker's employment status is, the greater the risk of exploitation. Those who are documented in general have the same employment rights as UK workers, although dependent on their immigration status they may have restrictions on how or where they work.

Undocumented workers:

Undocumented or unauthorised migration falls into a variety of categories, but the two main ones are:

- Those who come by land, sea or air using false documents and utilising organised criminal networks; and
- Those who enter with a valid visa or under a visa-free regime but either overstay or alter the reasons for their stay, without Home Office approval. This can include failed asylum seekers who have not left the country following rejection of their applications.

The line between lawful and undocumented or unauthorised migrant status is a fine one. For example, an individual on a student visa, who works more than the allowed 20 hours a week "falls" into undocumented status, as easily as a migrant worker whose legal status becomes undocumented once she/he overstays. The status of the migrant worker can also change suddenly depending on the law and government policy on migration and employment. For example, the expansion of the EU to include the



10 new countries, and the introduction of new Sector Based Schemes in the hotel, catering and food manufacturing sectors, have created the conditions for the regularisation of a group of workers, literally overnight (Home Office, 2004)

Undocumented workers make up a significant component of the casual/seasonal workforce. Vasta's (2004) paper on informal employment explores the changes in industrial structures that may have led to an increase in the informal economy, and whether such employment is always low paid and exploitative.

The Commission to the European Communities report (CEC, 2004) suggests that the highest percentage of residents in the UK without permission to work are males between the ages of 20 and 30, they are young, mobile, willing to take risks and are generally low skilled. The report also acknowledges that an increasing number of undocumented migrants is educated, and chooses to migrate in search of a better life. Even so there is a tendency for these skilled and professional migrants to be employed in the low-skilled shadow economy, due to the fact that they do not have proper documentation, lack the right qualifications or the required language skills. Yet often their salary is much higher than that for their skilled job in the country of origin, indicating that migration for them is economically motivated.

The Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants, a network of organisations providing assistance to undocumented migrants residing in Europe has collected material detailing the problems faced by undocumented workers. The report (PICUM 2005) provides good practice examples from Europe and the USA on measures to ensure the protection of migrant workers.

Undocumented or unauthorised workers are at risk of being victims of organised criminal networks and gangmasters who bring workers to the UK by illegal means, subject them to exploitative work conditions and accommodate them in harrowing living conditions. News reports have highlighted the murky world of gangmasters and the exploitation of migrant workers around the country (Eastern Daily Press and The Guardian).

1.4.7 Labour market experiences

Haque (2002) demonstrates that migrants generally fare worse than the UK-born in terms of participating in the labour force and in finding work. The employment rate of migrant workers is around 64%, compared to 75% for the UK-born. However, he recognises that there are substantial variations in labour market experience, with those from industrialised countries performing far better than those from developing countries. According to Haque (2002) and Glover (2001), education and English language fluency were the key determinants of employment success. Haque (2002) also finds that migrant workers from white ethnic backgrounds tend to perform as well as or better than the existing population, in terms of their employment and participation rates and wage levels, whereas migrants from a non-white ethnic minority background do worse than the UK-born. In addition they are less likely to be employed in comparison to people of a similar ethnic group who were born in the UK.(ibid) The report's findings are similar to Shields and Wheatley (2003).

Dustman et al (2003) finds that language fluency of immigrant groups is strongly and positively associated with the probability to be employed, and with wages. According to them, participation rates differ amongst different migrant communities, with Pakistanis and Bangladeshis amongst those with lowest participation probabilities.

Immigrant communities are more concentrated in self-employment relative to UK born whites, according to Dustman et al (2003). The report findings show that some immigrant communities are more concentrated in particular sectors. While those from the ethnic minority communities are more active in



the Distribution, Hotel and Restaurant sector, white immigrants are concentrated in the construction sector.

1.4.8 Socio-economic impact of migration

The socio-economic impact of migration is controversial. Many opinion polls reveal a general consensus for strict limits for restricting immigration (MORI, 2006), with attitudes to immigration often influenced by public concerns around national security, erosion of national identity and 'values', abuse of government welfare, availability of housing, pressure on the health system and the displacement of local workers from the labour market and associated adverse effects on wages.

However, with regards to the labour market there is little evidence that migrants raise unemployment rates or lower wages in the regions where they concentrate. Instead, the reported effects of immigration have been economic growth without inflation and net fiscal contributions to government revenue. A study by Dustmann, Fabbri and Preston (2005) investigating the effects of migration on regional unemployment rates across the UK, found that migrants often create their own jobs by expanding employment as a whole. To the extent that migrants bring different skills to a locality, that locality specialises more in goods and services that are intensive in the use of those skills, selling them in competitive markets at home and abroad. One way of conceptualising the phenomenon is to say that it is the goods market that does the adjusting to immigration rather than the labour market (see also Bauder, 2006).

An analysis on fiscal outcomes for immigrants tentatively calculated that migrants in the UK contributed £31.2b in taxes, and increased public expenditure by £28.8b through the receipt of public goods and services, resulting in an estimated net fiscal contribution of around £2.5b (Gott & Johnson, 2002). The study also shows that certain observable characteristics correlate with positive fiscal outcomes, in particular working age, higher education qualifications, skill levels and language fluency. However, because factors determining the fiscal impact vary and develop over generations, a one-off assessment does not allow us to test the above hypothesis. So a continuation of the original study, over a five -year period was undertaken by IPPR.

The IPPR (2005) study suggests that the immigrants are proportionately greater contributors to public finances than non-immigrants. As the analysis shows, the relative net fiscal contribution of immigrants compares favourably to the UK-born; total revenue from immigrants increased by 22 per cent (6 per cent for UK-born) and in real terms from £33.8b in 1999-00 to £41.2b in 2003-04. To put it another way, during the same period the average foreign-born person cost the exchequer £74 in net terms. Meanwhile, the average UK-born person cost the exchequer £892 in net terms.

The contribution immigrants make to public finances is increasing, and is likely to grow stronger in the near future. Figures for 2001-02 show that in net terms the average foreign-born person contributed £331 while the average UK-born person consumed £222. Migrant workers from the A8 states are also making an immense contribution, some £240m in total economic contribution between 1 May- 31 December 2004. As with other groups of migrant workers, their contribution is also likely to be positive as their entitlement to welfare benefits is restricted. Aside from the contribution to tax revenue, the governor of the Bank of England has said that migrant workers from Eastern Europe have eased labour market pressure and helped prevent inflation from rising.

In February 2004, then Home secretary David Blunkett noted that the UK needed "migrant workers to fill skill gaps and the 550,000 vacancies in our labour market, especially in the hospitality, cleaning, agriculture, food processing, care home and construction services where there are severe shortages." ¹⁵



He added that it was the government's contention that "effectively managed legal migration is vital to Britain's economic and social interest."¹⁶

Economic migration has been conceptualised as a voluntary market transaction between a willing buyer (whoever is willing to employ the migrant) and a willing seller or worker (the migrant) and is likely to be both economically efficient and beneficial to both parties. Unlike goods and capital, migrants are economic and social agents themselves; hence, 'migration is most likely to occur precisely when it is most likely to be welfare enhancing' (Glover 2001).¹⁷

Glover's study, commissioned by the Home Office, was the first attempt within the UK to undertake a systematic analysis of the impact of migration and to "better understand the extent to which the Home Office is achieving its aims to develop a migration policy in the interests of 'sustainable growth and social inclusion'".¹⁸ The findings formed the basis for a new approach to migration policy across government, reflected most in the White Paper, *Secure Borders, Safe Haven* (published Feb 2002)¹⁹. It recognises the role migrants play in enhancing economic growth and in helping to create jobs for the existing population.

The Glover study also analyses the impact of migration on the migrants themselves as well as for the UK as a whole.²⁰ It states that there is little evidence that UK workers are harmed by migrants but concurs that the concentration of migrants in particular areas may bring with it a number of positive and negative externalities. For instance, while migrants bring diverse skills, experience and know-how to the UK and help to regenerate run-down areas, they may also increase pressure on housing markets, transport and other infrastructure.²¹

1.4.9 Discrimination and disadvantage

A 2003 study commissioned by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) reported that there are 'large and persistent disadvantages' faced by migrants and minorities within the labour markets of the 15 EU member countries, including the UK.²² It also reports that foreign employees often work in worse working conditions than their national counterparts, especially those who lack legal status.

The ILO has also recognised that the 'lack of legal protection for migrant workers heightens their attractiveness as instruments of 'maintaining competitiveness' because they are obliged to work in situations where decent work conditions are not enforced. Sectors employing irregular workers are usually those where little or no regulatory activity upholds minimum safety, health and working conditions that should ensure 'decent work'²³ '.

Economic indicators, complaints of discrimination such as those handled by the CABs and court cases, provide evidence of discrimination. Case studies by the CABs, trade unions and media reports show that many migrant workers are exposed to several levels of discrimination and exploitation, including access to housing, health services and working conditions.

A CAB report²⁴ suggests that migrant workers are most vulnerable in agriculture, hospitality, food processing, cleaning, care homes and construction services. It also reports that in the agricultural and food-processing sectors, employment issues such as pay and terms and conditions are strongly connected with housing issues, as in most cases accommodation is provided by the agency. Although the accommodation is often over-crowded and living conditions severely wanting, substantial deductions are made from the already low wages to cover rent and transportation costs. The CAB also found that agencies often make attractive but misleading promises to recruit workers from their home countries and had failed to provide a contract of employment and proper pay slips.



Other problems include:

- Breaches of working time regulations – subjecting workers to long working hours;
- Denial of paid holidays and statutory sick pay;
- Usage of under-aged workers;
- Infringements of Agricultural Wages Board agreements and the National Minimum Wage;
- Failure to ensure that the worker has a N.I number, and the apparent non-payment of tax and N.I contributions;
- Withholding workers' personal documents;
- Misinforming legal migrant workers by suggesting that they are really working unlawfully, to deter them from complaining or seeking advice.
- Misinformation about their rights remains a significant factor in the exploitation of migrant workers. Many migrant workers entering the UK for low-skilled, low-income work from the EU live under the assumption that they are illegally residing in the UK and thus are willing to put up with appalling conditions, both at work and also with respect to their accommodation.²⁵ Lack of proficiency in English makes them an easier target, and increases their reluctance to seek help or advice.

Migrant workers who do not have proper documents fear retribution from employers as well as from the immigration authorities, the police and any government agency, leaving them vulnerable and exposed and feeling insecure and isolated. They are excluded from regulated paid employment and are left at the mercy of traffickers and gangmasters involved in bringing them to the UK. As a result migrants may even be reluctant to get medical help, as doctors' surgeries will only register foreign migrants if they have proof of legal status, either as registered workers, asylum seekers or as EU citizens.²⁶

Debt is another important factor in the vicious cycle of exploitation of migrant workers. Chinese migrant workers from Fujian province have been reported to have paid gangmasters amounts ranging between £13,000 to £22,000 (in an area of China where the average monthly salary is £13), on the promise that high paying jobs awaited them in Britain, only to find that they were put to work in slave-like working conditions, under the control of gangmasters, or literally dumped in the UK to fend for themselves, possessing fake passports and documents.²⁷ With depleted life-savings, they put their families in life-long debt and were thus impelled to put up with appalling work conditions, working inhumanly long hours in order to send money home and pay off these debts. Their undocumented work status and their debt-ridden conditions make these workers particularly vulnerable to exploitation by gangmasters, employers, loan-sharks from whom they borrowed money.

There are also media reports providing evidence of gangmasters using violence and force to instil fear in migrant workers. The Eastern Daily Press reported that in Thetford, a man's thigh was impaled to a seat with a long knife for failing to make payments to the gangmaster traffickers who brought him here from China. The punishment was meted out in front of fellow workers, to send a message to those who failed to pay their debts in time.²⁸

Fears among migrants are not unfounded, as immigration raids have forced hundreds of undocumented Chinese migrants out of their jobs.²⁹ Dismissed without notice they have been left with no means to support their families and may have been driven to take up dangerous jobs such as cockling.

1.5. Migrant workers in the East of England

Historically the majority of international migrants have arrived to work initially in London or the South East, making the employment of foreign-born migrant workers in the East of England a relatively new phenomenon. Within the migrant worker population, just over 10 per cent relocate to the South East,



just under a quarter of migrant workers move to London and 40 per cent of migrant workers relocating to the Midlands, East Anglia and the South West, which is a marked shift from the position in 2001 (Propping Up Rural and Small Town Britain, TUC, 2004).

Most statistics on different aspects of migration are fragile and there are no reliable estimates of the numbers of migrant workers in the East of England. There is no international standard definition of 'migrant' and debate centres on whether the proxy of birthplace or nationality should identify migrant status and how far the definition should be affected by duration of stay. Of the datasets available on the numbers of migrant workers, most capture a part of the picture but each contains relative weaknesses. The statistic quoted often with reservations is 20,000 workers mostly employed in the agricultural sector and food processing industries with a concentration in East Anglia³⁰. However, recent figures from the Accession Monitoring Report 2006 show another dense concentration of 25,770 registered workers in Anglia, in Administrative, Business and Managerial Services.

There is some evidence of a seasonal swell of migrant workers to the region during the summer months, during periods of relatively high agricultural output and indeed the region historically has hosted workers who have migrated from other regions of the UK to undertake seasonal work. This suggests a large degree of mobility within the migrant worker population of the region, contributing to the difficulty in estimating its size.

The migrant workforce in the East of England is ethnically diverse. It includes Portuguese, Chinese, South Asians, Albanians, Kosovans, Americans (North and South) as well as migrants from the Eastern European communities (Ukraine, Lithuania, Estonia, Belarus, Latvia and Russia) and the Commonwealth countries (India)³¹. According to Taylor and Rogaly, based on data from the South Norfolk Primary Care Trust, at the time of writing there was a population of around 6,000 Portuguese workers in Thetford and Swaffham and about 1,000 to 1,500 Chinese workers in the King's Lynn and surrounding areas. Within the King's Lynn area the largest group identified was Portuguese people working in factories. The second largest was from the Philippines or from South Asia working for the NHS or in care work. Workers from the former Eastern Bloc and the USSR commonly would come for working holidays or work under one of the sector schemes and formed a large proportion of the workforce of the local pack houses and land labour.

The Department for Work and Pensions provides a figure for the number of NINo applied for by non-British workers for the East of England during 2005/06 as totalling 52,800 - an increase of 18,700 from 2004/05 (DWP, 2006)³². The region has the third highest number of allocated NINOs after London and the South East.

The report, Migrant workers in the East of England, by WLRI for EEDA³³ estimated that the number of recent migrant workers in the region is somewhere between 50,000 and 80,000 workers at peak seasonal times. Women were as likely to be migrants in search of work as men and a wide range of age groups were noted, although most were in the 25 to 49 year old group. Information on migrant workers in the region can also be derived from the University of East Anglia's study by Taylor and Rogaly, Migrant working in West Norfolk³⁴, Pemberton's Beyond Numbers: the Chinese migrant worker community in West Norfolk³⁵, Food on the table – the economic impact of migrant working in Norfolk³⁶ and the working papers from a conference on migrant workers in Norfolk organised by the Norfolk Constabulary³⁷. A report which focuses on a small area within the region, A profile of migrant workers in the Breckland Area³⁸, looked at the skills that migrant workers possessed and found fairly high levels of generic skills, such as numerical skills, communication, problem solving and other languages.



The Central and Eastern European Accession countries have been a source of many of these new migrants. Based on information from those who had registered since 1 May 2004, a report by ippr in late 2004 found most registered workers were employed in factory work and other labouring jobs such as packing, cleaning, farm labour, warehouse work, building sites, catering, hospitality and care jobs

Filipino and South Asian migrants were also employed in large numbers within the NHS or in private care work. The WLRI research also found that skilled South African workers were being employed in the private care industry and in hotels in unskilled work. There are also concerns over the quality and safety of the accommodation housing many migrant workers in the region. Local newspapers frequently report cases of overcrowding, with examples given of 10 to 20 adults in one house³⁹.

1.6. Sector analysis

1.6.1 Overview of the Construction Sector

The construction industry structure is complex, with organisations taking different roles from pure management to contracting, with main trades and specialist sub-contractors and high levels of self-employment. As of late 2003, about 37% of the of the construction workforce was self employed (Lindsay and Macaulay, 2004).

The majority of employers are very small, with 97% of firms employing fewer than 25 employees and accounting for 47% of employment within the sector. However there are strong regional variations in construction employment, given demand will be depend on the strength of the regional economy and skill shortages associated with major building projects and local industry success.

A series of economic indicators and industry surveys show the UK construction sector has experienced steady growth since it retracted during the recession of 1989-90. This expansion has meant more jobs, with the sector employing an estimated 2 million people and accounting for 6% of GDP⁴⁰. Most forecasts concur that the sector will continue to expand over the next few years, albeit at a slower pace than in the late 1990s (DTI, 2001). However, the growth of the construction industry takes place at a time of acute shortage of labour and skills, perpetuated by the fact that 'work in construction is not highly regarded and tends to be shunned by local workers'⁴¹.

Occupational trends

The occupational composition of the workforce in construction is distinctive from most other industries, in that a high proportion (approximately 50%) of the workforce is made up of people with well-developed manual skills, such as bricklayers, steel erectors, roofers, carpenters, glaziers etc), compared to around 10% in the economy as a whole. Consequently, employment tends to be proportionately less concentrated in managerial and professional occupations. It is predicted that the strongest proportionate growth in employment in construction will be in managerial, technical and professional occupations with demand for trade/craft occupation growing much more slowly (although in many occupations, such as carpenters, joiners and bricklayers this equates to large absolute increases in demand). The industry will need 83,160 entrants per year between 2003 and 2007⁴². The greatest cumulative requirement over the period 2003-2007 will be for: wood trades, managers, electricians, clerical, plumbers and bricklayers (CITB-Skills Foresight Report, 2003/4).

At present migrant workers are increasingly filling most of the skill's shortages, with particularly large influxes of workers and firms from Eastern European into the construction industry. The trend towards the recruitment of migrant workers as an integral part of the construction workforce was reflected across the EU-15 member states (Wells, 1996). In France, the building industry is the only sector where foreign labour is over-represented and in Austria, 18% of the construction work force was born overseas.



Additionally under the new freedom of movement rules, Eastern European countries can employ workers in their own countries while servicing contracts in the UK (Building, June 2004)⁴³.

In UK, an estimated 88,000 non-UK workers were employed in the construction industry in 2003⁴⁴ and a survey conducted by the Considerate Constructors' Scheme (2004) suggested that there were up to 100,000 workers on UK building sites for whom English was a second language. Most of these migrant workers are employed through chains of sub contractors, often as labourers, and hence are extremely difficult to quantify. Although there were no schemes under which construction workers could enter the UK, it has been possible to enter the UK as a self-employed person and then find work: as Anderson and Rogaly (2005) explain, this contributes to the invisibility of migrants.

Terms and conditions of employment

The sector by nature provides work that is time bound, seasonal and often on-off, demanding a corresponding flexibility in labour arrangements. Most of the labour arrangements work through sub contracting chains, with construction workers being hired as if they are fully independent, or self employed, by different sub contractors who feed up their supply of workers to larger sub contractors and so on. This system is known as the 'LOSC' market: labour only sub contracting⁴⁵. This implies that while the number of workers employed on site may be large, the actual numbers on the rolls of the main builders may be very small.

In addition, there is also considerable variation in the number of employees depending on the task at hand during the different stages of the construction process. This often leads to workers having short-term contracts rather than long-term direct employment. Workers are usually recruited through a long chain of recruitment agents, or by word of mouth. Payment is usually on a daily or weekly basis, and conditions of work are hard and arduous. However, the project-based nature of construction work leads to high occurrence of non-payment of wages.

A recent research report (IIF 2005)⁴⁶ found that 19% workers in the construction industry were temporary workers, who were more likely to be migrant workers. However, the regional spread varied significantly: in the North east region, the majority (90%) were indigenous to that region, while in London and the South East, only 40% were indigenous, with 9% of the workers coming from outside the UK. Black workers were found to be more likely to be new to the industry and working as labourers/general operatives. Further, working for an agency was quite common for recent entrants into the industry (17% of those in the industry less than a year do so), as was working on a self-employed basis (21%). Agencies are mainly used for labouring and general operative positions, jobs that have high risks associated with them.

Migrants thus form an important pool of cheap labour in the construction industry. Their lack of awareness about their rights, combined with the vulnerability accorded due to irregular contracts and a more 'patron-client' relationship rather than an employer-employee relationship can be important factors in increasing the risks that they face in the sector. For example, Anderson and Rogaly (2005) found that non-payment or payment at less than the agreed rate was common in construction workers. A study of Central and Eastern European migrants in the UK construction sector, estimated the mean hourly rates of pay at £8.29 and found that full-time employees in the sector worked longer than average hours at 45.6 hrs per week and just over 40% reported working overtime (Anderson et al, 2006).

Health and safety

The Health and Safety Executive describes construction as one of Britain's most dangerous industries⁴⁷. As a correlate of these dangerous working conditions, the construction industry is characterised by high risks of accidents and fatality, killing about 80 workers every year. In the last 25 years, 2,800 people



have died from injuries they received during construction work. Many more have been injured or made ill. Between April 2001 and March 2002, 79 workers died and thousands were injured as a result of construction work. The main causes of injury include falling through fragile roofs, from ladders and scaffolds, being struck by excavators, lift trucks, overturning vehicles, and being crushed by collapsing structures. Other factors that accentuate the risks for migrant workers are a lack of English language skills. On construction sites where changing conditions often require quick reactions to verbal communications, the inability to speak and/or understand English has been recognised as creating a particularly high risk to health and safety (Construction Confederation, May 2002).

Demographic profile⁴⁸

The construction workforce is 90% male compared with 54% of the total UK workforce and 98% of the industry is white. According to CITB-Construction Skills, the construction industry needs to recruit and retain over 88,000 trained people each year for the next five years. The industry will, therefore, have to recruit from non-traditional groups, with women and ethnic minorities expected to account for half its growth in the workforce over the next ten years. The majority of these new recruits will replace workers who will be retiring.

Whilst the number of women in the construction industry is slowly increasing, they are greatly under-represented, particularly in the trades and crafts. The CITB-Construction Skills strategy is to increase the annual apprentice recruitment places by 10% for women, and Black and Asian people. This is supported by a corporate positive image campaign aimed at marketing equal opportunities initiatives and the new Equality and Diversity toolkit for employers developed by 'Rethinking Construction'.

Gender

In construction the male: female ratio is 89:11 and **women** account for:

- approximately 10% of those employed in the construction industry
- 30% of all non-manual employment
- 1% of all manual employment
- 11.6% of all professionals and managers in the construction industry
- 20% of undergraduates of construction related degree courses
- 2% of all sole traders
- 7% of entrepreneurs running micro-enterprises employing less than 10
- 81% of those working in secretarial and trades

Ethnicity

In construction ethnic minorities represent:

- 2.8% of those employed in the construction industry
- 3.6% of all non-manual occupations
- 2.6% of all manual occupations
- 3.2% of all professionals and managers in the construction industry
- 10% of all those enrolling on a construction related degree course
- 2.3% of all sole traders

A recent survey by the Construction Confederation (2004) suggested that 1 in 10 builders are migrants.

Construction labour market in the East of England

Outside of London and the South East, the East of England has the largest construction output and is forecast to have the strongest growth of any region in the next few years. Therefore the region needs to



recruit and train 42,100 new workers between 2004 and 2008. However, firms in the region are experiencing a higher than average recruitment difficulty, with 72% of employers reporting difficulties in recruiting skilled staff. In the region 92% of construction firms employ fewer than 10 people, with constant uncertainty discouraging investment in training. There is, therefore, a considerable gap between the predicted number of qualified people in the construction sector and the number estimated to achieve those qualifications. The highest levels of demand by 2008 are predicted for managers, wood trades and bricklayers (CITB-Construction Skills Regional Skills Forecasts, 2004).

1.6.2 Overview of the knowledge / ICT sector

The mobility of skilled workers and the circulation of knowledge has become critically important to faster economic growth and to the need to sustain competitive and innovative markets and companies in the global economy. The increased mobility of skilled workers in recent years has been stimulated by the need for scarce skills, the demands of progressive globalisation and wider social and economic issues. To address these factors, recent immigration reforms across Europe have reoriented migration policy in order to engage more closely with labour market dynamics and the global competition for skilled workers. This has included the easing of the criteria employers have to address for a work permit in sectors facing skills shortages, administrative efficiency in processing applications and the easing of entry criteria for entrepreneurs. Many western countries have also introduced specific fast-track initiatives to encourage and facilitate the entry of highly skilled workers, for instance the HSMP (UK); the Green Card System (Germany); and the European Commission has adopted a proposal to introduce an EU work permit for highly skilled migrants (EU COM (2005) 269).

Within the Cambridgeshire area there are three main employers of highly skilled, knowledge workers – the university, the health sector and the IT sector. A common feature of work permit systems and fast-track initiatives has been the focus on ICT skills. The ICT sector holds several of the economy's most dynamic activities, which are often associated with the emergence of the so-called 'information society' or 'knowledge based economies'. In the UK, ICT is one of the biggest growth industries, employing a large number of high skilled workers and professionals. While estimates vary, depending on the definition of the ICT sector, it is conservatively estimated that the ICT sector employs some 1.25m workers – over 5% of the total business sector (LFS, Autumn 2000).

Occupational trends

With industry forecasts predicting the continued growth of employment opportunities over the next few years, the pressure of producing enough workers with the requisite skill levels for an ever-changing sector is immense. However, because of the interconnectivity of the ICT industry with other sectors, identifying skills needs is not straightforward. According to the e-skills UK ICT Inquiry, reports of ICT related 'shortages' during Q4 2005 were most common amongst firms recruiting systems design, systems development and support staff, whilst in skills terms the problems appeared to arise (in order) with respect to applicants 'other non-technical skills', IT User skills and higher level IT (i.e. ICT professional) skills.

In easing these skill constraints, many companies now seek to attract the relevant expertise from within the EU or from abroad either through the work permit system or through intra-company transfers. As such, the numbers of work permits for IT occupations has increased over recent years. In 2005, 30,000 IT workers arrived through the permit system, compared with 1,800 just ten years earlier in 1995. Between 2001 and 2004, some 110,000 work permits were issued in total for IT occupations, representing some 20% of the total work permits issued for all occupations, despite the fact that IT occupations represent only 3.5% of the workforce.



Of the 30,000 work permits issued in 2005 for IT occupations, 75% of these were for Intra-Company Transfers and 80% of the total were for workers from just one country – India. By comparison, only 11% of all work permits issued for non-IT occupations were issued for Intra Company Transferees. Indeed, of the top ten companies sponsoring IT workers to come to the UK, six were headquartered in India. While the strong presence of Indian IT companies and workers is undeniable, it is less clear why these specialist skills are not available within the UK workforce.

Terms and conditions of employment

The average salary of an IT professional is £32,500. However aggregated data on the average salary levels of IT work-permit holders, shows that the majority of these IT workers appear to be paid less than the industry average salary (Amicus, 2005; DTI 2002).

A further occupational breakdown of the IT sector suggests that 83% of IT managers and 90% of software engineers are paid less than the average salary for their job. And that 50% of IT Managers, 54% of Network Specialists, 62% of Project Managers, 64% of Systems Analysts, and 80% of Database Specialists appear to be paid below the minimum of the pay ranges provided to WPUK staff for assessing applications for work permits (Amicus, 2005).

Demographic Profile

In general, skilled migrant workers in this sector are likely to be male, single, aged under 35 years and in the early stages of their career development. Most migrant workers in the IT industry are, on average, from the Indian Sub-Continent and Pakistan (DTI, 2002), with the next biggest inflows from Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa. According to DTI research on knowledge migration, IT work permit holders had an undergraduate degree or a master's degree awarded in their country of origin.



Annex B

Key respondents' interview schedule

Begin by explaining the project's aims:

To contribute to a greater understanding of the migration of skilled professional workers;

To analyse the barriers that prevent migrant workers from accessing existing employment opportunities, with a specific emphasis on the construction sector.

Note that the interview is likely to focus on one or other of these two aims, save in those cases where the key respondent has a wider function – for example a local authority.

Section A: General background information

1. Can you describe your role in the organisation?

Section B: Questions where key respondent has information on both groups

2. Based on your experiences, can you give me an idea of the migrant workers you have knowledge of? - Indicate that we are interested in demographics, education and skills, work related issues

Probe – demographics: Where are they from; How long have they been here; Is their migration temporary; Place of Work; Age; Gender; geographical areas (towns/ villages) they mainly live; whether patterns of settlement in Cambridgeshire are similar/different to previous waves of migration - in other words are new migrants settling within est. migrant areas or other parts -spatial isolation, etc.

Probe - education and skills: levels of education/ qualification; Where obtained (Country); specific level of skills – professional or occupational; whether skills utilised; problems regarding recognition of qualifications; access to training/

Learning opportunities in local area - FE colleges, community delivery, employers, etc.

Probe - work related issues: are there differences in where they access work by ethnic origin/gender/age? How is employment accessed – agency, work permit, jobcentre, word of mouth; rates of pay; pay problems; shifts and working hours

Probe - language Issues: level of English; does this prevent access to appropriate work, access to information; ability to organise

Probe – harassment: assessment of workplace relationships; racism; sexism; existence of support mechanisms

Section C: Questions where key respondent has information on skilled professional workers

3. Can you tell me what you know about skilled professional workers working in the Cambridgeshire CC area? - Indicate that we are interested in demographics, education and skills, work related issues

Probe – demographics: Where are they from; How long have they been here; Is their migration temporary; Place of Work; Age; Gender; geographical areas (towns/ villages) they mainly live.

Probe - education and skills: levels of education/ qualification; Where obtained (Country); specific level of professional skills; whether skills utilised; problems regarding recognition of qualifications

Probe - work related issues: are there differences in where they access work by ethnic origin/gender/age? How is employment accessed – agency, work permit, jobcentre, word of mouth; rates of pay; pay problems; shifts and working hours



Probe - language Issues: level of English; does this prevent access to appropriate work, access to information; ability to organise

Probe – harassment: assessment of workplace relationships; racism; sexism; existence of support mechanisms

4. Are these workers generally accompanied by their families? Are there programmes of family support? How do they integrate with their families? What are the experiences of those who are not accompanied

Probe: what arrangements do they make for their children's education; do they use state educational provision; are their voices heard in school governing bodies; do they tend to access the same employment rights as local workers in relation to parental and dependency rights.

5. Do you know if they have any established networks in the UK, for example community organisations?

6. Are you aware of any other issues/ problems they might face in accessing services?

Probe: social services, health, education, accommodation - quality of housing stock, overcrowding, "white flight" and how this affects access to other services and intersects with work?

Section D: Questions where key respondent has information on construction workers

7. Can you tell me what you know about migrant construction workers working in the Cambridgeshire CC area? - Indicate that we are interested in demographics, education and skills, work related issues

Probe – demographics: Where are they from; How long have they been here; Is their migration temporary; Place of Work; Age; Gender; geographical areas (towns/ villages) they mainly live.

Probe - education and skills: levels of education/ qualification; Where obtained (Country); specific level of skills; whether skills utilised; problems regarding recognition of qualifications

Probe - work related issues: are there differences in where they access work by ethnic origin/gender/age? How is employment accessed – agency, work permit, jobcentre, word of mouth; rates of pay; pay problems; shifts and working hours

Probe - language Issues: level of English; does this prevent access to appropriate work, access to information; ability to organise

Probe – harassment: assessment of workplace relationships; racism; sexism; existence of support mechanisms

8. Are these workers generally unaccompanied by their families? What support mechanisms are there for those who are accompanied; is there any evidence of families arriving at a later stage;

Probe: in cases where they are accompanied what arrangements do they make for their children's education; do they use state educational provision; are their voices heard in school governing bodies; do they tend to access the same employment rights as local workers in relation to parental and dependency rights.

9. Do you know if they have any established networks in the UK, for example community organisations?

10. Are you aware of any other issues/ problems they might face in accessing services?

Probe: social services, health, education, accommodation? Public attitudes to new communities

11. Are you able to supply us with the contact details of any skilled professional workers whom we should interview for this research project?





Focus group questions

1. Have you worked in other countries? Is the move to Cambridge/UK temporary or permanent? Do you intend to move to other countries? If so why?
2. Have others had difficulties with recognition of overseas qualifications when applying for jobs?
3. What was the most important factor in your decision to work in Cambridgeshire/UK?
4. What are the best, or any slightly difficult aspects of working in Cambridgeshire?
5. A professional worker and their family has approached you about the possibility of moving to the region to live and work. What advice would you give them?
6. What do you enjoy most about living in Cambridgeshire?
7. Do you feel comfortable living here?
8. How satisfied are you with local services?
9. What do you think of housing availability/
10. Do you know your neighbours?
11. Do you feel part of the local community?
12. Would you like to engage in local issues? Is there anything you are particularly interested in?
13. What are your long-term plans in the UK?



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- ¹ EEDA (2006) 'Supporting self-help for disadvantaged communities to meet local needs' Business Plan 2007-2011, Investing in Communities Cambridgeshire
- ² The industry categorisation is based on the 'UK Standard Industrial Classifications of Economic Activities 1992' (SIC92).
- ³ EEDA, *East of England Economy and labour market background paper*, 13 April 2005
- ⁴ The UK Parliament. Written answers to questions, 5 Jan 2004.
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmhansrd/vo040105/text/40105w03.htm>
- ⁵ NOP Business, IES (2002) p12
- ⁶ *ibid*, p62
- ⁷ EEDA (2006) 'Supporting self-help for disadvantages communities to meet local needs' Business Plan 2007-2011, Investing in Communities, Cambridgeshire,
- ⁸ Five international workers attended the focus group meeting; a sixth was separately interviewed, as the individual concerned was unable to attend the focus group meeting.
- ⁹ The focus group questions will be included in the Final Report
- ¹⁰ This is the language qualification needed by medical staff that wish to practice their profession in the UK.
- ¹¹ These statistics are adjusted to account for changes in intentions i.e. people who intend to be migrants but in reality stay in the UK or abroad less than a year. In line with the results of the 2001 census, ONS provided a revised set of adjusted flows statistics in the summer of 2003.
- ¹² This could be calculated from the LFS since it does ask for year of arrival, however this is not reported yet and requires further analysis.
- ¹³ The industry categorisation is based on the 'UK Standard Industrial Classifications of Economic Activities 1992' (SIC92).
- ¹⁴ EEDA, *East of England Economy and labour market background paper*, 13 April 2005
- ¹⁵ Home Office News Release 069/2004, 23 Feb 2004
- ¹⁶ Home Office News Release 309/2003
- ¹⁷ Glover (2001) p4
- ¹⁸ Haque (2002) Introduction
- ¹⁹ Home Office (2002) White Paper, *Secure Borders Safe Haven* (CM5387 February 2002)
- ²⁰ Glover (2001) Chapter 6



²¹ *ibid*, Chapter 6

²² Jandl, M (2003) *Migrants, Minorities and Employment : exclusion, discrimination and anti-discrimination in the 15 member States of the EU*, International Centre for Migration Policy Development, Luxembourg

²³ ILO (April 2003) *Vulnerable groups: migrant workers*. United Nations Commission on Human Rights, 59th Session, item 14(a) of Agenda.

²⁴ CAB (2003), *Nowhere to Turn: CAB evidence on the exploitation of migrant workers*, London

²⁵ CAB evidence to the Select Committee on Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200203/cmselect/cmenvfru/691/691we05.htm>

²⁶ Taylor, Rogaly (2003) p12

²⁷ Press reports: BBC Inside Out, "A New Life." Oct 11, 2004, The Independent, "On the trail of the Chinese snakeheads", 10 May 2004, BBC News, "The Deadly Journey", April 5, 2001.

²⁸ Eastern Daily Press, *Fields of Dreams*, August 23, 2003.

²⁹ The Guardian, *Fear Drives Chinese into cockle beds*, May 3, 2004

³⁰ This number is derived from the National Insurance Number (NINo) allocated to overseas nationals entering the UK for work. The number however, does not include undocumented workers, for which there is little reliable data.

³¹ Information on migrant workers in the region can be derived from the University of East Anglia's study by Taylor and Rogaly, *Migrant Working in West Norfolk*, Pemberton's *Beyond Numbers: the Chinese migrant worker community in West Norfolk and the working papers from a conference on migrant workers in Norfolk* organized by the Norfolk Constabulary.

³² See http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/niall/niall_report.pdf (last accessed 8 September 2006)

³³ McKay, S. and Winkelmann-Gleed, A. (2005) *Migrant workers in the East of England*, East of England Development Agency.

³⁴ Taylor and Rogaly (2003) *Migrant working in West Norfolk*, Norfolk County Council: Norwich p1-2;

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/migration/research/NorfolkReport.pdf>

³⁵ Pemberton, C and Ling, B. (2004) *Beyond numbers: the Chinese migrant worker community in West Norfolk*, Ibis Insight

³⁶ Norfolk County Council and Norfolk YMCA (2005) *Food on the table – reports on: the economic impact of migrant working in Norfolk and the experiences of migrant workers in agriculture and food processing in Norfolk*

³⁷ Norfolk Constabulary (2004)



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- ⁴⁵ Anderson and Rogaly (2005), pg. 26
- ⁴⁶ IIF research Ltd with the University of Warwick (Feb 2005) *Workforce mobility and skills in the UK construction sector*. Research report prepared for the Construction Skills, DTI and ECITB.
- ⁴⁷ <http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/>
- ⁴⁸ University of Warwick IER website; CITB Construction Skills Website 2005; and CITB Construction Skills Agreement.