

SUMMARY REPORT ON RESEARCH INTO THE IMPACT OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN NORTHUMBERLAND

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Working Paper Number: 87
Date: February 2009

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The Northumberland Information Network is a partnership between:

Northumberland Strategic Partnership, Northumberland County Council, Northumberland Community Safety, CDRPs, Northumberland DAAT and Northumberland Early Years & Childcare Service.

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ACRONYMS

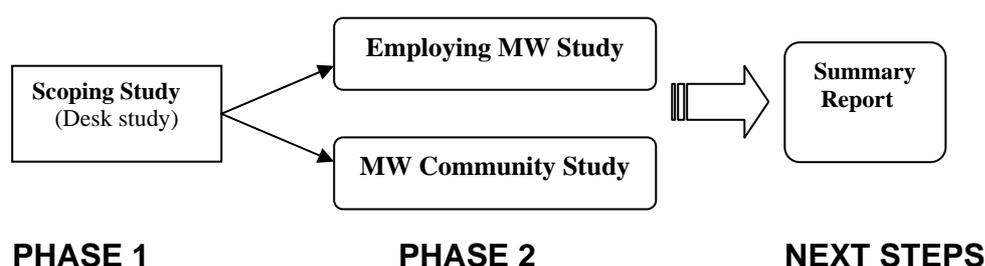
A2 = Second 2 Accession Countries
A8 = First 8 Accession Countries
ESOL = English for Speakers of Other Languages
EU = European Union
MWs = Migrant workers
NSP = Northumberland Strategic Partnership
PBS = Points Based System
WRS = Worker Registration Scheme

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report was commissioned by the Northumberland Strategic Partnership (NSP) and the County Council to summarise a number of pieces of research into the impact of international migrant workers in Northumberland. The combined research reports represent part of an emerging picture of migration in the county and provides more information than has been available before. However, migration patterns can change quite quickly and it should be recognized that trends are difficult to predict and accurate statistical information is difficult to ascertain. This research programme has been conducted to inform the development of *Migration Matters – The Strategic Migration Framework (SMF)* for the county. The SMF sets out key priorities and thematic objectives linked to the Community Strategy and can be accessed at: www.nsp.org.uk/migration.

The first phase comprised a review of migration data and literature. This recommended that a second phase be conducted to cover the identified information gaps in our information and understanding on employers, migrant workers and communities in Northumberland. Two separate but parallel studies were therefore conducted, one researching the experiences of local employers of migrant workers in Northumberland. The other community based research into migrant worker experiences.

Fig. 1: Flow Chart showing Migrant Workers Research Programme



1.1 Purpose of the Summary Report

This Summary Report draws together the findings and conclusions of the three reports generated from the research during the latter half of 2008. The first report: 'Impact of Migrant Workers in Northumberland'¹, an InfoNet scoping paper which

¹ 'S. Greener, *Impact of Migrant Workers in Northumberland*', Working Paper no. 71, (2008) Northumberland Information Network

reviewed literature then available on migrant workers, collated data from various government sources including the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS), the Census, the International Passenger Survey and data from National Insurance Registration.

The second report: 'Employing Migrant Workers in Northumberland'² is a study through employer research and case studies of the experiences of local employers and the impact of migrant workers in Northumberland. The third report: 'Community Based Research with International Migrants in Northumberland'³, commissioned by the NSP, is community based research providing an assessment of the perceptions of migrant communities living and working in Northumberland.

1.2 Background

Phase 1 of the research programme established existing data and policy information that was available but also identified a lack of understanding on the employment situation of migrant workers. A clear need was therefore identified for an employer survey of businesses across Northumberland to look at the proportions of migrant workers being employed and their working patterns. It also recommended that such a survey look at industries where migrant workers were employed, wages received and hours worked.

A further survey was also indicated on social issues (school, housing, healthcare and childcare provision), and on the attractions of Northumberland in order to try and understand the reasons migrant workers either stay or leave the county.

² L. Juppenlatz, 'Employing Migrant Workers in Northumberland', Working Paper no. 86. (2009) Northumberland Information Network

³ Barefoot Research and Evaluation, *Community Based Research with International Migrants in Northumberland*, Working Paper no. 85, (2009), Northumberland Information Network

Fig. 2 shows key findings from each of the three reports.

Fig. 2: Summary of Key Findings

Findings/Conclusions	Phase 1	Phase 2	
	Report 1 Scoping	Report 2 MWE	Report 3 MW
1. Impact on economy of MWs	Higher productivity	Higher productivity	Not reported
2. Job types	Factory+farm work hotel/catering	Factory work, hotel/ catering, services, public sector	Factory work, services
3. Skills	Highly qualified, under-employed	Skilled/ unskilled, under-employed, filling gaps in workforce,	Skilled/unskilled, under-employed
4. Wages	Below county average	MWs paid same rates as local staff	Not reported
5. MW profile • <i>Nationality</i> • <i>Gender</i> • <i>Age</i> • <i>English Language</i>	Mobile, single Polish majority Male majority 18-44 Not reported	Single Polish majority Male majority 20-35 Limited to none	Married + single Polish majority Male (female dependants) Limited to none
6. Community support	Few MW support organisations in Northumberland	Not in ToR	Support from own (ethnic) community
7. Geographic Spread of MWs	North, south, east	North, south, east, west	North, south, east

In addition to the above, the employer research revealed the following benefits and challenges to employers and some emerging trends:

Benefits and challenges to employers

Benefits to employers of MWs	Higher productivity; fill gaps in workforce; MW work ethic
Challenges for employers of MWs	Extra admin.; limited MW language skills; lack of local advice; PBS system unclear

Emerging trends

- Businesses are increasingly reliant on migrant workers to fill the skills shortages and gaps left by the local labour force.
- Poland, once the dominant source of migrant workers, may be giving way to other A8 countries (Hungary, Latvia) as alternative sources for migrant workers.
- Recruitment agencies are being by-passed by employers looking for more cost-effective methods of recruiting migrant workers

2.0 SUMMARY OF SCOPING PAPER: 'IMPACT OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN NORTHUMBERLAND'

This scoping paper is a desk study of current literature available on migrant workers, including statistics from government sources. It is a sequel to the first paper on migrant workers produced by InfoNet: 'International Migrant Workers in Northumberland' (2006) by Ellie Bates. Topics covered include policy information, statistics, community support and partnerships. The paper concludes with recommendations for further research.

2.1 Terms of Reference and Methodology

The Terms of Reference for this paper required a review of quantitative data and literature on migrant workers in the county in order to assess their economic impact in Northumberland.

Methodology

The methodology used was a desk review of available information on migrant workers, together with illustrative case studies.

2.2 Key Findings

Migrant Worker Employment Statistics

Since 2004 Northumberland has seen a sharp rise in the number of migrant workers coming to the county. This rise was seen to peak in 2006 and the county as a whole is now starting to experience a slight downward trend in the numbers of migrant workers coming to the area. However, the total number and percentage of migrant workers in Northumberland has always been small, relative to all other parts of the country.

Geographical Spread

From May 2004 to March 2008 there were approximately 1,310 registered migrant workers recorded for Northumberland. A higher proportion of workers are registering in the North of the region than the South or the West, with the exception of Blyth

Valley, which also has a considerable proportion of migrant workers settling in the district.

Nationality and Gender

From April 2006, Polish registrations have become dominant, accounting for approximately 80% of registrations in Northumberland, displacing Lithuania as the leading source of migrant workers to the county.

More men register to work in Northumberland than women, with approximately 75% of registrations being male, typically aged 18 to 44.

Job Type and Wages

There is an urban/rural split as to the jobs undertaken by migrant workers. The more urban districts of Blyth Valley, Wansbeck and Castle Morpeth attract workers for factory jobs such as process operatives and packers whereas the more rural districts of Berwick upon Tweed, Tynedale and Alnwick attract workers for kitchen/catering, labourers and farm work. North Northumberland (Berwick upon Tweed in particular) has seen the largest proportion of migrant workers coming to the area.

Skills

Migrant workers bring with them a number of skills to Northumberland. IPPR defined migrant workers as being younger, more mobile, highly qualified and occupying hard-to-fill vacancies. Migrant workers typically take hard-to-fill vacancies and receive a lower wage than the Northumberland average.

It is thought that international migration can contribute significantly to improving the productivity of the region (One NorthEast).

Community Support

There appear to be few organisations set up for migrant communities/workers in Northumberland although formal networks/organisations for migrant communities exist in the urban centres of the North East, i.e. Newcastle and Sunderland.

2.3 Phase 2 Research Requirements

Given the limitations in the WRS data for migrant worker numbers in Northumberland, the scoping paper therefore made recommendations for further investigation in a second phase of research into the proportions of migrant workers in Northumberland. The results of this research are presented in the following sections.

3.0 SUMMARY OF REPORT: EMPLOYING MIGRANT WORKERS IN NORTHUMBERLAND

The topics covered in this report include: migrant worker employer experiences, migrant worker profile; selected employer case studies and main benefits/challenges faced by employers when taking on migrant workers. Recommendations for further action conclude the report.

3.1 Terms of Reference and Methodology

The Terms of Reference are shown below.

Phase 2 Terms of Reference: Employer research

- Investigate, through employer research, proportions of MWs being employed, the industries where employed, wages received and hours worked.
- Identify benefits migrant workers bring to the county and their employers.
- Highlight challenges faced by businesses in employing migrant workers.

Methodology

Over 50 organisations in Northumberland were contacted over the period July to November 2008, and out of this number, a total of 17 interviews were conducted with employers. Four case studies, drawing directly on employers experiences with migrant workers, were selected to highlight the employer/migrant worker relationship in more detail.

3.2 Key Findings

Migrant Worker Employment and Profile

Job Type and Wages

The sectors in which employers of migrants workers were engaged were hotel/catering; factory work/manufacturing; services and the public sector.

Over half of the employers interviewed were engaged in either the accommodation or the manufacturing sectors. The actual number of migrant workers employed in the businesses surveyed varied widely, although average number per business, where highly skilled or well qualified migrant workers were employed, was found to be relatively small (4-6).

Employers reported that migrant workers received the same rate of pay as local staff, with the minimum wage paid for basic tasks while a commensurate salary was paid to those who were technically qualified.

Migrant workers reportedly worked the same hours as local staff, varying in accordance with the different types of business and the sectors in which they were engaged. Migrant workers employed in the manufacturing sector were more frequently found to be doing shift work. Polish were often said to work harder and do more overtime.

Nationality and Gender

The countries of origin of migrant workers working in Northumberland were identified by employers interviewed as mainly the Accession 8 (A8)⁴ and Accession 2 (A2)⁵ countries. However, more Polish workers were employed than any other nationality, regardless of size of business or sector.

Single males outnumbered other categories of migrant workers (i.e. female, married, accompanied by families, etc.)

Employer experiences in Northumberland

Filling gaps in the labour force

Employers reported that migrant workers are taken on to fill gaps left by the local labour force resulting either from a lack of local applicants for jobs or a lack of interest from the local labour force in the types of jobs offered. Half of employers interviewed reported that they had not originally intended to employ migrant workers at all, but if a migrant worker applied for a vacancy, s/he was treated in the same way as any local applicant, and hired on their merits.

⁴ A8 countries: Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Cyprus, Slovakia, Czech Republic

⁵ A2 countries : Romania, Bulgaria

ESOL Training Needs

The different types of training offered by employers to migrant workers ranged from 'on-the-job' training to ESOL classes for non-English speaking employees as part of the employment package. Wide geographic differences were found to exist in the level of services and facilities available for migrant workers in Northumberland, and employers noted the lack of facilities for ESOL classes. It was felt that this was a gap that urgently needed to be filled.

Recruitment methods

The majority of employers in the study used were formal recruitment methods such as recruitment agencies and/or JobCentres and advertising, while about one quarter used informal methods such as referrals, 'word of mouth' and personal recommendations to source new staff.

The benefits to businesses from employing migrant workers included:

- They fill gaps left by local workforce.
- They have a strong work ethic, and 'are here to work'.
- Higher productivity levels.
- They are willing to do wider range of jobs than the local workforce.

The main challenges faced by employers of migrant workers were:

- The additional workload from the more complex administrative and legal procedures resulting from recruiting and employing migrant workers.
- Communication and language issues.
- Confusion over the Points Based System.
- Migrant workers often need more assistance than local workers to settle in (housing, financial, etc.).

4.0 SUMMARY OF REPORT: COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH WITH INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS IN NORTHUMBERLAND

4.1 Terms of Reference and Methodology

The terms of reference are shown below:

Phase 2 Terms of Reference: Migrant Worker Experiences

- To obtain views on Northumberland as a place to live and work
- Gauge plans and trends of MWs for moving or staying in the area
- Seek advice from individuals regarding potential gaps in service provision or problems accessing services.

Methodology

A total of 88 migrants were interviewed over two months (October and November 2008), predominantly in focus groups but also using semi-structured individual interviews. All those interviewed either lived or worked in Northumberland. The objective of this research was to provide an assessment of the perceptions of migrant communities about living and working in Northumberland.

4.2 Key Findings

The key findings of the research are set out below.

Demography

The demographics of migrants varied and included: families who had migrated to find employment and a new life; women and men who had met and married a resident of the county, either overseas or in Northumberland; young people (mostly Polish) who had come to the area to find employment and travel with no intention of staying; and the traditional view of the migrant worker, someone (usually male) who left their family (usually in Poland) to find work and send home money.

Migrant Worker Profile

The majority of migrants interviewed arrived between 2004 and 2008, with a peak in 2006 and a subsequent decline thereafter. Most migrants came directly to Northumberland, with most of those remaining in their first town of arrival. There has been some limited internal movements and some movements from outside of the

county. More migrants intend to stay, with the reasons for staying related either to having family living here or a job.

Community Support

Members of the same country of origin provide the main social function in terms of friendship, support and information. The support covers all aspects of a migrant's life, from finding a job, accommodation, knowledge and access to services, transport and money. It was notable that there was little significant mixing between many migrant and resident communities.

Migrant Worker Experiences

The majority of migrants reported no problems accessing the services that they needed and their two main sources of information were either the existing migrant community or their spouses. This may mask two important issues. Firstly the fact that migrants workers expressed a lack of knowledge when first arriving and also a dependence on other migrants for information meaning that service information and knowledge could potentially be incorrect. One example of this is the incorrect assumption by some MWs that if you want something you have to pay for it when in fact many services in the UK are often free. The second issue is related to the sample group interviewed, a large number of people interviewed are already engaged or aware of the services on offer in the county more so than say seasonal migrants that come to the county who continue to be hidden to an extent meaning that these views only represent a sample of our migrant population.

The majority of migrant workers have limited to no competency in English. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) was by far the biggest need that was expressed. The lack of ESOL provision masks three other significant related problems of finding other jobs if made redundant, career progression and integrating with resident communities.

A significant finding of the research was a strong link identified between the level of English of the individual migrant and the reaction to them in the workplace and in wider society.

Features of living in Northumberland that attracted migrants included the good nature of people, the countryside and the peace and quiet.

5.0 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings from each of the three reports illustrated in Fig. 2, the following key conclusions were reached:

- Migrant worker impact on the economy is resulting in higher productivity for Northumberland's economy.
- Migrant workers are often highly skilled but underemployed.
- Migrant workers are paid below the county average.
- There is a demand for informal and formal English training both from MWs and employers and a lack of appropriate ESOL provision, especially in rural areas.
- Positive feedback from employers of migrant workers outweighs the challenges they face in taking them on.
- There is very limited community development support for migrant workers in Northumberland and a need to increase the range of activities which promote community integration with the indigenous population.
- Migrant workers are found to be working in a wide geographic spread across Northumberland.
- MW's have commented on a range of positive aspects to living in the county and accessing services. However there is evidence that this masks a need to provide more consistent and well planned service information and delivery which takes account of MW needs.
- International migration to the county is not a new trend but it has increased since 2004. Migrant workers are coming here to live and work mainly from the European Union, the majority being Polish migrants but there are also nationals for examples from Portuguese, Romanian, and Lithuanian.
- Migrant Workers represent the bulk of international migration to the country at the present time; however the nature of migration and government policy can change quickly meaning council staff may be required to provide services to new arrivals from a variety of backgrounds, and of different nationalities, in the future. There are likely to be very small numbers of Asylum Seekers and refugees living in the county at present.
- Some migrants come here to work for a short time, in seasonal jobs in agriculture or tourism for instance but others are now settling in the area with

their families. The demographics of migration is diverse and includes people who are young and old, male and female and single or as part of a family. As such, like the counties diverse range of residents, migrants have a range of service needs.

- Northumberland is now home to a wide array of people from across the world, albeit in small numbers.
- Research indicates that migrants feel generally welcome in the county and like the people, the quiet, nature and the beautiful countryside. As with any resident, they have the same basic needs when accessing services effectively and share the same concerns about local issues including community safety.

5.1 Policy Implications, Recommendations and Next Steps

The following are recommendations for future action based on the foregoing research:

- Northumberland County Council should provide a service to assist with the interpretation and understanding of the regulations and guidelines concerning the employment of EU and overseas workers.
- Localised support should be available and increased for employers.
- Further support should be provided for services and facilities for migrant workers, especially English (ESOL) classes, particularly in more outlying areas.



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