

Migration



What is the purpose of the Briefing Note series?

The IS has developed an Elected Members Briefing Series to help elected members keep abreast with key issues affecting local government.

Some Briefing Notes will be directly produced by IS staff but we will also publish material from as wide a range of public bodies, commentators and observers of public services as possible.

We will use the IS website and Elected Member e-Bulletin to publicise and provide access to the Briefing Notes. All Briefing Notes in the series can be accessed at www.improvementservice.org.uk/elected-members-development.

What is migration?

Definition

Migration in the context of this briefing note means the movement of people across borders with the aim of taking up residence. In the UK this includes:

- people from the European Economic Area (EEA)¹ who are generally free to work, study or set up a business here;
- people from outwith the EEA who are subject to immigration control and come with the aim of working, studying or setting up a business; and
- forced migrants who come to seek protection or who are resettled here (people awaiting a decision on their claim for protection are ‘asylum seekers’, those who have been granted protection or have been resettled here are ‘refugees’).

Migration to the UK

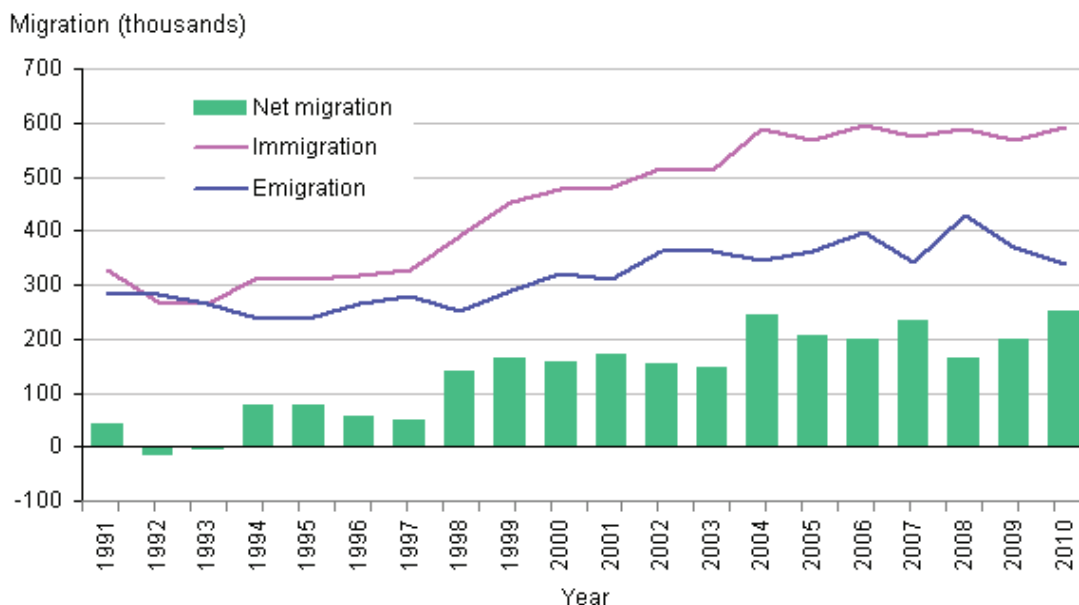
There is a long history of migration to the UK, going back many centuries. However, since the end of the Second World War, the UK has experienced unprecedented levels of migration. This has been particularly pronounced since the mid-1990s.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) provides figures which give us a general picture on the number of people who are migrating to and from the UK. The most recent ONS data, which is based on the definition of a migrant as someone who moves from their country of previous residence for at least a year, provides us with the following headline figures:

- an estimated 593,000 people migrated **to** the UK in the year to June 2011;
- an estimated 343,000 people migrated **from** the UK during the same period; and
- net migration of 250,000 - net migration is the difference between the number of people migrating to and from the UK (ONS Migration Statistics, Quarterly Report, February 2012).

While there has been an increase in net migration over the last year, it is debatable whether this reflects a general pattern of migration continuing to increase as it did in the 1990s and the early years of the last decade. As the Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir Michael Scholar, put it recently, “whilst there was undoubtedly a marked increase in net migration between 1991 and 2004, the evidence is mixed as to any further increase since then” (Letter to Damian Green, Minister of State for Immigration, 11 October 2011). This is perhaps best illustrated in the following graph:

¹ The EEA comprises the 27 members of the EU, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.



Total annual long-term international migration estimates, UK, 1991-2010
(ONS Migration Statistics, Quarterly Report, November 2011)

In terms of how the migrant population is constituted, the following figures from ONS for 2010 give a sense of the main migrant groups and the numbers that are involved:

- 236,000 migrated to the UK for formal study;
- 113,000 came to the UK with a definite job;
- 80,000 came to the UK to look for work;
- 77,000 were accompanying or joining family members; and
- 48,000 were classified as ‘other’ or had not given a specific reason for coming (IPS Long Term International Migration Estimates of immigration to the UK for the year to December 2010, ONS, November 2011).

Asylum applicants make up approximately 4% of all migrants to Britain. However, numbers have fallen significantly in recent years, and have reduced from a peak of 84,130 in 2002 to 19,804 in 2011. That said, 2011 saw an 11% increase in applications compared to 2010 (Home Office, February 2012).

At 10.2% of the total population, Britain has a lower share of migrants than many other developed countries. For instance, the Netherlands has 10.7%, Germany has 12.9%, Sweden has 13.4%, the USA has 13.6%, Canada has 20.1% and Australia has 25% (Wadsworth, 2010, p. 1-2). The increases in migration that Britain has experienced in recent years are proportionate to the increases that have been seen in many other industrialised countries.

While there is freedom of movement to and from the UK for European Economic Area (EEA) nationals,

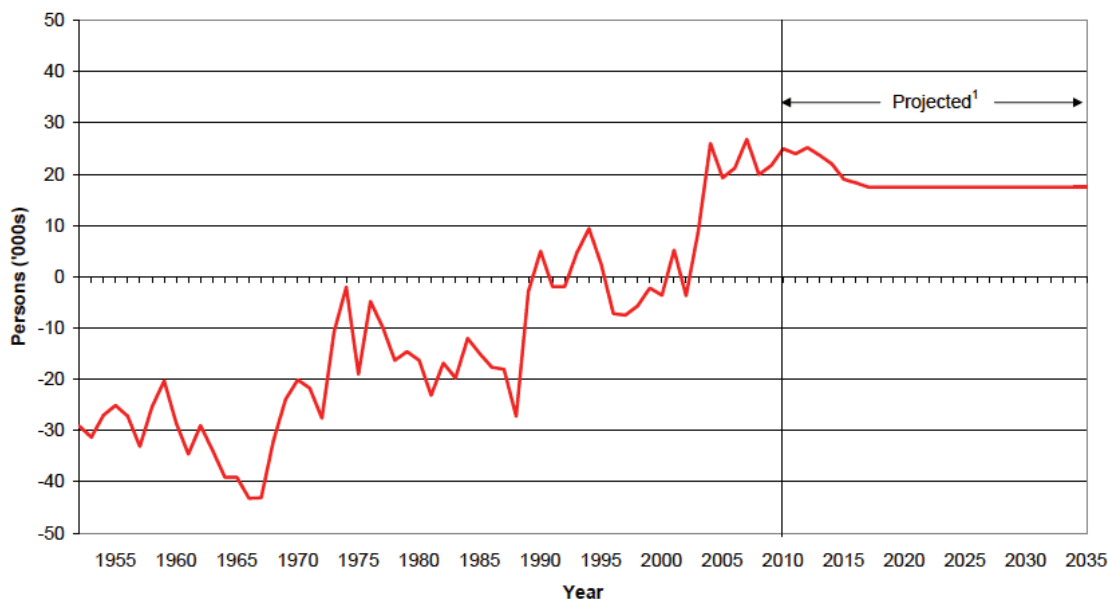
non-EEA migrants are subject to immigration control. Non-EEA nationals who come into the UK for the purposes of working, studying or setting up a business come through the Points Based Immigration System (PBS). This requires them to obtain a visa under one of five tiers classified as follows:

- **Tier 1 for high-value migrants.** This tier is subdivided into the following subsets: entrepreneur, investor, post study work (closing in April 2012) and exceptional talent;
- **Tier 2 for skilled migrants.** This tier is subdivided as follows: general, intra-company transfers, ministers of religion and sportspeople;
- **Tier 3 for temporary unskilled workers.** This tier has never operated in practice;
- **Tier 4 for students;** and
- **Tier 5 for temporary workers and youth mobility.**

In order to be granted a visa under any of these tiers, the applicant has to meet various criteria and accrue a minimum number of points based on various factors such as qualification levels, future expected earnings, sponsorship, English language skills and available maintenance.

Migration to Scotland

Historically, Scotland has been a country of net out-migration (net out-migration is when more people leave an area than move to it). However, this has changed in recent years and, since 2002, Scotland has consistently experienced net in-migration (net in-migration is when more people move to an area than leave it). As the following graph illustrates, this is expected to continue until at least 2035, with net migration expected to be at approximately 17,500 from 2016-17 onwards. This figure assumes net migration of 8,500 from the rest of the UK and 9,000 from international migration.



Estimated and projected net migration, Scotland, 1951-2035
(National Records of Scotland, October 2011)

In terms of total numbers of migrants, the number of non-British people living in Scotland increased from 127,000 in 2004 to 248,000 in 2010, while the number who were not born in the UK increased from 204,000 in 2004 to 326,000 in 2010. This pattern was replicated in our cities. Over the same period, the number of people not born in the UK increased from 39,000 to 66,000 in Edinburgh; from 43,000 to 65,000 in Glasgow; from 11,000 to 30,000 in Aberdeen; and from 6,000 to 12,000 in Dundee (*The Scotsman*, 25 August 2011).

Why does migration matter?

Impacts of migration

It is often argued that migration is a cause of – or at least a contributor to – a number of the problems that are faced in British society today. Overcrowded cities, higher unemployment rates, lower wages, and increasingly stretched public services and housing stock are frequently blamed on increased levels of migration. However, the evidence base in relation to such claims is patchy at best. While migration can and does create pressure on certain services, there is evidence to suggest that the negative effects are often outweighed by the positives. This is illustrated below, with reference to some recent research on the subject.

Impact on tax revenues and welfare benefits

Migrants make a significant contribution to the state through tax revenues and are actually less likely to draw heavily on services provided by the state. There are a number of reasons for this, including the fact that a large proportion of migrants come to the UK to work, while they also tend to be younger and therefore less likely to draw on health and welfare services. There are also strict rules that govern their entitlement to welfare benefits and make them less likely to access them. Indeed, recently published analysis by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) suggests that, while 16.6% of working age UK nationals were claiming a DWP working age benefit as at February 2011, only 6.6% of working age non-UK nationals were doing so too (DWP, 2012, p. 4). Given that migrants comprise approximately 13% of the labour force compared to 11.5% of the population as a whole, the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) have commented that “migrants make up more than their fair share of those who are working and paying taxes; and less than their fair share of those who are claiming out-of-work benefits” (Cavanagh, 2012).

Impact on public services

Research by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) in December 2011 also sought to quantify the impact of migration on the consumption of education and children’s services and the consumption of health services, social care and social services. With regard to migrants who come to the UK under the PBS, it concluded that:

the cost of points based migration to UK state education and public service is small both relative to the total cost of these services and to the share of these groups in the population as a whole. Moreover...it is well established...that they tend to be in higher income groups, so are likely to pay relatively high rates of tax and contribute to the economy via both the output they produce and, for Tier 4 [students], via their fees and maintenance costs. This means that the relative balance between what they cost and what they contribute is firmly weighted towards a very substantial net contribution, both to the economy, and to public finances. Substantial reductions in net migration of these groups is therefore likely to have, overall, a negative impact on the public finances (and hence, indirectly, on public services). (George et al, 2011, p. viii - ix)

In relation to housing, “evidence suggests that [social] housing shortages have more to do with family fragmentation than with immigration” (Royal Geographical Society, 2008, p. 13), while London School of Economics (LSE) research states that “[i]mmigrants, on average, are less likely to be in social housing than people born in the UK, even when the immigrant is from a developing country” (Wadsworth, 2010, p. 1). It should also be highlighted that new immigrants from outside the EU do not have entitlement to social housing, thus calling into question any suggestions of preferential treatment for migrants.

Impact on employment and wages

With regard to employment, recent research points to an association between migration and reduced employment amongst the native population (Migration Advisory Committee, 2012). However, the same research also acknowledges that “any link between immigration and employment of British-born people cannot be proved to be causal” (p. 2). Meanwhile, the NIESR research cited above, in considering unemployment, suggests that there is no evidence of immigration impacting on unemployment rates. There is also a lack of evidence that migration has an adverse effect on wage levels. Indeed, “[r]esearch commissioned by the Low Pay Commission...found that immigration to the UK has made a positive contribution to the average wage increase experienced by non-immigrant workers” (Royal Geographical Society, 2008, p. 15). It has been suggested that there may be downward pressure on wages in some sectors, for instance in low wage sectors where many new immigrants tend to find work. However, this tends to be offset by a slight increase at the other end of the scale and, as such, the overall effect is generally thought to be neutral, or close to neutral. It therefore seems that there is “little evidence of overall adverse effects of immigration on wages...for people born in the UK” (Wadsworth, 2010, p. 7).

There is a view that Eastern and Central European migrants have caused a reduction in employment amongst the native population, and had a negative effect on wages. Again, this has been largely discredited, as pointed out in research cited by Rolfe and Metcalfe (2009): “[a] review of general migration research and research on recent A8 migrants [migrants from the eight EU accession countries of Central and Eastern Europe] into the UK, found that there was ‘little or no evidence that immigrants have had a major impact on native labour market outcomes such as wages and unemployment’ (Blanchflower et al 2007, quoted in Rolfe and Metcalfe, 2009, paragraph 3.6). Again, this is backed up in the LSE research which states that “[a] recent study of the fiscal impact of immigration of workers from [the A8 countries] concludes that because this group of immigrants are more likely to be in work and make less use of welfare and other public services, their net contribution is positive” (Wadsworth, 2010, p. 7).

Public perceptions

Despite such evidence, it is clear that immigration remains a ‘hot topic’ in Britain today. It was a major issue during the 2010 General Election campaign and a survey conducted at the time saw the electorate rank it second, behind the economy and ahead of unemployment and crime, in a list of the most important issue facing the country (British Elections Survey 2010). The media has an important role to play in this regard. While it is recognised that the Scottish-based media tends to portray migration in a relatively positive light, this is not always the case with London-based titles. Research has shown that

voters who report regularly reading newspapers which have a tendency to run negative stories about immigration report more negative views than voters from similar social and political backgrounds who do not read such papers. This is perhaps best illustrated with reference to media coverage in relation to asylum seekers and refugees. Crawley (2005) found that certain sections of the press have been guilty of using provocative and derogatory terminology when describing asylum seekers, as well as inaccurate or misleading statistics and photographic images.

The role of the media aside, opinion polls still tend to show that a majority of the British public favour a reduction in immigration. For example, the 2011 Transatlantic Trends survey showed that an increasing proportion of the British public - up to 68% from 65% in 2010 - view immigration as more of a problem than an opportunity, while 57% of those surveyed in 2011 said that the UK has too many immigrants. However, this can be based on misconceptions regarding the actual number of immigrants in the country. For instance, when respondents were presented with actual numbers, the 2010 Transatlantic Trends survey saw the number who viewed immigrant levels as being too high drop by 13%.

Interestingly, evidence from other countries shows that a consequence of high levels of immigration is not always negative public perceptions. For instance, migrants make up approximately 20% of Canada's population, but the 2010 Transatlantic Trends survey showed that only around a quarter of the Canadian population viewed immigration as more of a problem than an opportunity. Closer to home, Germany also has a higher proportion of immigrants than the UK and yet only 28% of Germans surveyed in 2011 felt that the country had too many immigrants.

Other research highlights another interesting factor; namely that public attitudes towards migration do not tend to be driven by direct experiences. IPSOS-MORI and YouGov research quoted by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Migration (APPG) shows that “[w]hen voters are asked if migrants have a negative impact nationally (on jobs, crime, local services), around 60-70% say yes. When asked about the same impacts locally only around 10-20% reports a problem” (APPG Briefing, p. 2).

Recent research by the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford has also shown that the views of the public are a lot more nuanced than the headline figures often suggest. Thus, while 69% of the people that they surveyed wanted to see immigration reduced, views on how this should be achieved, and which groups of immigrants should be targeted, were far more complex. Some of the Migration Observatory's key findings are highlighted in the box overleaf:

Understanding public opinion on immigration in Britain

- When thinking about immigrants, 62% of respondents thought of asylum seekers, even although they make up a very small proportion of migrants (4% in 2009). Only 29% thought of students, even although they represent the largest group of immigrants coming to the UK (37% of 2009 immigrant arrivals).
- There is majority support for reducing immigration of asylum seekers (56%), as well as low-skilled workers (64%) and extended family members (58%).
- Among respondents who want immigration reduced overall, 54% said that they would like reductions either “only” (28%) or “mostly” (26%) among illegal immigrants, while just over a third (35%) supported reductions equally among legal and illegal immigrants.
- There is more support for reducing permanent immigration (57%) than temporary immigration (47%).
- A majority of respondents thought that the number of high-skilled migrants and foreign students should either increase or stay the same. 32% supported reductions in the number of high-skilled workers, and 31% supported reductions in the number of university students.

Taken from *Thinking Behind the Numbers*, p. 3 (Migration Observatory, October 2011)

Given such findings, while it might be reasonable to suggest that a majority of the British public would wish to see a reduction in immigration, such a statement requires to be heavily caveated to reflect the often complex and contradictory views that many people express on this topic.

It is also important that significant differences in views across the UK are acknowledged. For instance, the Migration Observatory research shows that opposition to immigration is lowest in Scotland and London, while Scotland has higher levels of support for substantially increased migration than anywhere else in Britain, albeit that this is still a minority view. And this more positive perspective is highlighted in other research too. Rolfe and Metcalfe (2009) point out that “[e]vidence from a number of surveys suggests that the Scottish public is more welcoming of migrants than in other parts of the UK” (p. 36). They also cite research by IPPR which “found that respondents in Scotland were more assertive about the economic benefit of migration, and in particular migrants’ willingness to take jobs which locals reject. More generally, the research explains the more positive attitude of the Scottish public to migration, in comparison to the rest of the UK, with reference to a number of factors: the relatively small scale of migration into Scotland, the strong sense of national identity, political leadership on migration and more balanced media coverage” (p. 37).

Political responses to migration

While immigration policy is an issue that is reserved to Westminster, successive Scottish Executives/

Governments have sought to work with the UK Government to ensure that UK policy reflects Scottish interests.

There has been broad political support for migration at Holyrood over a number of years. Perhaps the clearest manifestation of this was the cross-party support expressed for the Fresh Talent Initiative (FTI), introduced by the then First Minister Jack McConnell and his Labour-Liberal Democrat coalition in 2004. FTI was launched in the context of growing concerns in relation to Scotland's demographic challenges and, particularly, its ageing and declining population. Its original aims and actions are set out in the box below:

Fresh Talent Initiative

Key Aims:

- to address the projected falling population and increasing age demographic in Scotland by encouraging and enabling people to relocate to Scotland, allowing ongoing stays by students, and other measures;
- to bolster the dynamism and cosmopolitanism of Scottish life and the economy; and
- to promote Scotland as an ideal place to live, study, work and do business.

Key Actions:

- provide information in countries of origin about opportunities in Scotland and specifically about the support provided to enable talented individuals to come and work in Scotland;
- advice and support to assist applicants to gain entry into Scotland and, through interaction with the Home Office, reduce some of the barriers to entry into Scotland for talented migrants;
- encouragement to specific groups of international migrants (especially international students) to remain in Scotland and gain access to and experience of the Scottish labour market;
- encourage employers to engage more with channels of international migration as part of their employment strategy; and
- enhance the quality of the welcome and information returnees can access on entry into Scotland.

Taken from Rogerson et al, 2006, p. 14-15.

Most aspects of the FTI continue to be central to the current SNP administration's approach to migration, albeit that some of the actions associated with it have been amended since it was first introduced.

For instance, changes in the UK Government's approach to student migration mean that a particular initiative in relation to students - namely the Working In Scotland Scheme which entitled international graduates from Scottish universities to live and work in Scotland for two years following the completion of their studies - is no longer permitted under the current regulations.

However, the SNP administration continues to view migration as an important driver of economic growth and a means of tackling Scotland's demographic challenges. This position is summarised in the Scottish Government Economic Strategy, published in September 2011. This highlights that Scotland's population is projected to age more rapidly compared to the UK as a whole, while growth in the working age population is projected to be considerably lower. As such, the Scottish Government argues that "maintaining recent levels of net migration...will be crucial to delivering our ambitions on growing Scotland's population" (Scottish Government, 2011, p. 74).

Both Labour and the Liberal Democrats also continue to be supportive of positive net migration to Scotland. This has been reflected in recent statements from both parties, such as those quoted in an article in *The Scotsman* newspaper on 25 August 2011:

"The pressures that an increase in migration can bring are surely balanced out by the economic and cultural benefits for Scotland." (Liberal Democrat MSP Alison McInnes)

"Immigration to Scotland in recent times has been beneficial for our economy and added to Scotland's culture." (Labour spokesman).

On the other hand, the Scottish Conservative position is more reflective of the policies adopted by the Coalition Government in Westminster:

"We want the brightest and best workers to come to Scotland, make a strong contribution to our economy while they are here, and then return home. A small number of exceptional migrants will be able to stay permanently but for the majority, coming here to work will not lead automatically to settlement in Scotland and elsewhere in the UK. Under Labour, immigration got out of control which is why the UK government is taking action to control numbers." (Conservative MSP David McLetchie, quoted in *The Scotsman*, 25 August 2011).

While the UK Government acknowledges the economic benefits that migration can bring, its position is that immigration levels are too high. As such, its stated aim is to bring net migration down to the tens of thousands by the end of the current parliament. Since coming to power in 2010 the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition has introduced a variety of policies aimed at doing this, while they intend to make further changes in the near future:

“What we need is a system that ... goes out to seek those people who are either going to create jobs or wealth or add to the high-level artistic and cultural aspirations we have. Getting the number down is the absolute key but what I am aiming at is fewer and better.” (Damian Green MP, Minister of State for Immigration, quoted in *The Telegraph*, 29 January 2012).

The Scottish Government agree that they, too, want the ‘brightest and best’, but where they differ from their UK Government counterparts is in how this is to be achieved. The Scottish Government argue that the restrictions introduced by the coalition government are “too blunt an instrument” (Scottish Government, 2011, p. 74) to address Scotland’s economic needs, as well as their current population growth target.

Why does migration matter for elected members?

There is no doubt that migration has an impact on council services. Any influx of people to an area places additional pressures on health and social care, social work and education services. Councils also provide specific advice and information to new migrants together with interpretation and translation services and English as an Additional Language support. In addition, they have a duty to deliver services to foreign nationals who are destitute and have specific mental or physical health problems and no recourse to public funds. There are particular complexities associated with the rights and entitlements of migrants in this regard, and councils must grapple with the complex legal and legislative frameworks that determine how they should respond to the needs of migrants living within their boundaries.

However, migrants also bring with them a range of benefits. For instance, they can fill skills gaps and contribute to the economy both by paying taxes and by buying goods and services locally. A surge of young migrants arriving in an area can boost the working age population and help tackle the problem of an ageing population by creating a larger pool of workers and tax payers. The benefits in this sense are increased if migrants can be encouraged to settle in an area over the medium to long term because they will continue to contribute economically and may have children who will provide another boost in the population that is below retirement age.

The benefits of in-migration are such that some local authorities may wish to actively encourage migrants to come to their area. Increased migration is of particular value in areas where the population is declining. While transitory migrants may bring a short-term boost to local economies, in order to effectively counteract the demographic challenges that many areas of Scotland are facing, migrants who settle and integrate into an area are needed. The demographic picture does differ across different local authorities in Scotland, and some areas actually have an increasing population. However, these areas may still wish to attract migrants to their area in order to fill specific skills gaps and enhance their cultural diversity.

Although local authorities do not have any control over migration policy, and often have very little control over who comes to live in their area, there are still some mechanisms within the current system that can be utilised to enable migrants to come to Scotland and particular local authority areas. Most migrants from the EEA have the right to live and work in the UK, while the PBS provides opportunities for migrants from beyond the EEA to come and live and work in the UK, so long as they meet certain criteria. There is a skills shortage list attached to the PBS and migrants who can fulfil one of the roles on the list get extra points. There is also an additional skills shortage list for Scotland and the Migration Advisory Committee is responsible for making recommendations to the UK Government on what occupations are included on both lists. They consult stakeholders regularly on this and local authorities and their community planning partners can play a key role in identifying skills gaps in their area and presenting

evidence to the Migration Advisory Committee, thus potentially opening up a route for migrants to enter their area to fill skills shortages.

There are also a range of soft levers that Scottish local authorities can use to promote their areas to migrants. For example, they may wish to market the natural environment, quality of life, education services and so on in order to encourage migrants to settle. There is also evidence that migrants are more likely to settle if they migrate at certain points in their life. For example, migrants who have young families are less likely to become onward migrants than young, single migrants. That said, there are of course moral issues attached to encouraging migrants to come to an area. People in Scotland are familiar with the concept of ‘brain drain’ as many young Scottish graduates migrated south in recent decades in order to find better opportunities. If local authorities seek to actively encourage migrants to come to their areas, they should bear in mind the negative impact that outwards migration can have. Migration within the EU is to some extent cyclical and as migrants leave one country they will be replaced by migrants from another country. However, targeting migrants from under-developed countries, particularly those whose skills are in short supply, can have significant negative effects on fragile states.

COSLA Strategic Migration Partnership (CSMP) seeks to support local authorities to respond to migration in a positive way and identify the benefits migration can bring.

CSMP has developed a Migration Policy Toolkit as a means of assisting local authorities and their community planning partners in developing strategic approaches to migration. The toolkit is divided into 4 sections which allow users to:

1. understand the demographic challenge faced in their area;
2. build an evidence base about the migrant communities already in an area;
3. decide upon an overall strategy towards migration suitable to their area’s needs; and
4. identify policy options and develop indicators to incorporate their strategy towards migration into their area’s Single Outcome Agreement.

Further details on the work of CSMP, including a link to the Policy Toolkit and contact details for the Team, can be found at: www.migrationscotland.org.uk.

Key messages for elected members

- Migration tends to be viewed more positively in Scotland than in other parts of the UK and its economic, social and cultural benefits are often more readily acknowledged. Local and national politicians can play an important role in shaping public attitudes towards migration by addressing concerns and questions about the impacts of migration in a balanced and evidenced manner.
- There is broad consensus in Scotland that population growth is an important means of stimulating the economy and mitigating the negative impacts of demographic change. However, while the Scottish Government has identified inward migration as a key means of growing the population, immigration policy is reserved to Westminster and the UK Government is developing policies designed to reduce net migration.
- There is freedom of movement to and from the UK for European Economic Area (EEA) nationals. EEA migrants are often the subject of unsubstantiated claims regarding the negative impact that they have on wages and employment. It should also be highlighted that many UK nationals take advantage of the freedom that they have to move to other parts of the EEA.
- Non-EEA migrants are subject to immigration control and those who wish to work or study in the UK must apply for a visa through the Points Based Immigration System (PBS). Obtaining a visa is not easy and applicants have to meet various criteria and accrue a minimum number of points based on factors such as qualification levels, future expected earnings, sponsorship, English language skills and available maintenance.
- While it may seem that public opinion is in favour of reduced immigration, views are a lot more complex than that. For instance, surveys show that most people are not in favour of reducing the number of highly-skilled workers and university students coming to the UK, but are in favour of reducing the number of asylum seekers and illegal immigrants.
- Although many people seem to be in favour of reducing the numbers of asylum seekers, they constitute only 4% of the total number of migrants to the UK. What is more, most asylum seekers and refugees come from countries affected by conflict, violence and human rights abuses, while there is a lack of evidence to back up claims that significant numbers are 'bogus' or 'economic migrants'. Neither is there an evidence base to suggest that they come to the UK to access our benefits system; indeed many have little or no choice as to their final destination and do not necessarily set out to come to the UK.
- While migration can bring challenges in terms of providing public services, migrants also bring a range of benefits to an area. They can have a significant impact on an area's demographics and boost its working age population, filling skills gaps and contributing to the local economy.

- Migration can allow employers to recruit highly skilled people who are unavailable in the local jobs market, as well as lower skilled people in sectors where recruitment and retention is no less a problem. What is more, there are parts of the economy that rely heavily on migrant workers. For instance, approximately one third of doctors and dentists registered to practice in the NHS qualified abroad. Their contribution cannot be underestimated.
- Although social and cultural impacts are often difficult to quantify, there is evidence that migrants do bring clear benefits in this regard. For instance, various surveys of Scottish employers have indicated that migrants are valued for positive traits such as punctuality, reliability and flexibility; are found to be productive and have a strong work ethic; are able to integrate well into the existing workforce; and can have skills that are hard to find amongst the local workforce.

Terminology

Anyone considering issues associated with migration will be faced with a multitude of terms, acronyms and abbreviations on the subject. Below are definitions of some of the most common.

Migrant/Immigrant

These terms tend to be used interchangeably to refer to a person who leaves his/her country of origin to take up residence in another country. In the UK, the definition of a migrant used in national statistics is someone who moves to the UK from their country of previous residence for at least one year.

EEA Migrant

The European Economic Area (EEA) comprises the 27 members of the European Union (EU), plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. EEA nationals are free to move between the EEA states and are not subject to immigration control.

A8

This refers to the eight accession states (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) which joined the EU in 2004. Nationals of these countries were subject to certain transitional restrictions in relation to their ability to work and claim benefits in the UK. These restrictions were lifted in May 2011.

A2

This refers to Romania and Bulgaria, the two accession states which joined the EU in 2007. Nationals of these countries are subject to certain transitional restrictions in relation to the ability of their nationals to work and claim benefits in the UK. These restrictions will be lifted in January 2014.

Third Country National

This refers to an individual who is neither from the EU/EEA country in which they are staying, nor from another EU/EEA country.

Points Based System

This is the means of regulating migration to the UK from outwith the EEA. It comprises 5 tiers that regulate the migration of various categories of migrants including high value and skilled workers, students and temporary workers. The system is administered by the UK Border Agency.

Asylum Seeker

This refers to someone who is applying for protection from persecution or fear of persecution in their own country. There is a legal right to apply for asylum and have it considered under the 1951 UN Refugee Convention.

Refugee

A refugee is someone whose claim for asylum has been recognised under the 1951 Refugee Convention. In the UK, it is the UK Border Agency that determines whether or not an asylum application is legitimate.

Further support and contacts

COSLA Strategic Migration Partnership (CSMP) seeks to support local authorities to respond to migration in a positive way and identify the benefits migration can bring. Further details on the work of CSMP, including a link to the Migration Policy Toolkit and contact details for the Team, can be found at: www.migrationscotland.org.uk.

Other useful links include the following:

All-Party Parliamentary Group on Migration – www.appgmigration.org.uk

General Register Office for Scotland Statistics – www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/index.html

Office for National Statistics – www.ons.gov.uk

Migration Observatory – www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk

Talent Scotland – www.talentscotland.com

UK Border Agency – www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk

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The Improvement Service is devoted to improving the efficiency, quality and accountability of public services in Scotland through learning and sharing information and experiences.

