

# The economic impact of migrant workers in the West Midlands

Full Report  
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# Acknowledgements

This study was commissioned by the West Midlands Regional Observatory on behalf of Advantage West Midlands, the West Midlands Learning and Skills Council together with a range of other partner organisations. The report writing and analysis was undertaken by the Institute for Employment Research at the University of Warwick, with fieldwork undertaken by BMG Research.

Anne E. Green, David Owen and Paul Jones  
Institute for Employment Research  
University of Warwick  
Coventry  
CV4 7AL

Telephone: 024 7652 4113  
Email: Anne.Green@warwick.ac.uk  
Web: <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/>

Chris Owen and Jayne Francis  
BMG Research



# Foreword

Over the past three years, we have pooled our resources and investment in skills and labour market research and analysis to develop, through the work of the Regional Observatory, an excellent evidence base to shape and drive our joint work on employment and skills. This approach and the work of the Observatory are now regarded as a model of good practice being followed by a number of regions.

Our aim is to gain a much more profound understanding of all the complex dynamics of the 21st century labour market, in particular the interaction between economic and demographic change and its impact on skills and employment. From our excellent evidence base, we are now able to focus our investment much more on the critical gaps in our knowledge and understanding.

Nowhere has that knowledge gap been more apparent than in relation to the impact of migrant workers, in particular those from European Union Accession countries, on the region's economy and labour market. In commissioning this important research study, we wanted to move the debate on from anecdotes and stereotypes to arrive at a much more balanced and objective understanding of what is actually happening. This study not only analyses the official statistics in detail, but also contributes significant new primary research from large-scale surveys of both migrant workers and employers. It has enabled us to develop a detailed picture of the motivations and experiences of migrant workers and to find out where and in what sectors they are working and about the skills they bring to these jobs.

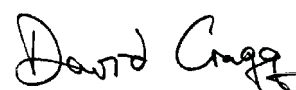
The research demonstrates that migrant workers are bringing clear benefits to the region's economy. In some sectors, such as manufacturing, agriculture and the hotel and catering industry, and in some local areas, they are meeting critical labour shortages. However, the research raises important issues for public policy and the service delivery role of public agencies across a range of areas.

Our next task, therefore, is to work together and, through Government Office, with relevant Government Departments to ensure we respond effectively to the findings of this research to maximise the benefits of this key labour market resource at the same time as ensuring that we support the integration of migrant workers into the workforce and the wider community. The research has also exposed a number of issues which will require further investigation. We will build this into our research programme for the coming year.

Local authorities, the Strategic Health Authority, Government Office and a range of other partners have all contributed to this study, both financially and in shaping and steering the work through our steering group. Our particular thanks go to them for their support and enthusiastic commitment. We look forward to continuing this partnership with them in implementing this work.



John Edwards



David Cragg



[www.advantagewm.co.uk](http://www.advantagewm.co.uk)



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# Funding Partners

Progress during the research process was overseen by a steering group representing public agencies across the region. This comprised representatives from the funding partners and also included members from other interested agencies such as Government Office for the West Midlands, West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership, West Midlands Regional Assembly, Sandwell Borough Council, West Midlands Regional Observatory and Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce. A full list of steering group members can be found as an annex in this report.

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# Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Foreword	3
Funding Partners	4
Glossary	7
Executive Summary	9
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>16</b>
1.1 Background to the study	16
1.2 Research objectives	16
1.3 Methodology	17
1.4 Structure of the report	18
<b>2 Migration policy context</b>	<b>19</b>
2.1 Overview of migration flows	19
2.2 Historical and policy context overview	19
2.3 Migration routes	21
<b>3 Definitional issues and data sources</b>	<b>22</b>
3.1 Definitions	22
3.2 Key data sources and their strengths and weaknesses	22
<b>4 The scale and spatial distribution of labour migration</b>	<b>26</b>
4.1 Introduction	26
4.2 Estimates of migrant employment from the Labour Force Survey	27
4.3 NINo registrations of overseas nationals	27
4.4 Worker Registration Scheme - Migration of A8 nationals	31
4.5 Work permits	33
4.6 Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme	33
4.7 Sample of labour migrants in the West Midlands	33
4.8 Overview	35
<b>5 The profile of labour migrants</b>	<b>36</b>
5.1 Introduction	37
5.2 Nationality	37
5.3 Gender	42
5.4 Age	42
5.5 Household profile	44
5.6 Qualifications	45
5.7 Economic position	47
5.8 Industrial profile	50
5.9 Occupational profile	52
5.10 Recruitment channels used by migrants	61
5.11 Housing circumstances	64

<b>6</b>	<b>Migrants' motivations, aspirations and intentions</b>	<b>71</b>
6.1	Introduction	71
6.2	Previous migrations to the UK and current duration of stay	72
6.3	Motivations for coming to the UK	75
6.4	Intended length of stay in the UK	78
6.5	Satisfaction levels	82
6.6	Overview	88
<b>7</b>	<b>Employers' perspectives</b>	<b>89</b>
7.1	Introduction	89
7.2	Rationale for employing migrant workers	92
7.3	Recruitment channels	94
7.4	Contractual arrangements	95
7.5	Advantages of employing migrant workers	96
7.6	Difficulties of employing migrant workers	98
7.7	Assessment and implications	99
<b>8</b>	<b>Labour market and economic impacts of migrant workers</b>	<b>101</b>
8.1	Introduction	102
8.2	Overview of previous studies	102
8.3	Data and methods for assessing labour market impacts	103
8.4	Employment impacts of migrant workers	104
8.5	Impact on unemployment	107
8.6	Trends in vacancies	116
8.7	Impact on earnings	117
8.8	Impact on business performance	121
8.9	Contribution of migrant workers to the West Midlands economy	123
8.10	Overview and conclusions	124
<b>9</b>	<b>Policy implications for skills, training provision and regional economic development</b>	<b>125</b>
9.1	Understanding attitudes to skill development	126
9.2	The importance of English language skills	126
9.3	Other training	135
9.4	Motivations for training and learning	135
9.5	Implications for skills and regional economic development policy	138
<b>10</b>	<b>Implications for other policy areas</b>	<b>143</b>
10.1	Introduction	143
10.2	Family and household structure, intentions to stay and service provision	143
10.3	Community cohesion	144
10.4	Good practice	147
<b>11</b>	<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>148</b>
	<b>References</b>	<b>154</b>
	<b>Annex - Steering Group Members</b>	<b>157</b>
	<b>Full Document Information</b>	<b>158</b>

# Glossary

A2	'Accession 2' - Bulgaria, Romania (entered the EU in January 2007)
A8	'Accession 8' - Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia (entered the EU in May 2004, along with Cyprus and Malta - the ten countries together are the 'A10')
APL	Accreditation of Prior Learning
APS	Annual Population Survey
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DCSF	Department of Children, Schools and Families
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
(employment) displacement	Defined here as a situation where the employment trend for migrant workers is positive and the employment trend for UK nationals is negative
EEA	European Economic Area
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
EU	European Union
EU15	Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Spain, United Kingdom
FE	Further Education
GVA	Gross Value-Added
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
MAC	Migration Advisory Committee - with a membership of independent experts, its role is to advise Ministers on where migration might sensibly fill gaps in the labour market
MIF	Migration Impacts Forum - its role is to provide information on the wider impacts of migration on local communities and how best to ensure public services can respond and community cohesion be safeguarded
Migrant Dense Industries	Industries where migrant workers have a greater propensity to be employed than their UK national counterparts

<b>Migrant Dense Occupations</b>	Occupations where migrant workers have a greater propensity to be employed than their UK-national counterparts
<b>New Commonwealth</b>	Commonwealth countries other than those in the 'Old Commonwealth' (countries include India and Pakistan)
<b>NINo</b>	National Insurance number
<b>Old Commonwealth</b>	Canada, Australia, New Zealand
<b>ONS</b>	Office for National Statistics
<b>Other Europe</b>	All parts of Europe (including the former USSR) which are outside the EU
<b>PBS</b>	Points-Based System
<b>Rest of the World</b>	All parts of the world outside Europe, the Old Commonwealth and the New Commonwealth
<b>SAWS</b>	Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme
<b>SBS</b>	Sector Based Scheme
<b>SSC</b>	Sector Skills Council
<b>TIM</b>	Total International Migration
<b>WRS</b>	Worker Registration Scheme



# Executive Summary

## Introduction

There has been a rapid growth in net migration to the UK in recent years. The research reported here was undertaken to address a gap in understanding of the size and profile of migrant workers and their motivation for location in the West Midlands region. It was also designed to assess labour market and economic impacts of migrant workers and implications for skills and training provision.

The report combines findings from a desk-based study (published separately) and analysis of secondary data sources (covering the period from 2001 to 2006/7) with primary research (undertaken in 2007) encompassing:

- a quantitative survey of 223 employers of migrant workers in the West Midlands (hereinafter referred to as the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey)
- a qualitative survey of over 40 third-party organisations involved with supporting migrant workers
- a quantitative survey of 712 migrant workers in the West Midlands (referred to as the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey); and
- a qualitative survey of migrant workers using 8 mini focus groups.

## Migration policy context

The migration policy context plays a role in shaping flows of migrant workers. However, the migration policy context is subject to change.

Migrants enter the UK by different routes. Characteristics of migrant workers vary by migration route. Work permits and sector-based schemes have been used for some time to address specific skill/labour shortages. The expansion of the EU in 2004 has had significant implications for flows of migrant workers to the UK. Recent debate on migration flows to the UK and economic impacts of migration have focused primarily on migrants from eastern Europe.

## Definitional issues and data sources

Studies of migration adopt different definitions of 'migrants' and 'migration'. This study focuses on non-UK citizens who came to the UK for the purpose of employment and who have a legal right to work in the UK.

It is important to keep in mind that no single data source has comprehensive coverage of migration. A particular challenge facing migration studies is the lack of information on out-flows (i.e. emigration) from the UK. Each of the data sources referred to in this report has its own strengths and weaknesses and adopts a different definition of migration and has partial coverage of the phenomenon.

## The scale and spatial distribution of labour migration

The number of migrant workers in the West Midlands has increased markedly since 2002 and especially since May 2004 when labour migrants from the A8 countries were granted access to the UK labour market.

According to the Labour Force Survey (LFS) there were around 122,000 non-UK nationals in employment in the West Midlands in summer 2006, representing 4.9% of total employment, of whom 86,000 had entered the UK since 1991 and 54,000 had entered since 2001. These are likely to be minimum estimates given that some of the most mobile groups of the population tend to be missed by the LFS.

The scale of the recent increase in migration to the region is illustrated by the fact that there were 48,000 National Insurance Number (NINo) registrations of overseas nationals in the West Midlands in 2006/7, compared with 23,400 in 2002/3. This represents a similar rate of increase to the UK average.

The key component of recent increase in labour migration to the region has been migrants from Accession 8 (so-called 'A8') countries (notably Poland). Between May 2004 and March 2007 there were just over 47,000 approved 'first applications' to the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) in the West Midlands. However, migration from other sources remains important: over 19,000 people from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) were granted Work Permits to work in the West Midlands between 2002 and 2006. The West Midlands has slightly more migrant workers from A8 countries and New Commonwealth countries than the UK average, and fewer migrants from EU15 countries and the Old Commonwealth.

At sub-regional level there have been contrasts in the scale and speed of change in different local areas. There have been marked increases in migrant workers in some rural areas (notably Herefordshire) as well as additions to established urban concentrations of labour migrants, where work permit applications are concentrated. Migrant workers on the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme represent an important component of the migrant population in some rural areas - particularly in the summer months.

## The profile of labour migrants

Poles account for the largest single national group of labour migrants in the West Midlands, followed by Indians. A8 countries have replaced the New Commonwealth as the largest source of new labour migrants in recent years. There are local variations in the profile of labour migrants by nationality.

Migrant workers are predominantly young: around 40% are aged 25 years and under and a further 40% are aged 25-34 years. Around three-quarters of migrants in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey have not brought family members to the UK and few planned to do so in future. The youthful age profile of migrant workers is an important consideration here. Males outnumber females amongst labour migrants. There are some variations in gender profile according to the data source examined, but in general there are around 3 males to every 2 females.

Differences in qualification structures in different countries and in translating qualifications gained outside the UK to UK equivalents means that there are problems in making robust comparisons between the qualifications of migrant workers and the general population. Analysis of LFS data shows that nearly half of the highest qualifications of post-2002 migrants to the West Midlands are coded as 'Other'. The share of such migrants with a highest qualification at degree or equivalent level was somewhat lower than for the general population. However, amongst the migrants in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey, the proportion with qualifications at degree level or above exceeded the corresponding share in the West Midlands working age population and in the 20-39 years age group. With a small survey of migrant workers it is difficult to say with any certainty how qualification levels of migrant workers compare with the general population.

The vast majority of labour migrants to the West Midlands are working. Only half of migrants in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey were in employment prior to coming to the UK, nearly a third were students and most of the remainder were unemployed.

Migrant workers are unevenly distributed by industry. They play an important role in some sectors of the economy. Analysis of a range of secondary and primary sources shows that they are especially concentrated in sectors such as Agriculture; Manufacturing; Hotels & Restaurants; Transport, Storage & Communication; and Health & Social Work. There is evidence from secondary data analysis of increasing segregation of migrant workers in industries where they are already concentrated.

Migrant workers are clustered by occupation. Analysis of secondary data sources shows that while some are concentrated in professional occupations (e.g. in Health) there is a trend towards a greater concentration of more recent migrants in less skilled occupations - notably Operatives and Elementary Occupations. The lower skilled and lower paid areas of employment where migrants workers are concentrated are associated with higher than average rates of employment turnover - typically these are jobs associated with relatively unattractive working conditions where employers face labour shortages.

There is evidence from the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey that a substantial proportion of migrant workers having worked in occupations at a higher level outside the UK than the occupations they were engaged in at the time of the survey. On coming to the UK they had taken the first job that they could find, had found that opportunities were restricted by their limited English or had found it difficult to find similar work to that done previously.

A third of migrant workers in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey had obtained their first/current job via an agency in the UK and a third had found work via friends/family members. Insights from qualitative elements of the research suggest that agencies are particularly important for first jobs and social networks are important in finding subsequent employment openings.

The study focuses primarily on economic and labour market issues, but a limited amount of information was collected on housing. Information from the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey shows that the majority of migrants (around 60%) are in the private rented sector. Over half of the sample shared accommodation with non-family members; (partly this reflects the youthful age profile of the sample). On the basis of the evidence from the survey it appears that overcrowding is an issue only in a relatively small number of cases.

## Migrants' motivations, aspirations and intentions

Migrant workers are heterogeneous: their motivations, aspirations and intentions vary. Nevertheless, some common themes emerge from the analyses. Economic motives for coming to the UK predominate amongst migrants in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey - 62% of respondents cited working/finding a job/earning money as their main reason for coming to the UK. Learning/improving English is an important secondary factor for many migrant workers.

One in ten of the migrants in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey had been to the UK prior to their current stay. The median duration of their current (ongoing) stay for migrant workers surveyed was 17 months. In most cases location in the West Midlands is attributable to serendipity - it was where they 'were sent' or where they 'ended up'.

Some migrants intend to stay for a few months only whereas at the opposite end of the spectrum some migrant workers intend to settle permanently. Migrant workers from the New Commonwealth are amongst the most likely to contemplate permanent settlement. Substantial numbers of individuals change their intentions (predominantly, but not exclusively, revising their plans upwards towards longer stays), and approximately 20% are uncertain about how long they will stay. Interviewees from third-party organisations had mixed views about whether substantial numbers of migrant workers would stay in the UK long-term or whether they would return to their origin countries as economic conditions there improved.

Overall satisfaction levels with life in the UK are high, with 76% of respondents to the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey saying that they were quite/very satisfied. Aspects of their current job that migrant workers are least satisfied with are rate of pay and level of employment (i.e. working below their qualification/skills level); although more migrant workers are satisfied than dissatisfied about these aspects.

## Employers' perspectives

The information on employers' perspectives is drawn from the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey covering 223 organisations employing migrant workers; (note that the sample is not representative of all employers in the region). Some organisations approached to take part in the survey appeared reluctant to admit to employing, or to talk about, migrant workers.

The main rationale emerging for employing migrant workers was to address labour shortages, although in some cases migrant workers were employed to fill skills shortages. Several employers admitted that migrant workers were less reluctant to do certain types of jobs (often relatively unskilled jobs) than UK nationals. In the majority of organisations surveyed, migrant workers were used to meet an ongoing steady demand for labour throughout the year. Employers surveyed reported that migrant workers are engaged primarily on direct, permanent contracts.

The main advantages cited for employing migrant workers were that they were hard working/had a good work ethic (mentioned by over half of employers surveyed), were reliable and meticulous. It is clear from the focus groups conducted with migrant workers that many of the migrants themselves were aware of their reputation for working hard and doing a good job. The employers in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey reported high levels of satisfaction with their experience of employing migrant workers: 71% were 'very satisfied' and 19% were 'quite satisfied'.

The main difficulty of employing migrant workers cited by employers was communication problems due to poor English (cited by over half of employers surveyed).

Around half of employers in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey indicated that they were not sure whether they would employ more or less migrant workers in the future, but of the remainder, the balance was in favour of maintaining or increasing employment of migrant workers.

## Labour market and economic impacts of migrant workers

In theory, migrant workers could have a negative labour market impact by reducing employment rates for other sub-groups of workers (especially those with poor skills), contributing to a rise in unemployment rates, reducing the number of vacancies and maintaining wages at lower levels than would otherwise be the case. Migrant workers could have a positive economic impact via a contribution to addressing labour shortages, enhancing productivity, increasing output, maintaining or raising levels of employment and creating additional demand in the economy.

Previous studies at UK level suggest that immigration is beneficial to the economy overall and that there is no generalised negative impact, although there is anecdotal evidence that there may be some localised negative effects, in particular, local areas and labour market segments. These general findings are replicated at regional level. Statistical estimates suggest that migrant workers make a positive contribution to the regional economy, accounting for between 4% and 5% of regional output.

Analysis of Labour Force Survey (LFS) data on 'migrant-dense' (MD) industries and occupations (i.e. where migrant workers have a greater propensity to be employed than UK nationals) provides evidence of 'displacement' of UK nationals by migrant workers (i.e. the employment trend of migrant workers is

positive, while that of UK nationals is negative). Analyses of data on unemployment and on transitions of UK nationals out of MD areas of work suggest that UK nationals have not suffered greater unemployment as a consequence of greater employment of migrant workers. This indicates that, in aggregate, displacement has been voluntary (i.e. movement out of MD areas of work has not been a result of choice and not a function of redundancy), rather than involuntary; (although some individuals particularly those with the weakest labour market positions - may have suffered involuntary displacement). There is no statistically significant evidence that migrant workers have contributed to a rise in unemployment at local area level. Nor is there any statistical evidence from analyses of LFS data that growth in the number of migrant workers is associated with lower rates of earnings growth. However, there is anecdotal evidence from particular labour markets and local areas that migration can have negative effects.

Analyses of vacancy data at regional level suggest that migrants are responding to labour shortages in particular sectors and occupations. There is no statistically significant evidence to suggest that an increase in migrant workers is associated with a reduction in recorded vacancies at local area level.

Migrant workers in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey are disproportionately concentrated in low-wage jobs. Although a few interviewees from third-party organisations expressed concerns about exploitation of migrant workers, such concerns were not widespread and evidence was largely anecdotal.

The overwhelming majority of employers are satisfied with the experience of employing migrant workers and the majority of migrant workers in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey indicate that their overall experience of the UK has been positive. Employers in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey generally cited migrant workers as having a positive impact or as having little change on their business. The main ways that migrant workers had a positive impact on business were through working harder/working longer hours and increased work standard/quality and performance.

## Policy implications for skills, training provision and regional economic development

Many migrant workers are interested in improving their English and in learning and skills development more generally. English language skills are important for employment progression, engagement and social integration. More migrant workers in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey self-assessed their English language skills as good/very good than as poor/very poor. Understanding and speaking skills are generally better than writing skills. Younger people tend to rate their English language skills more highly than older people.

Despite the importance of English language skills, over half of migrant workers in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey had neither been offered nor received any help with improving their English language skills; (20% of respondents said that they did not need any help). Respondents who had been offered or received help with English language skills were most likely to cite friends as a source of help, followed by colleges and then employers.

The majority of employers in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey cited English language skills as important when employing migrant workers. Over three-quarters of employers in the sample indicated that migrants' English language skills were adequate or better than needed to do the job that they were employed for. This helps to explain why the majority of employers did not provide English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) training or provide other help with English language skills for those workers whose English language skills needed further development.

The most frequently cited types of training provided by employers were induction training - including basic health and safety, and on-the-job training provided by another member of the workforce. In part, this reflects the concentration of migrant workers in less skilled jobs. Hence, on the basis of evidence from the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey and the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey, it appears that many employers want classic 'economic migrants' (i.e. workers who are attracted by higher pay in the UK than in their origin country, but who are content to stay in low-skilled roles), while many migrant workers 'aspire' to improve their skills/improve their language abilities/gain other relevant qualifications so that they can pursue their true career path - either in the UK, their country of origin or elsewhere.

There is scope for employers to make better use of the skills of 'aspiring' migrant workers - for the benefit of both businesses and individuals. Better utilisation of migrant workers' skills is likely to involve qualification recognition, skills recognition, development of language skills and policies to facilitate progression in employment.

There is a danger for businesses and for the regional economy that use of migrant workers in filling labour shortages in less skilled occupations and in sectors which are unattractive to UK nationals may delay capital investment and/or restructuring of labour processes and so reinforce a 'low-skill equilibrium'.

There is an economic risk that the numbers of migrant workers coming to the West Midlands will decrease in the future and/or that the profile of migrant workers may change. It is important to ensure that alternative sources of labour (including the long-term unemployed and people currently outside the labour force) are not overlooked and that they have the requisite attitudes and skills for employers to consider them.

## Implications for other policy areas

The speed of change in population in some areas and uncertainty about migrant numbers poses ongoing challenges for service providers.

An influx of migrant workers has led to increased pressure on private rented accommodation. Over time, more migrant workers may seek accommodation in the owner-occupied, social-rented sectors - and the latter type of accommodation is in short supply in some local areas.

Most migrants are in employment and do not claim benefits. Currently, the age structure and household composition of the migrant population is such that it does not place substantial demands on the health service in aggregate (although there may be pressures in some local areas). However, the presence of children will increase demand for school places in areas of migrant concentration.

In terms of community cohesion, tensions/differences have been noted between:

- migrant workers and the indigenous population
- migrant workers and refugees/asylum seekers
- migrant workers and ethnic minorities
- groups of migrant workers
- 'old' and 'new' members of the same national group
- permanent and agency staff.

Several interviewees expressed concerns about the way that press reporting and some political groups could 'stir up' tensions between different sections of the population.

It was noted by some interviewees from third-party organisations, and by some migrant workers, that Poles are viewed as particularly desirable by employers.

There is growing literature on 'good practice' in dealing with the local impacts of migration and Web-based information sources have been launched to provide information and guidance to migrant workers, employers and other agencies. It is important that policy makers and organisations in the West Midlands are aware of such developments and tap into these sources of information and intelligence as appropriate.

## Conclusions

The findings presented in this report relate to a particular point in time. It cannot be assumed that current trends will continue in the future. Migration is a dynamic phenomenon and is characterised by uncertainty - about numbers of migrants and migrants' intentions. This dynamism and uncertainty are not new phenomena, but have become increasingly important over time.

Like other studies of migrant workers, the analyses presented here are thwarted by deficiencies in the information base - most notably the absence of comprehensive data on emigration. There is an urgent need to address shortcomings in official statistics and to improve the information base on international migration in order to inform economic and social policy and planning.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the number of migrant workers in the West Midlands has increased markedly in recent years. Although A8 migrants have been the most important component of increase, it is important to remember that there are substantial numbers of migrant workers from other countries - notably the New Commonwealth. Recent migrants are overwhelmingly young and they are in employment. They make an important contribution to the West Midlands economy. There is scope for better utilisation of migrant workers' skills and experience for the benefit of the West Midlands economy.

It is difficult to measure the impact of migration with any certainty, but secondary data analyses reveal no statistically significant evidence at the regional level for a dampening down of wages or an increase in unemployment as a consequence of labour migration. Those UK nationals who are in the weakest positions vis-à-vis the labour market are most likely to feel any negative impact.

Migrant workers are disproportionately clustered in low-wage sectors and occupations. The segregation of migrant workers in particular labour market segments has implications for progression and for the openness of parts of the labour market to other population groups. It is also evident from various elements of the research that agencies play an important role in the migration process and in shaping labour market norms. Some interviewees from third-party organisations expressed concern about the role of some agencies in possible exploitation of migrant workers and as having undesirable impacts on employment opportunities.

It is questionable whether the attraction of migrant workers - particularly from the same groups and in the same numbers - is sustainable in future. Therefore, it is important that other groups of (potential) workers are not overlooked.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background to the study

In recent years there has been rapid growth in net migration to the UK (see Chapter 2 for further details). Migration from central and eastern Europe has been much higher than was anticipated. There is a significant gap in understanding of the size and profile of migrant workers and their motivations for location in the West Midlands region. Likewise, little is known about the effect of migration on resident workers.

To deal with the information gap, BMG Research and the Institute for Employment Research at the University of Warwick were commissioned to undertake a study into the economic impact of migrant workers in the West Midlands region. This report presents the key findings from that study.

## 1.2 Research objectives

The research had five main objectives:

- To quantify the extent of migrant workers in the region and to profile their demographic and socio-economic characteristics
- To assess the impact that migrant worker activity is having on the West Midlands' economy and indigenous UK population
- To investigate migrant workers' attitudes and motivations for coming to the UK and their reasons for location in the West Midlands, and to see to what extent migrant workers' plans may change during their time in the UK. Likewise, to investigate the rationale of employers for employing migrant workers
- To assess the implications of the above for skills and training provision in the region, for migrant workers and for the indigenous population
- To provide some contextual information to support other policy areas in assessing the impact of migrant workers on other selected key services and areas of public life - such as housing, health and community cohesion.<sup>1</sup>

It is intended that the research findings will be used by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to inform future provision of training and qualifications-related support for economic migrants, by Advantage West Midlands (the regional development agency) and partners in updating and implementing the West Midlands Economic Strategy and informing regional economic planning. The results are relevant to Local Strategic Partnerships in gaining a greater understanding of the potential impact and issues relating to migrant workers at the local level.

When reading this report, it is important to bear in mind the limitations of research of this nature. Within the resources available for this project, it was possible to survey only a small fraction of the (unknown) migrant population and of employers employing migrant workers in the region. In designing the research, secondary data sources were used to target the survey as accurately as possible, but in the absence of comprehensive information on migrant workers or employers of migrant workers, it is not possible to know how representative the results are. Moreover, statistical theory tells us that the smaller the sample, the less confident we can be that the results obtained are an accurate picture of the true characteristics of the population studied. However, the broad characteristics of the survey are generally consistent with the conclusions drawn from the analysis of

<sup>1</sup> The primary focus of the research is on economic and labour market issues. The other policy areas and aspects of life mentioned above are not covered in detail. The research does not cover the impact of migrant workers on crime and school-based education.



secondary data sources and surveys conducted elsewhere, though some inconsistencies can be expected when comparing the results with other small-scale surveys (which may have used different methodologies) or when examining the characteristics of small sub-groups of the migrant worker population.

### 1.3 Methodology

The study combined primary data collection with the analysis of secondary data sources.

The first part of the study comprised desk-based research and profiling activities using secondary data sources (hereafter referred to as secondary data analysis) (see Green et al., 2007b). The aim was to:

- Trace the changing migration policy context
- Investigate definitional issues
- Review the academic and policy literature on migration
- Identify key secondary data sources on migrant workers
- Provide a profile of migrant workers from secondary and primary sources
- Estimate, using official data sources, the impact of migrant workers on the West Midlands labour market and their contribution to the regional economy
- Inform and provide a context for the primary research elements of the research.

The secondary data analysis presented here is based either on administrative records, which count the great majority of migrant workers, or official statistics collected using a sample design intended to be representative of the population as a whole.

The primary data collection undertaken for the study had four components:

- A quantitative survey of 223 employers of migrant workers - hereafter termed 'The West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey'. Interviews were conducted by telephone
- A qualitative survey of 41 third-party organisations involved with supporting migrant workers. The majority of the interviews were conducted face-to-face and the remainder by telephone
- A quantitative survey of 712 migrant workers - hereafter termed 'The West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey'. The questionnaire was designed to be suitable for self-completion, with guidance being provided in some cases, but most were completed through face-to-face interviews. The questionnaire was available in English and was translated into Polish, Slovak, Portuguese, Chinese and Russian<sup>2</sup> languages
- A qualitative survey of migrant workers using 8 mini-focus groups, with around 4-6 participants per group.

It is important to recognise that this research provides valuable insights into the economic impact of migrant workers in the West Midlands but is limited in nature. It was possible to survey only a small fraction of the (unknown) migrant population and of employers employing migrant workers in the region. Without robust sampling frames of the migrant population or of employers who employ migrant workers the primary data collected is not necessarily statistically representative, even though care was taken to use available information from secondary data sources when drawing up the samples. Hence, the results must be treated with care.

This report is the main output from the project and is designed to be read as a stand alone document. It draws on other elements of the project, to which readers are referred for more detailed supporting information:

<sup>2</sup> The questionnaire was translated into Russian because it was considered that migrants from several east European countries (with different languages) might have knowledge of Russian.

- A desk-based study -conducted to inform the design and delivery of the desk-based element of the project (Green et al., 2007b). It provides a review of selected findings from a review of the literature, a profile of migrants in the West Midlands and an analysis of migrant employment and its labour market and economic impacts
- A technical report - providing technical and methodological details (including survey out-turns) of the migrant worker and employer surveys, third party (stakeholder) consultation and focus groups (Owen, 2007). Copies of the questionnaires and topic guides used in the research are included also
- Data sets - key tables from the migrant worker and employer surveys.

## 1.4 Structure of the report

Chapter 3 is concerned with definitional issues and the scope, strengths and weaknesses of data sources on migration and migrant workers.

An overview of the scale of labour migration to the West Midlands and the uneven spatial distribution of migrant workers is presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter 5 presents a demographic and socio-economic profile of migrant workers in the West Midlands, drawing on information from secondary data sources and from the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey. It also presents a limited amount of information on the household and housing circumstances of migrant workers based on information from the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey.

Chapter 6 explores in greater detail the motivations, aspirations and intentions of migrant workers, and how these have changed and are changing in the light of their experiences. This draws on information from the quantitative and qualitative surveys of migrant workers undertaken for this research. The findings are related to those of other studies of migrant workers.

Chapter 7 investigates the rationale of employers for employing migrant workers and reflections on that experience. This draws primarily on the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey undertaken for this research project and on the wider literature.

The focus of Chapter 8 is on the impact of migrant workers on the West Midlands labour market and economy and on the indigenous population in the region. This section draws predominantly on secondary data analysis, but also presents information from the qualitative survey of third-party organisations, the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey and on other research at national and regional scales.

Chapter 9 presents an assessment of the policy implications of the above for skills, training provision and regional economic development in the West Midlands. This draws on findings from all parts of the research.

Implications for selected other areas of policy are outlined in Chapter 10. The first set of issues addressed concern family and household structure, intentions to stay and service provision. The focus then shifts to community cohesion. However, these other policy areas are not covered in detail.

Chapter 11 concludes with an overview of key findings and themes arising from the research.

## 2. Migration policy context

### Key points:

The migration policy context plays a role in shaping flows of migrant workers.

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However, the migration policy context is subject to change.

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Migrants enter the UK by different routes. Characteristics of migrant workers vary by migration route.

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Work permits and sector-based schemes have been used for some time to address specific skill/labour shortages.

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The expansion of the EU in 2004 has had significant implications for flows of migrant workers to the UK.

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### 2.1 Overview of migration flows

In recent years immigration has been running at historically high levels and the UK has gained population at an increasing rate due to net immigration. The volume of migration increased steadily during the 1990s and from the mid-1990s asylum flows became a major component of immigration, peaking in the first few years of the 21st century. From 2004 onwards the focus of popular and strategic policy attention has shifted towards flows of labour migrants from EU-member states in central and eastern Europe, although economic migration from other parts of the world remains important. While economic migration dominates current migration flows, migration for family reasons continues to be an important source of new migration and the New Commonwealth remains an important source for migration flows (Green et al., 2005). Hence, it is important to consider 'migrant workers' within this broader context of migrant flows.

### 2.2 Historical and policy context overview

The volume and nature of migration is shaped by the legislative framework at UK (and EU) level. Hence, in any consideration of the role of migrants in the labour market the legislative and policy framework is of key importance.

After World War II, ex-servicemen from eastern Europe were encouraged to stay in the UK and more migrants were attracted from these countries in order to fill labour shortages created by the reconstruction effort. With the subsequent division of Europe by the 'Iron Curtain', migrants were recruited from the New Commonwealth. A series of New Commonwealth Immigration Acts in the 1960s and 1970s attempted to control this new migration stream by restricting the rights of Commonwealth citizens to settle in the UK. Labour migration from outside the EU was fairly strictly controlled in the UK and the wider EU until the 1990s.

After 1992 the creation of a single market in labour in the EU led to some relaxation in restrictions on migration. Other trends associated with globalisation and a more interconnected world economy, coupled with growth in the UK economy, led to a large increase in the numbers of travellers and permanent immigrants to the UK. Claims for asylum increased in the 1990s as a result of civil conflicts in various parts of the world, but there were also concerns that asylum was being used in some cases as a way of gaining access to the labour markets of the UK and other EU countries. The immigration system came under considerable administrative pressure, and in 2002 the right of asylum seekers to seek work was withdrawn.

In an overview of UK immigration policy, Somerville (2007) characterises the period since 2001 as one of 'reattaching economics to migration policies'. The UK government states that it embraces the principle of 'managed migration', with migration being viewed as a positive economic asset that contributes to macroeconomic health, and as a solution for replacing workers who are retiring and who are not being replaced at the younger end of the workforce due to falling birth rates (Stanfield et al., 2004; Somerville, 2007). It makes explicit recognition of the potential role for migration to address labour market deficiencies, especially in key professions and some unskilled jobs.

There are a number of managed migration routes for migrants from beyond the EU. These include the Work Permit system (for non-European Economic Area [EEA] migrants filling specific vacancies - including in the NHS), the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme and a number of special schemes focusing on specific sectors at the lower end of the labour market where posts were difficult to fill in the UK. In 2005 the Home Secretary announced that the Government intended to phase out all low-skilled immigration routes, although subsequently it was agreed that Sector Based Schemes (SBS) would be retained for Bulgarian and Romanian nationals. Likewise, the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS), which has existed since the late 1940s to provide cheap seasonal labour (in the form of foreign students) for farmers, will move towards exclusively recruiting Bulgarian and Romanian nationals from 2008.

Hence, the volume and nature of managed migration is shaped by the legislative framework at UK level, which has changed and continues to change over time in accordance with sectoral needs. For example, much of the increase in NHS staff in recent years has been achieved through overseas recruiting; however this is likely to decline due to the increased number of medical and nursing trainees, although doctors trained outside the EU are still able to apply for training posts in the UK. Indeed, evidence from an interview with an agency in the West Midlands indicated that migrant workers were used to fill shortages when they arose, but that there were no shortages at a particular hospital currently.

Migration policy is subject to review and in 2006 a points-based management strategy for managing labour migration was announced (Home Office, 2006); (at the time of writing this is due to be rolled out from 2008). This is likely to have an impact on the volume and nature of future migration flows, with a limited number of categories to be used for judging the status of applications to live and work in the UK:

- Tier 1: highly skilled individuals
- Tier 2: skilled workers with a specific job offer to fill gaps in the UK labour force
- Tier 3: limited numbers of lower skilled workers needed to fill specific temporary labour shortages
- Tier 4: students
- Tier 5: temporary workers/youth mobility.

The points-based system (PBS) has been designed to meet criteria of objectivity, transparency, operability, usability, flexibility, robustness and cost-effectiveness. It will replace an existing system that has been branded by the government as complex, unclear, bureaucratic, inefficient and having scope for subjective, inconsistent and incorrect decisions (Salt and Millar, 2006). It is designed to maximise the economic contribution of migration (under the guidance of a Migration Advisory Committee [MAC] which will advise ministers on where migration might sensibly fill gaps in the labour market) and to maximise the contribution of permanent migrants towards UK citizenship. In recognition of the wider socio-economic impacts of migration on public services and local communities, in June 2007 a Migration Impacts Forum (MIF) was launched to consider the wider social impacts of migration<sup>3</sup> and at regional level Strategic Migration Partnerships have been established.

<sup>3</sup> The October 2007 meeting of the MIF considered a number of topics, including evidence on a regional consultation on the impacts of migration, community cohesion, and the economic and fiscal impacts of migration - see <http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/lawandpolicy/migrationimpactsforum/meeting17october2007/>

## 2.3 Migration routes

As highlighted above, migrants enter the UK by a number of different routes, which vary in importance over time. From a labour market perspective, different migration routes are important in feeding different industries and occupations.

Free movement rights mean that citizens of the EU15 (i.e. the first fifteen European Union member states) and other EEA countries do not need permission to work in the UK. No comprehensive statistics are collected upon their entry to the UK although they need a National Insurance number (as all workers do) to work in the UK.

With EU expansion to central and eastern Europe in May 2004, the UK put in place transitional measures to regulate access to the labour market by nationals of the 'A8' countries via the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS). This expansion of the EU in 2004, and the fact that the UK was one of only three member states (alongside Sweden and Ireland) that chose not to impose restrictions on so-called 'Accession 8' (A8) migrants from the new central and eastern European Accession countries, has led to much greater than expected numbers of migrants from 'new' EU member states in central and eastern Europe coming to the UK since 2004. Indeed, the scale of recent immigration is such that Poles have been identified as the largest ever single national group of entrants that the British Isles has ever experienced (Salt and Millar, 2006). With the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU in January 2007, additional restrictions were placed on migrants from these 'Accession 2' (A2) states.<sup>4</sup>

As noted above, asylum flows became a major component of immigration during the 1990s (in part because controls on labour migration remained strict, but also driven by the number of civil conflicts). Some are asylum seekers and subsequently gain refugee status. This group can form an important part of the workforce in some local areas. In the last few years, the number of asylum seekers has fallen considerably, reflecting the end of the Balkans wars, but also the increased number of routes made available for labour migration.

Students (often working in agriculture) and working holidaymakers represent further important sources of migrant labour.

Some migrants enter the UK illegally, and others enter legally but work illegally. There is an unknown number of failed asylum seekers living in the UK (estimated by the Home Office [2005] to be 430,000 and by Migrationwatch [2005] to be 670,000), who are not able to work legally, but may provide a source of illegal workers. No particular attempts are made in this project to ascertain the size of, or gather information specifically on illegal migrants. Likewise, trafficking for purposes of labour exploitation is not specifically covered, although it is noted that recent research has shown that, typically, victims are found in industries requiring large numbers of low-paid, flexible, seasonal workers (Dowling et al., 2007).

<sup>4</sup>After a 10-month review the UK Government announced that the restrictions on Bulgarian and Romanian migrants would be retained.

## 3. Definitional issues and data sources

### Key points:

Studies of migration adopt different definitions of 'migrants' and 'migration'.

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This study focuses on non-UK citizens who came to the UK for the purpose of employment and who have a legal right to work in the UK.

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No single data source has comprehensive coverage of migration. Each of the data sources referred to in this report has its own strengths and weaknesses and adopts a different definition of migration and has partial coverage of the phenomenon.

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A key challenge facing migration studies is the lack of information on out-flows (i.e. emigration) from the UK.

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### 3.1 Definitions

There are a number of different definitions of 'migration' and 'migrant'/'labour migrant' in common use, although official statistics usually define a migrant as someone who intends to stay in the country for at least twelve months. The terms are used in different ways by different data sources and in the academic and policy literature and in different local studies. In practice, the definition of international migrants varies according to data sets used. Differences in migrant definitions mean that data sources may have different numbers of migrants for the same time period.

Here the focus is on non-UK citizens who come to the UK for the purpose of employment (as far as we can ascertain) and who have a legal right to work in the UK. Note that we cannot be certain whether migrants come to the UK for employment reasons because key household surveys do not collect information on reasons for migration (although the International Passenger Survey [IPS] does collect such information from a sample of arrivals at key ports of entry to the UK). Some people arrive in the UK as students, asylum seekers, and for family completion purposes, rather than primarily for work. In some instances the definition is rather fuzzy. However, they may go on to form a significant part of the migrant labour market. It is also possible that people can change their citizenship.

'Country of birth' has been used in some previous studies analysing the distribution and profile of migrants in the UK (e.g. Kyambi, 2005; Green et al., 2007a). One reason for this is that 'country of birth' remains constant for each individual, whereas 'nationality' can change (as noted above). It is salient to note that some UK nationals are born abroad, while some people born in the UK are foreign nationals. In comparing the results of different studies it is important to be mindful of these different definitions.

### 3.2 Key data sources and their strengths and weaknesses

#### 3.2.1 Introduction

At the outset it is appropriate to note the difficult nature of the evidence on migration. As outlined below, individual secondary data sources provide an incomplete picture of the migrant population (for different reasons) and it is difficult to bring them together to provide a composite overview. Much of the qualitative evidence that

is available is anecdotal in nature. However, to ignore such evidence is to discount vital intelligence on trends in migration and the experience of migrants, other workers and employers.

There is a lack of up-to-date information on the numbers and characteristics of migrant workers at national, regional and local levels, with no single data source providing a comprehensive picture (Rees and Boden, 2006). The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes estimates of annual international migration flows (referred to as Total International Migration [TIM]) as part of its mid-year estimates of population, but it is widely acknowledged that international migration is the most difficult component of population change to estimate.

Differences in what is measured by key data sets and the complexity of the migration process further hamper attempts to quantify migration and to measure migrant impacts. It is not possible to produce a single number which definitively measures the population, let alone migrants, because humans move unpredictably and often untraceably. Only continuous tracking would enable an accurate count. Hence, only broad estimates are possible - especially at regional and sub-regional levels where often small sample sizes may mean that less detailed information may be generated at regional than at national level in order to overcome statistical robustness/confidentiality constraints. Different data sources adopt different definitions, relate to different time periods and geographical areas, have different detail in terms of disaggregations (e.g. by industry, occupation, etc) and have different strengths and limitations.

### 3.2.2 Census and survey data

Official statistics identify migrants in two ways:

- through surveys of residents (i.e. stocks); or
- through direct surveys of people as they move (i.e. flows).

The two most important surveys of residents in the UK are the 10-yearly Census of Population and the Labour Force Survey (LFS)/Annual Population Survey (APS) which provide more frequent updates and so more timely information.

The Census of Population collects information on country of birth and location one year before the Census. Within the latter, it is possible to identify residents who were living outside the UK one year before the Census. The Census provides information at a local level but since data is collected decennially, it cannot provide a regularly updated picture. It does not provide information on nationality.

The LFS/APS collect the country of birth and nationality of respondents and also have information concerning when (i.e. the year) a person entered the UK. It is the only source of data on the nationality of the foreign population and workforce in the UK, but the relatively small size of the sample means that detailed disaggregation by nationality and migrant characteristics is not possible and that even aggregate data may not be robust in small areas. Annual fluctuations may reflect sampling errors.

The Census and LFS/APS focus on residents (of working age) and so provide no information on persons leaving the UK. Sample households should stay in the survey for five successive quarters, but there is no information on where individuals who are not traced in a wave of the survey have gone.

It should be borne in mind that surveys tend to be poorer at capturing mobile populations - for example, some sub-groups (such as young people - especially males) tend to have relatively low response rates in surveys. Hence, short-term migration is likely to be under-estimated. Likewise, some areas (especially inner city areas which have historically served as important destination areas for new arrivals to the UK) typically display lower-than-average response rates in surveys. This means that it is likely that there will be geographical variations in the number of

migrants captured by surveys. This is an important issue given that most migrants come to the UK for a short period of time only (LSC, 2007) and that there is a tendency towards shorter-term moves - exemplified by:

- a declining proportion of Work Permits issued for periods of 12 months or more
- three-quarters of WRS applicants in 2006 answered a question on their registration form about migrant intentions (Home Office, DWP, HM Revenue & Customs, CLG, 2007):
  - 55% indicated that they intended to stay for three months or less
  - 25% did not know how long their stay would be
  - 10% indicated that they intended to stay for more than two years.

### 3.2.3 Information from administrative sources

Analysis of administrative data sources has been the prime method through which very recent migration has been measured. These data sets, administered by Work Permits (UK), hold information at local level on the nationality of individuals and their date of registration, but not date of entry to the UK. They do not cover individuals working illegally. They should be interpreted with caution, because they provide inflow data only - length of stay in the UK/departures from the UK are not recorded, because there is no requirement for individuals to de-register from a scheme or notify the scheme when they leave the UK.

The key data sources which are of greatest relevance for this research are outlined below.

#### 3.2.3.1 National Insurance Numbers (NINOs) registrations

Every overseas national who is legally employed/self-employed in the UK requires a NINo. Hence, NINo registration data cover all labour migrants (i.e. EU citizens - including those from Accession countries who are covered by the WRS), those on Work Permits and (including students working part-time), whatever their length of stay in the UK. NINos are recorded at the place they are applied for (and so are likely to reflect an [unknown] mixture of workplace-based and residence-based data). The date of registration is the date when their NINo is registered on the system, following allocation.

The NINo is often thought of as a proxy for when migrants become active in the labour market; (there may be a lag between arrival and applying for a NINo). The key strength of the data is its wide coverage (i.e. a 100% sample held at case level).

#### 3.2.3.2 The Workers Registration Scheme

Registrations on the Workers Registration Scheme (WRS) apply to A8 nationals (from Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia) who are employees. The self-employed do not need to register. Data on A2 migrants from Bulgaria and Romania is collected using a different administrative system.

The WRS does not require workers to de-register, and so makes no allowance for people who registered but may have subsequently left the UK. This is an important issue given the temporary nature of much migration from A8 countries. The data presented in this report relates to 'first applications' (i.e. the data excludes multiple applications by the same person) and is on a workplace-basis. A count of WRS first does not represent a measurement of the migrant 'stock' (i.e. inflows minus outflows), since outflows are not recorded.

A limited amount of Management Information is available publicly, through quarterly Accession Monitoring Reports are published by the Home Office, Department for Work and Pensions, HM Revenue and Customs and Department for Communities and Local Government. Initially, data for use in this project was obtained via



Freedom of Information requests to Work Permits (UK), but in Spring 2007 data was made available to researchers and analysts in government via the Local Government Association.

### 3.2.3.3 Work Permits

Work permits are required by non-EEA nationals in order to work legally in the UK; (EU and other EEA nationals are not included within the Work Permit scheme). Applications are made by employers. The data are made available on a workplace- basis. The data made available refer to work permits currently in force - i.e. it measures the number of people with work permits and with valid permission to work at the time the data were produced, not the total number of work permits issued to date; (expired permits are excluded from the count).

Information on work permits presented in subsequent chapters of this report was obtained via a Freedom of Information request to Work Permits (UK).

### 3.2.3.4 The Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme

In addition to the other methods through which migrant workers come to the UK, the Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Scheme (SAWS) allows workers from outside the EEA to enter the United Kingdom to do seasonal agricultural work for farmers and growers (most of which is low-skilled). The annual quota for the scheme is fixed.

The scheme is run on behalf of the Home Office by operators who recruit suitable people and place them on farms. The usual period of work is between five weeks and six months and workers are expected to leave the country at the end of their period of employment, but may apply for the scheme again after three months outside the UK (if they continue to satisfy Home Office rules).

Very little data on the scheme is made available. A request for data was submitted to Work Permits UK under the Freedom of Information Act. Data is provided only for small numbers of postcode districts because of current technical difficulties in extracting the data, and hence data was requested for three rural local authority districts which could be reasonably accurately represented by postcode districts: Herefordshire, Wychavon and Stratford-upon-Avon, to provide an indication of the characteristics and impact of migration in rural labour markets.)

## 3.2.4 Regional and local surveys

To address the information gaps in 'official sources' in some local areas, surveys have been undertaken (for example in Wychavon, Stratford-upon-Avon, etc), providing information on the demographic characteristics, skills, learning needs and aspirations, duration of stay, future intentions, etc, of migrant workers. As outlined in Chapter 1, for this research a quantitative migrant survey (the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey) was undertaken to help fill an information gap at regional level.

Results of regional and local surveys need to be interpreted with caution because there is no comprehensive sampling frame from which to draw a sample of migrant workers, the sampling method and questionnaire design differs from survey to survey and the information gathered may date quickly. The results relate to the specific period of time when the survey was undertaken and it should be borne in mind that patterns and tendencies shown are liable to change over time.

### 3.2.5 Overview

The shifting nature and composition of the migrant population and uncertainty about length of stay (especially given the lack of information on individuals leaving the UK), coupled with factors relating to the scope, incompleteness and time lag between collection and publication of statistics, renders estimation of the size of the migrant population at national, regional and local area level very difficult. Even where broad estimates are made, they may be misleading.

## 4. The scale and spatial distribution of labour migration

### Key points:

According to the Labour Force Survey (LFS) there were around 122,000 non-UK nationals in employment in the West Midlands in summer 2006, representing 4.9% of total employment, of whom 86,000 had entered the UK since 1991 and 54,000 had entered after 2001. These are likely to be minimum estimates given that some of the most mobile groups of the population tend to be missed by the LFS.

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The scale of the recent increase in migration to the region is illustrated by the fact that there were 48,000 National Insurance Number (NINo) registrations of overseas nationals in the West Midlands in 2006/7, compared with 23,400 thousand in 2002/3. This represents a similar rate of increase to the UK average.

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There have been marked increases in migrant workers in some rural areas (notably Herefordshire) as well as additions to established urban concentrations of labour migrants.

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The key component of recent increase in labour migration to the region has been migrants from Accession 8 (so-called 'A8') countries (notably Poland). Between May 2004 and March 2007 there were just over 47,000 approved 'first applications' to the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) in the West Midlands.

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Over 19,000 people from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) were granted Work Permits to work in the West Midlands between 2002 and 2006. Work permit applications are concentrated in the major urban centres - notably Birmingham and Coventry.

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Migrants on the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme represent an important component of the migrant population in some rural areas - particularly in the Summer.

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### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents information from the data sources outlined in Chapter 3 on the numbers and (for administrative sources) the spatial distribution of labour migrants in the West Midlands region (further information at the local level is available in the initial desk-based study conducted for the project [Green et al., 2007b]). The strengths and weaknesses of each of the data sources outlined in Chapter 3 should be borne in mind when interpreting the statistics presented in this Chapter.

It should be noted that some migrants will be included in two or more data sources, whereas others have non-overlapping coverage (e.g. the WRS and Work Permits). However, it is not possible to identify such overlaps at the individual level.

The shifting nature and composition of the migrant population and uncertainty about length of stay (especially given the lack of information on individuals leaving the UK), coupled with factors relating to the scope, incompleteness and time lag between collection and publication of statistics, renders precise estimation of the size of the migrant population at national, regional and local area level very difficult. Even where broad estimates are made, they may be misleading. It is important to keep this in mind when reading this chapter.

## 4.2 Estimates of migrant employment from the Labour Force Survey

It is possible to derive estimates of migrant workers using data from the LFS using variables on nationality (i.e. non-UK nationals) and year of entry to the UK. Using a merged LFS dataset containing all individuals entering the survey over the period from spring 2001 to summer 2006, estimates of migrants were derived as follows:

- post-2002 migrants (i.e. most recent migrants) and post-1991 migrants (i.e. those who have arrived over a longer period): non-UK nationals arriving in the UK from 2001 onwards and 1991 onwards, respectively;
- all economic migrants: non-UK nationals of working age (i.e. 16-59/64) irrespective of year of arrival.

According to the LFS there were around 122,000 migrant workers in the West Midlands in summer 2006 (representing 4.9% of total employment in the West Midlands), of whom 86,000 had entered the UK since 1991 (representing 3.5% of total employment). Within this latter group around 54,000 had entered the UK since 2002 (representing 2.2% of total employment). These are likely to be minimum estimates and they are subject to sampling error.

## 4.3 NINo registrations of overseas nationals

### 4.3.1 Number of NINo registrations of overseas nationals

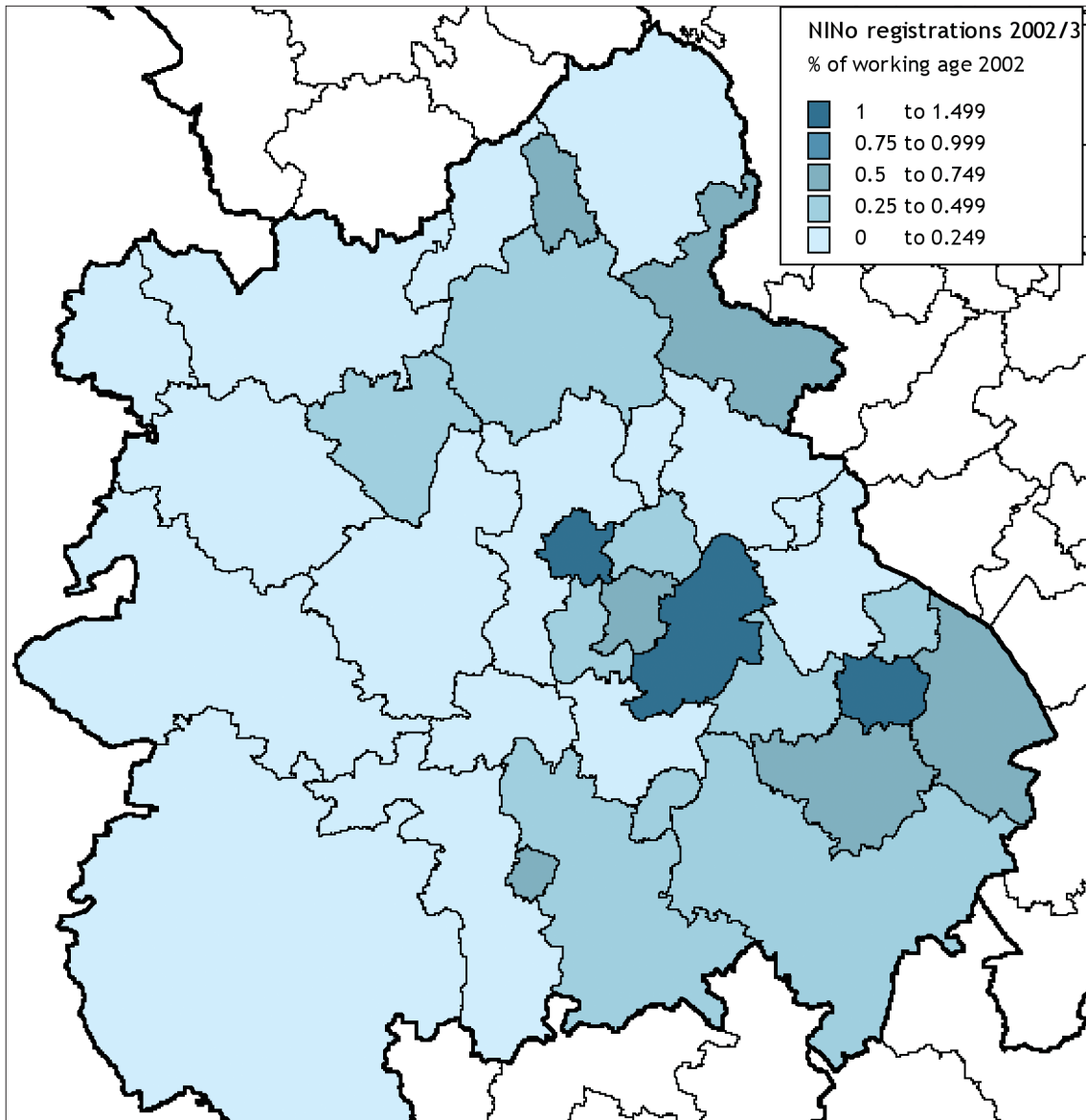
There has been a huge increase in the number of NINo registrations to overseas nationals both nationally and in the West Midlands over the five financial years 2002/3 to 2006/7. The UK total increased from 349,000 to 713,000 over this period, while the West Midlands total increased from 23,400 to 48,000. (Note that the NINo registrations of overseas represent a net increment to the migrant stock in employment over the period in question and an unknown number of migrants will stay for a short period only, whereas the LFS estimates outlined above refer to the 'stock' of migrants at a particular snapshot in time).

The West Midlands accounted for 6.7% of the UK total in both 2002/3 and 2006/7, but in the intervening years the share fell slightly. This indicates that despite the number of NINo registrations of overseas nationals in the West Midlands being 89.2% higher in 2005/6 than 2002/3, the increase was no greater than the UK average; (see Chapter 5 for further details of the scale of the increase by nationality).

### 4.3.2 Spatial distribution of NINo registrations of overseas nationals

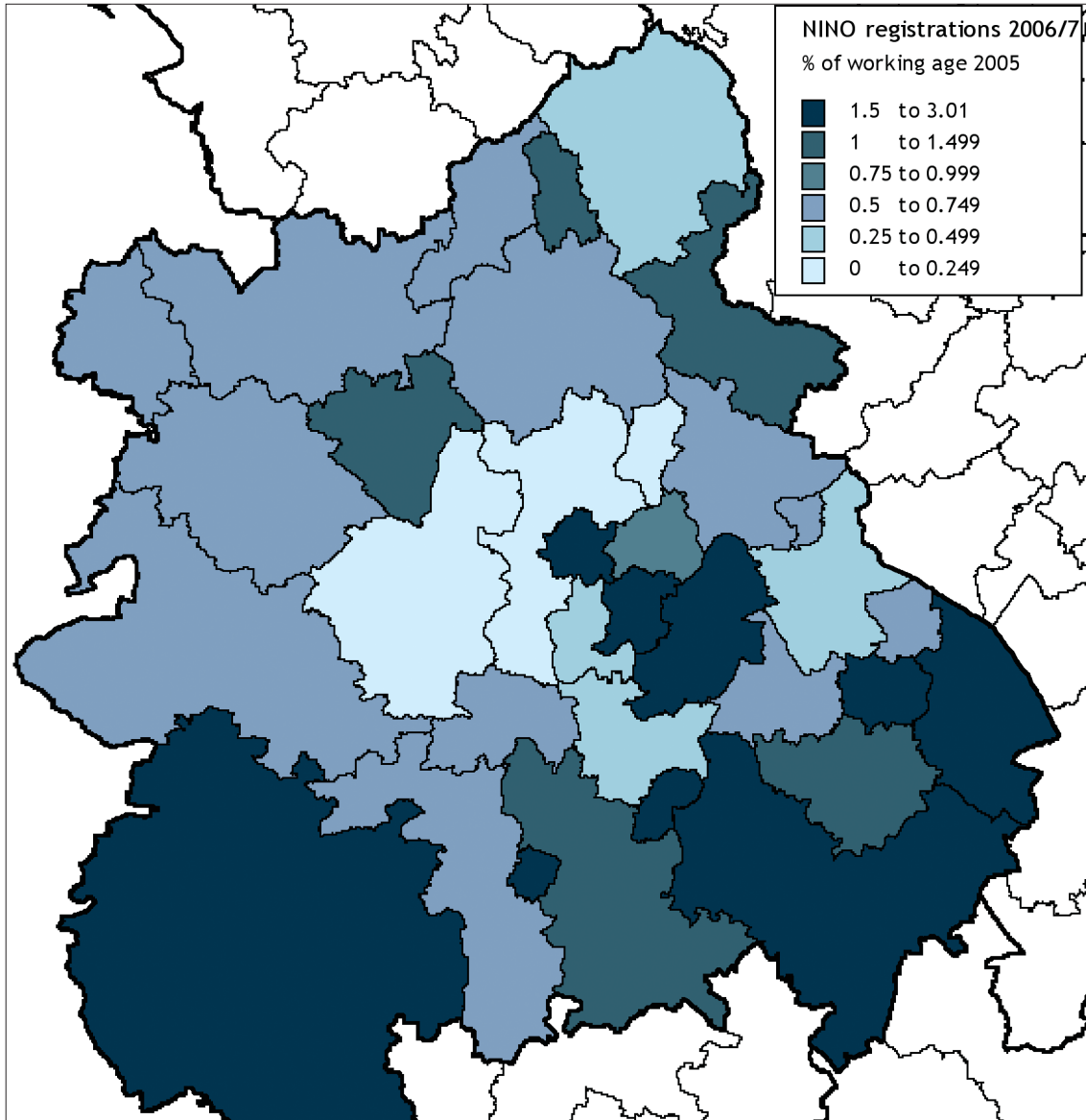
Figures 4.1 and 4.2 present NINo registrations of overseas nationals in 2002/3 and 2006/7 as a percentage of working age people (aged 16 to 59/64 years). These maps dramatically highlight the increase in NINo registrations of overseas nationals across the region and the locally significant numbers in Herefordshire and other rural areas in 2006/7, adding to the urban concentrations already apparent in 2002/3.

Figure 4.1 NINo registrations of overseas nationals 2002/3 as a percentage of working age people



NINo registrations for overseas nationals; Mid-Year Estimates (via Nomis)

Figure 4.2 NINo registrations of overseas nationals 2006/7 as a percentage of working age people



NINo registrations for overseas nationals; Mid-Year Estimates (via Nomis)

Figure 4.3a replicates a diagram in an Audit Commission (2007) report, but here for West Midlands local authority areas only. The x-axis measures NINo registrations of overseas nationals in 2006/7 as a percentage of the working age population in 2005, so providing an indication of relative 'scale' of such registrations relative to the size of the working age population. The y-axis measures the 'speed' of change in such registrations between 2002/3 and 2006/7. High values on the axis represent a high 'speed' of change. The 'impact' is a function of both 'scale' and 'speed' of change.

Figure 4.3a Local impact of NINo registrations of overseas nationals in West Midlands local authority areas

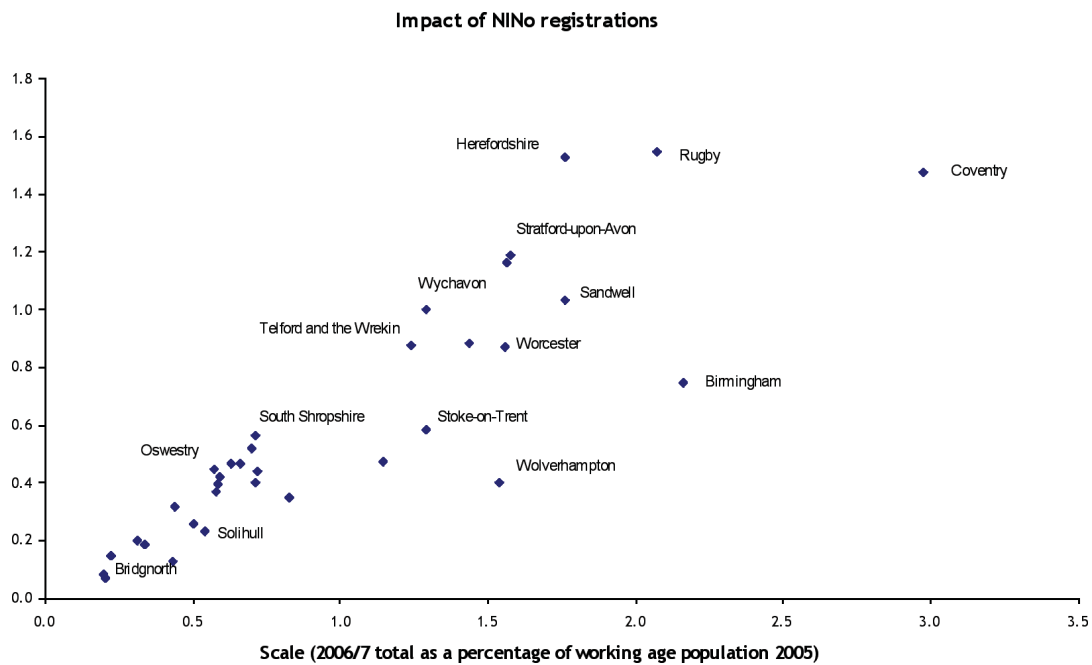
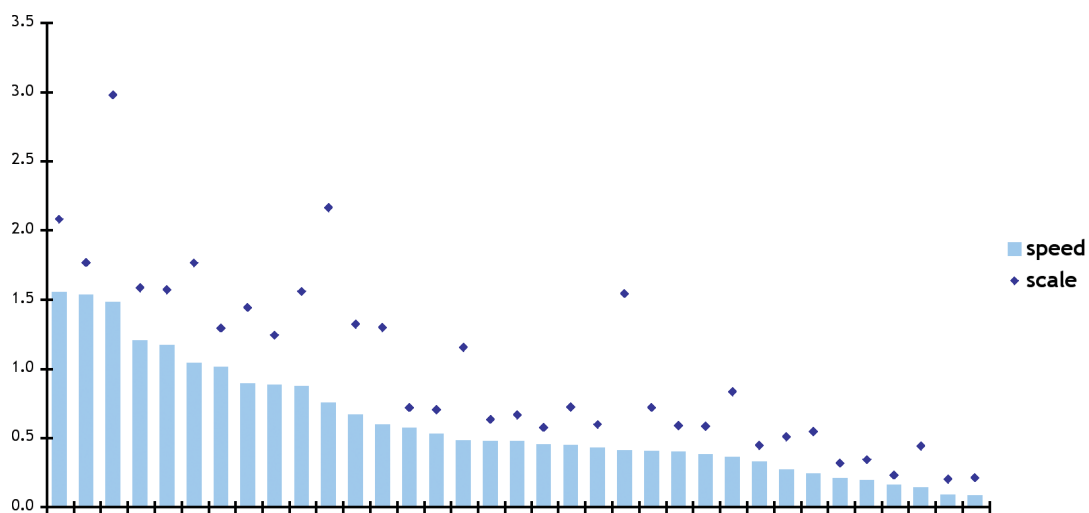


Figure 4.3b Local impact of NINo registrations of overseas nationals in West Midlands local authority areas ranked by speed of change between 2002/3 and 2006/7



NINo registrations for overseas nationals; Mid-Year Estimates (via Nomis). Scale is calculated as new NI numbers issued to non-UK nationals in 2006/7 per authority as a percentage of the working age population in that authority. Speed is change in percentage from 2002/03 to 2006/07.

Figure 4.3a demonstrates that on this measure the local impact of NINo registrations is particularly high in Coventry (the point furthest to the top right on the graph), while the impact is least in areas such as Bridgnorth and Solihull (located in the bottom left-hand corner on the graph). In addition to Coventry, NINo registrations of non-UK nationals as a percentage of the working age population in 2006/7 were relatively high in Birmingham and Rugby, while the speed of change was greatest in Rugby, Herefordshire and Coventry.

The information shown in Figure 4.3a is displayed in a different way in Figure 4.3b. 'Scale' and 'speed' of change values are shown for all local authority areas in the West Midlands. The local authority areas are ranked from left to right according to decreasing 'speed' of change (portrayed by the bars). The dots on the chart portray the 'scale' of change for each area.

## 4.4 Registration Scheme - Migration of A8 nationals

### 4.4.1 Number of WRS migrants

As outlined in 3.2, nationals of A8 countries who wish to take up employment in the UK are generally required to register with the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS). The data presented here contain only those that have submitted applications to register with the Home Office, to work in the UK. Workers who are self-employed do not need to register and are therefore generally not included in these figures: there may also be other workers from A8 countries who for one reason or another do not register and are thus not included in these figures. The data are workplace-based; (it has been found that a workplace-base is more reliable than a residence-base because of the number of people applying from temporary addresses).

The WRS number of applicants to the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) does not represent a measurement of net migration to the UK (inflows minus outflows): rather, it is a gross (cumulative) figure for the number of approved 'first applications' to the WRS in a given period. Hence, if an A8 migrant comes to the UK and makes a first application in Birmingham but subsequently moves from Birmingham to London, he/she is counted in Birmingham (i.e. individual A8 migrants are counted once only per stay in the UK, and if an individual). Likewise, if an A8 migrant comes to the UK and makes a first application in Manchester and subsequently moves to Coventry, he/she is counted in Manchester (not in Coventry). However, if an A8 migrant from Poland comes to Rugby and then returns to Poland, but a year later returns to the UK and re-applies to the WRS in Stratford-upon-Avon that individual will be counted in the statistics in Rugby in the first period and in Stratford-upon-Avon in the second period.

The figures are not current: an individual who has registered to work and who leaves employment is not required to de-register, so some of those counted will have left the employment for which they registered and some are likely to have left the West Midlands (and the UK).

Over the period from May 2004 to March 2007 there were just over 47,000 approved applications in the West Midlands. 26,825 were in the period from May 2004 to March 2006, with a further 20,335 in the year from April 2006 to March 2007.

### 4.4.2 Spatial distribution of WRS migrants

Data from the WRS show that over the period from May 2004 to March 2007 the local authority areas with the largest count of A8 migrants were Herefordshire (7,140) and Birmingham (7,110). Together, these two areas account for 30% of all A8 migrants recorded in the WRS in the region over the period. (Note that this is not a current count of migrants [since migrants are counted 'in' but not counted 'out'] and there will be local variations in the duration of stay of migrants, with migrants working in jobs related to agriculture in rural areas likely to be characterised by shorter durations of stay than their counterparts in other industries in urban areas, as outlined in subsequent chapters). Local authority areas with the next largest counts of A8 migrants recorded by the WRS over this period were Coventry (2,785), Stratford-on-Avon (2,330), Walsall (2,095), Wychavon (2,075), Sandwell (1,995), Stoke-on-Trent (1,995) and Wolverhampton (1,735). Together these areas accounted for 62% of the West Midlands total.

Table 4.1 shows the geographical distribution of A8 migrants recorded by the WRS by the DEFRA urban-rural classification<sup>5</sup> (see key to Table 4.1 for details). Major Urban Areas account for 32% of the count. However, it is also apparent that there have been significant numbers of WRS migrants to rural areas. Indeed, a key feature of the A8 migration to the UK has been a greater orientation towards rural areas than previous migrations (Stenning et al., 2006; Green et al., 2007a; Commission for Rural Communities, 2007), which have been primarily focused on major urban areas. Rural-50 districts account for 22% of the cumulative count of A8 migrants over the period, with Rural-80 and Significant Rural districts each accounting for a further 12-13%. Applications show a tendency to peak in rural areas in summer months.

**Table 4.1 The geographical distribution of WRS applications by urban-rural categories in the West Midland**

DEFRA urban/rural category	May 2004-Mar 2007 (n)	May 2004 - Mar 2006 (% of WM total)	Apr-Jun 2006 (% of WM total)	Jul-Sep 2006 (% of WM total)	Oct-Dec 2006 (% of WM total)	Jan-Mar 2007 (% of WM total)	May 2004-Mar 2007 (% of WM total)
Major Urban	14,635	32.3	24.7	23.6	34.9	35.4	31.0
Large Urban	5,545	10.8	11.0	9.3	17.8	14.2	11.8
Other Urban	4,755	10.0	10.2	8.3	12.2	10.7	10.1
Significant Rural	6,100	12.7	12.9	11.7	13.7	15.1	12.9
Rural-50	10,590	21.7	29.0	34.7	12.9	15.3	22.5
Rural-80	5,525	12.4	12.2	12.4	8.6	9.3	11.7

**WRS statistics**

The DEFRA urban/rural categorisation is based on settlement type:

Major Urban: districts with either 100,000 people or 50% of their population in urban areas with a population of more than 750,000.

Large Urban: districts with either 50,000 people or 50% of their population in one of 17 urban areas with a population between 250,000 and 750,000.

Other Urban: districts with fewer than 37,000 people or less than 26% of their population in rural settlements and larger market towns.

Significant Rural: districts with more than 37,000 people or more than 26% of their population in rural settlements and larger market towns.

Rural-50: districts with at least 50% but less than 80% of their population in rural settlements and larger market towns.

Rural-80: districts with at least 80% of their population in rural settlements and larger market towns.

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/ruralstats/rural-definition.htm>



## 4.5 Work permits

### 4.5.1 Number of migrants on work permits

Overall, 19,461 people were granted work permits in the West Midlands between 2002 and 2006. As outlined in Chapter 3, this scheme refers to migrants from outside the European Economic Area (EEA).

### 4.5.2 Spatial distribution of migrants on work permits

Birmingham accounts for 30% of all migrants granted work permits between 2002 and 2006. The next largest concentration was in Coventry (9.1% of the regional total), followed by Sandwell (5.5%), Warwick (4.3%) and Wolverhampton (4.3%).

This distribution is rather different from that of WRS migrants (over the period from May 2004 to the end of 2006). Local authority areas with a substantially higher relative concentration of Work Permit applicants than of WRS applicants include Warwick, Bromsgrove, South Staffordshire, Birmingham, Worcester, Solihull, Oswestry and Coventry.

By contrast, Herefordshire and Wychavon have substantially lower relative concentrations of migrants on work permits than of WRS migrants. This is illustrative of the fact that the spatial distribution of migrants on work permits is more biased towards large urban centres than that of WRS migrants. However, as the list of local authorities above suggests, some local areas with large employers recruiting specialist staff also have higher relative concentrations of migrants on work permits vis-à-vis WRS migrants.

## 4.6 Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme

### 4.6.1 Number of migrants on SAWS

SAWS is subject to a strict national quota - set at 16,250 places in 2007 (compared with 25,000 in 2004), of which 40% are allocated to Bulgarian and Romanian nationals. The remaining 60% is reserved for students from non-EEA countries. The numbers of work cards issued to foreign nationals in the UK under the SAWS were 20,557 in 2004, 15,610 in 2005 and 16,178 in 2006. The national groups accounting for the largest numbers of workers were Ukraine, Bulgaria, Russia, Romania and Belarus.

Data obtained for a small number of selected postcode districts in the West Midlands has enabled estimates of SAWS workers (by workplace) for three districts in the region. The annual average number of workers on SAWS over the period from 2004 to 2006 was 2,754 in Herefordshire, 262 in Wychavon and 262 in Stratford-upon-Avon. Most of these migrants are unlikely to be captured in other data sources on migration.

### 4.6.2 Spatial distribution of migrants on SAWS

Given its focus on agriculture, the SAWS is especially important in rural areas. Individuals who have come to the UK on SAWS can be a significant component of the migrant worker population in some areas.

## 4.7 Sample of labour migrants in the West Midlands

For the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey, quotas were set by sub-region (as outlined in the Technical Report [Owen, 2007]). In practice, respondents could have answered a survey at a location near to where they lived or where they worked, so the sub-regional quotas serve as a guide only. Respondents were asked to provide details of the City/Town/Village and postcode of where they lived and where they worked. The responses to this question varied greatly in the level of detail provided.

Table 4.2 presents a cross-tabulation at the broad sub-regional scale of where migrants resident in each sub-region work.

**Table 4.2 Sub-region of workplace for migrant workers resident in each sub-region (row percentages)**

Sub-region of Residence	Sub-region of Workplace						TOTAL (n)
	Birmingham & Solihull	Coventry & Warwickshire	Black Country	Staffordshire & Stoke	Hereford, Worcestershire, Shropshire	Other	
Birmingham & Solihull	76.3	0.8	5.0	0.8	6.7	10.4	240
Coventry & Warwickshire	5.1	70.3	8.0	0.0	0.7	15.9	138
Black Country	25.0	10.0	39.0	2.0	9.0	15.0	100
Staffordshire & Stoke	0.0	0.0	0.0	49.3	18.8	31.9	69
Hereford, Worcestershire, Shropshire	0.0	4.5	3.0	0.0	82.8	9.7	134
Other	19.4	9.7	9.7	6.5	48.4	6.5	31
<b>TOTAL (n)</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>712</b>

West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey

In all instances the largest single proportion of migrants both work and live in the same area. However, there are also some important differences, which are indicative of the geographical mobility of migrant workers. The percentage of migrants working outside the area of the survey ranged from 61% in the Black Country and 47% in Stoke and Staffordshire to 30% in Coventry and Warwickshire, 24% in Birmingham & Solihull and 17% in Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire. These statistics suggest that some sub-regions - notably the Black Country and Stoke and Staffordshire - are relatively more important in providing housing for migrant workers than workplaces, whereas Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire have a net in-flow of migrant workers in this sample. At a more local level, some of the interviewees from third-party organisations highlighted areas of cheap housing (specific examples identified included Stoke and Kidderminster) as being attractive to migrants and to gangmasters.

## 4.8 Overview

It is not possible to say with any certainty how many migrant workers there are in the West Midlands at any one time. Different data sources provide different estimates:

- According to the LFS there were around 122,000 non-UK nationals working in the West Midlands in Summer 2006, of whom 54,000 had entered the UK from 2002 onwards. This is likely to be an under-estimate of the total number of labour migrants
- There were 48,000 NINo registrations of overseas nationals in the West Midlands in 2006/7. This represents the best estimate of new migrant workers arriving to work in the West Midlands, but an unknown number of these will have left the UK during the year
- There were 47,000 first applications from A8 countries under the WRS between May 2004 and March 2007. Some of these migrants will have moved to other regions or will have left the UK. Self-employed migrants from A8 countries are not included in this figure
- Between 2002 and 2006 19,000 people from outside the EEA were granted work permits in the West Midlands. Some of these people will have left the UK during this period.

It is clear from all sources that there has been a marked increase in the number of labour migrants to the West Midlands in the UK in recent years. The relative increase in the West Midlands is similar to that experienced across the UK as a whole.

Some of the largest concentrations of labour migrants are in the main urban centres - such as Birmingham and Coventry. Many, but not all, rural areas have seen marked relative increases in the number of labour migrants (especially from eastern Europe) in the last few years.

## 5. The profile of labour migrants

### Key points:

Poles account for the largest single national group of labour migrants in the West Midlands, followed by Indians. A8 countries have replaced the New Commonwealth as the largest source of new labour migrants in recent years. There are local variations in the profile of labour migrants by nationality.

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Males outnumber females amongst labour migrants. There are some variations in gender profile according to the data source examined, but in general there are around 3 males to every 2 females.

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Migrant workers are predominantly young: around 40% are aged 25 years and under and a further 40% are aged 25-34 years.

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Around three-quarters of migrants in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey had not brought family members to the UK and few planned to do so in future. The youthful age profile of migrant workers is an important consideration here.

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The vast majority of labour migrants are in employment in the UK. Only half of migrants in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey were in employment prior to coming to the UK, nearly a third were students and most of the remainder were unemployed.

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Migrant workers are unevenly distributed by industry. Analysis of a range of secondary and primary sources shows that they are especially concentrated in sectors such as Agriculture; Manufacturing; Hotels & Restaurants; Transport, Storage & Communication; and Health & Social Work. There is evidence from secondary data analysis of increasing segregation of migrant workers in industries where they are already concentrated.

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Migrant workers are unevenly distributed by occupation. Analysis of secondary data sources shows that while some are concentrated in professional occupations (e.g. in health) there is a trend towards a greater concentration of more recent migrants in less skilled occupations - notably Operatives and Elementary Occupations. There is evidence from the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey of a substantial proportion of migrant workers having worked in higher level occupations outside the UK. On coming to the UK they had taken the first job that they could find, had found that opportunities were restricted by their limited English or had found it difficult to find similar work to that done previously.

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A third of migrant workers in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey had obtained their first/current job via an agency in the UK and a third had found work via friends/family members. Insights from qualitative elements of the research suggest that agencies are particularly important for first jobs and social networks are important in finding subsequent employment openings.

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Information from the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey shows that the majority of migrants (around 60%) are in the private rented sector. Over half of the sample shared accommodation with non-family members; (partly this reflects the youthful age profile of the sample). On the basis of the evidence from the survey it appears that overcrowding is an issue only in a relatively small number of cases.

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## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a demographic and socio-economic profile of migrant workers in the West Midlands, drawing on information from secondary data sources and from the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey.

As highlighted in Chapters 3 and 4, the different secondary data sources vary in their coverage of the population of migrant workers and so the profiles of labour migrants presented here will vary to some extent according to the data source used. Readers are urged to keep in mind the coverage of the various sources (as described in relevant sections of Chapters 3 and 4) when interpreting the results presented here. For more detailed analysis of secondary data sources at the sub-regional level readers are referred to the desk-based study (Green et al., 2007b).

## 5.2 Nationality

Some data sources provide information on migrants from all national groups, while others cover a restricted range of labour migrants (e.g. the WRS covers A8 migrants only). This section presents a profile (and where applicable recent changes in the profile) of labour migrants by nationality.

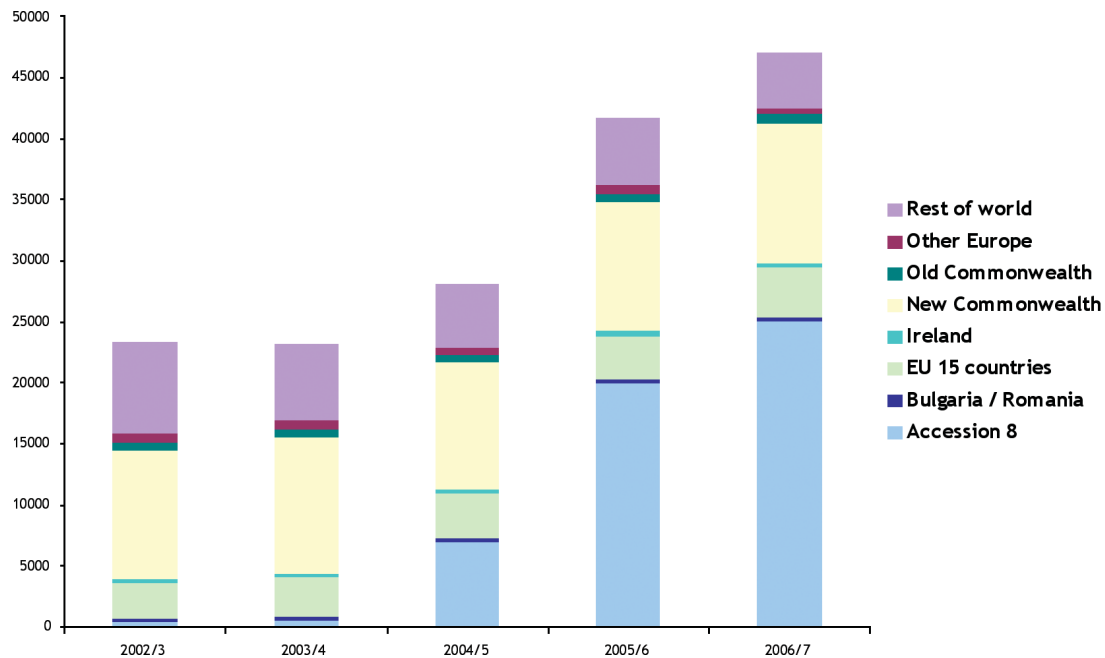
### 5.2.1 NINo registrations data

Figure 5.1 and Table 5.1 show the changing profile of overseas registrations by broad national group in the West Midlands from 2002/3 to 2006/7. In relative terms there has been a shift from New Commonwealth countries dominating in 2002/3 (45% of the total) to Accession 8 countries accounting for the largest share of registrations from 2005/6 onwards (53% of total registrations in 2006/7).

In general, the changing profile of labour migrants by nationality in the region mirrors changes in the profile at UK level. However, in 2006/7, relative to the UK, the West Midlands recorded:

- a larger proportion of total NINo registrations from:
  - A8 countries (53% compared to 44% nationally)
  - the New Commonwealth (25% compared to 22% nationally).
- a smaller proportion of total NI registrations from:
  - EU countries (9% compared to 13% nationally)
  - Old Commonwealth (2% compared to 5% nationally).

Figure 5.1 Profile of NINo registrations of overseas nationals in the West Midlands by broad geographical region of the world, 2002/3-2006/7



NINo registrations data

Table 5.1 Profile of NINo registrations of overseas nationals in the West Midlands by broad geographical region of the world, 2002/3-2006/7

Broad geographical region of the world	2002/3	2003/3 % of total	2006/7	2006/7 % of total	change 2002/3 - 2006/7	% change 2002/3 - 2006/7
Accession 8	400	1.7	25050	53.3	24650	6162.5
Bulgaria / Romania	240	1.0	260	0.6	20	8.3
EU15 countries	2910	12.4	4090	8.7	1180	40.5
Ireland	280	1.2	330	0.7	50	17.9
New Commonwealth	10560	45.1	11530	24.5	970	9.2
Old Commonwealth	700	3.0	710	1.5	10	1.4
Other Europe <sup>6</sup>	670	2.9	490	1.0	-180	-26.9
Rest of world <sup>7</sup>	7630	32.6	4570	9.7	-3060	-40.1
<b>All origins</b>	<b>25390</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>48030</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>22640</b>	<b>89.2</b>

NINo registrations data. Totals for groups of countries do not match grand totals because data are aggregated from local authority level, at which numbers are perturbed by DWP in order to preserve confidentiality.

<sup>6</sup> In this and subsequent Tables 'Other Europe' includes all parts of Europe (including the former USSR) which are outside the EU.

<sup>7</sup> 'Rest of the world' includes all parts of the world not separately identified in the categories above.

Table 5.2 lists the 20 largest countries in terms of NINo registrations of overseas nationals in the West Midlands in 2002/3, 2004/5 and 2006/7 (i.e. at 2-year intervals). At the start of the period, India, Pakistan, the Philippines and countries of refugee flows such as Iraq and Afghanistan were dominant, but Poland and other eastern European countries overtook them in 2004/5, and in 2006/7 (despite an increase in South-Asian migration) there were four times more Polish registrants than for the next largest country of origin (India).

**Table 5.2 West Midlands - 20 largest nationalities for NINo registrations by overseas nationals, 2002/3, 2004/5 and 2006/7**

Country	2002/03	%	Country	2004/05	%	Country	2006/07	%
<i>All</i>	23400	100	<i>All</i>	28100	100	<i>All</i>	48030	100
India	2640	11.3	Poland	4180	14.9	Poland	18630	38.8
Pakistan	2550	10.9	India	2890	10.3	India	4130	8.6
Iraq	1900	8.1	Pakistan	2410	8.6	Pakistan	3020	6.3
Zimbabwe	1130	4.8	China	1030	3.7	Slovak Rep	2820	5.9
Afghanistan	1040	4.4	S Africa	850	3.0	Latvia	1080	2.2
Philippines	970	4.1	Slovak Rep	810	2.9	Lithuania	1070	2.2
Jamaica	900	3.8	Netherlands	680	2.4	China	960	2.0
China	860	3.7	Bangladesh	660	2.3	France	850	1.8
S Africa	810	3.5	Portugal	660	2.3	Bangladesh	800	1.7
Bangladesh	660	2.8	Zimbabwe	640	2.3	Germany	750	1.6
France	550	2.4	Iraq	620	2.2	Czech Rep	730	1.5
Somalia	550	2.4	Jamaica	600	2.1	Netherlands	690	1.4
Portugal	450	1.9	Lithuania	590	2.1	Nigeria	640	1.3
Australia	410	1.8	France	590	2.1	Hungary	630	1.3
Netherlands	390	1.7	Philippines	590	2.1	Philippines	590	1.2
Germany	380	1.6	Ghana	540	1.9	S Africa	580	1.2
Iran	380	1.6	Latvia	470	1.7	Portugal	480	1.0
Malaysia	330	1.4	Germany	470	1.7	Australia	420	0.9
Spain	310	1.3	Somalia	450	1.6	Zimbabwe	400	0.8
Ireland Rep	280	1.2	Czech Rep	420	1.5	Iraq	360	0.7

NINo registrations data

Table 5.3 presents the three largest overseas nationalities registering for NINos<sup>8</sup> by local authority district in the financial year 2006/7.

**Table 5.3 Largest 3 overseas nationalities registering for NINos 2006/7 by local authority area**

Local authority	All	Largest	Number	%	Second largest	Number	%	Third largest	Number	%
Birmingham	14550	Poland	4310	29.6	Pakistan	1820	12.5	India	1280	8.8
Bridgnorth	70	Poland	20	28.6	Australia	10	14.3	Not specified	0	0.0
Bromsgrove	210	Poland	60	28.6	India	20	9.5	Australia	10	4.8
Cannock Chase	130	Poland	50	38.5	Philippines	10	7.7	USA	10	7.7
Coventry	6230	Poland	2420	38.8	India	590	9.5	Slovak Rep	370	5.9
Dudley	900	Poland	240	26.7	Pakistan	120	13.3	India	60	6.7
East Staffordshire	1040	Poland	670	64.4	Pakistan	90	8.7	India	50	4.8
Herefordshire	2120	Poland	1220	57.5	Lithuania	180	8.5	Slovak Rep	180	8.5
Lichfield	380	Poland	170	44.7	Latvia	60	15.8	France	20	5.3
Malvern Hills	290	Poland	130	44.8	Slovak Rep	20	6.9	Australia	10	3.4
Newcastle-under-Lyme	430	Poland	150	34.9	Slovak Rep	60	14.0	China	30	7.0
North Shropshire	250	Poland	140	56.0	Slovak Rep	30	12.0	India	10	4.0
North Warwickshire	190	Poland	100	52.6	India	20	10.5	South Africa	10	5.3
Nuneaton and Bedworth	590	Poland	280	47.5	India	70	11.9	Nepal	70	11.9
Oswestry	150	Poland	60	40.0	Slovak Rep	40	26.7	Italy	10	6.7
Redditch	880	Poland	500	56.8	Slovak Rep	130	14.8	Pakistan	60	6.8
Rugby	1300	Poland	680	52.3	Slovak Rep	140	10.8	Portugal	50	3.8
Sandwell	3380	Poland	1400	41.4	India	530	15.7	Slovak Rep	180	5.3
Shrewsbury and Atcham	430	Poland	160	37.2	South Africa	30	7.0	Philippines	30	7.0
Solihull	730	Poland	190	26.0	India	100	13.7	South Africa	30	4.1
South Shropshire	200	Poland	70	35.0	Slovak Rep	20	10.0	Pakistan	10	5.0
South Staffordshire	160	Poland	50	31.3	India	20	12.5	South Africa	10	6.3
Stafford	610	Poland	260	42.6	India	50	8.2	Slovak Rep	40	6.6
Staffordshire Moorlands	200	Poland	90	45.0	India	20	10.0	Australia	10	5.0
Stoke-on-Trent	2110	Poland	620	29.4	Slovak Rep	290	13.7	India	230	10.9
Stratford-on-Avon	1270	Poland	730	57.5	Slovak Rep	70	5.5	South Africa	50	3.9
Tamworth	360	Poland	250	69.4	Lithuania	20	5.6	Slovak Rep	20	5.6
Telford and Wrekin	1370	Poland	670	48.9	Ghana	90	6.6	India	90	6.6
Walsall	1390	Poland	440	31.7	India	190	13.7	Pakistan	180	12.9
Warwick	1150	Poland	380	33.0	India	100	8.7	Germany	50	4.3
Wolverhampton	2510	Poland	750	29.9	India	500	19.9	Lithuania	170	6.8
Worcester	1020	Poland	580	56.9	Portugal	70	6.9	Slovak Rep	40	3.9
Wychavon	1030	Poland	600	58.3	Slovak Rep	90	8.7	Lithuania	70	6.8
Wyre Forest	400	Poland	190	47.5	Hungary	40	10.0	Slovak Rep	40	10.0
<b>West Midlands</b>	<b>48030</b>	<b>Poland</b>	<b>18630</b>	<b>38.8</b>	<b>India</b>	<b>4130</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>3020</b>	<b>6.3</b>

[NINo registrations data](#)

The largest numbers of registrations are for Polish people in every local authority area. Poles accounted for over 60% of all NINo registrations of overseas nationals in Tamworth and East Staffordshire, but only just over a quarter of the total in Solihull and Dudley. This is illustrative of variations in the nationality profiles of labour migrants at local level across the region. India was the second or third largest country of origin in 17 districts, as was the Slovak Republic. The number of Pakistani and Indian people obtaining NINos was highest in Birmingham.

<sup>8</sup> These data represent an unknown mixture of workplace-based and residence-based registrations.



### 5.2.2 Worker Registration Scheme data

The WRS data covers A8 migrants only. Over the period from May 2004 to March 2006 Poles comprised 69% of the cumulative count of around 48,000 A8 migrants. Over time they have accounted for a larger share of the increasing total, with 65% of the total in the period March 2004 to May 2006 and around 76% in the period from October 2006 to March 2007. The second largest national group is the Slovaks, accounting for nearly 12% of the cumulative count over the entire period. Lithuanians and Latvians are the next largest groups with 7% and 6% of the cumulative total, respectively. Both of these groups (and Lithuanians in particular) have accounted for a smaller share of the West Midlands total WRS workers in the period since May 2006 than formerly. For variations in nationality profiles at local authority area level see the desk-based study (Green et al., 2007b).

### 5.2.3 Work Permit data

Work permit data cover non-EEA nationals only. The national origins of labour migrants on work permits are very diverse. Over the period from 2002 to 2006 the 'top 25' out of the 180 nationalities supplying migrants on work permits accounted for 91% of the total number of migrants on work permits. The countries of origin supplying most migrants on work permits were India (25% of the regional work permit total), the Philippines (with 14% of the regional total) and China, South Africa and Zimbabwe (each supplying about 7% of the regional total).

### 5.2.4 West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey

There is no sampling frame for undertaking a survey of migrant workers at regional level. However, for the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey, quotas were set by nationality with reference to other information sources (notably NINo registration data for overseas nationals and WRS records) in order to ensure coverage of the groups thought to be most significant in the region. The quotas by nationality were established for guidance in securing a broad sample and not as a rigid structure. Quotas for numbers of respondents were also set for sub-regions (for further details see the Technical report [Owen, 2007]).

When interpreting the results from the survey it is important to note that they only relate to the sample of migrants surveyed.

Of the 712 migrants included in the survey, the largest national groups are as follows:

- Polish, 303
- Indian, 101
- Pakistani, 57
- Slovakian, 38
- Bulgarian, 27
- Chinese, 23
- Romanian, 16
- Somali, 12
- Latvian, 10
- Bangladeshi, 10.

The next largest national groups represented in the sample are South African (9), Russian (7), Kurdish (7), Nigerian (6), Czech (6), Hungarian (5), Iraqi (5). There are 30 further national groups in the sample, but with smaller numbers of respondents.

### 5.2.5 Overview

Analyses of a range of different data sources show that there have been important changes in the profile of migrant workers by nationality in recent years. Poland has risen dramatically to become easily the largest supplier of migrant workers in the last two-three years, with other A8 countries also increasing in importance. New Commonwealth countries (including India and Pakistan) remain an important source of migrants to the region.

## 5.3 Gender

Females are outnumbered by males amongst labour migrants:

- Females accounted for 45% of NINo registrations by overseas nationals in 2006/7.
  - over the period from 2002/3 to 2006/7 the share of females ranged from 42% in 2005/6 to 48% in 2003/4
  - the gender profile of labour migrants varies to some extent by local areas - over the period 2002/3 to 2006/7 the highest percentages of females occurred in smaller local authorities with large hospitals.
- Females account for 38% of WRS applicants over the period from May 2004 to March 2006
- One-third of respondents to the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey were female; (this is slightly lower than might have been expected on the basis of the secondary data sources outlined above, but it should be noted that the length of stay of female migrants tends to be slightly shorter than for males [see 6.2.4] and healthcare workers [many of whom are female] were not strongly represented in the sample).

## 5.4 Age

A consistent finding from national and local studies of migrants is that migrants are predominantly young adults. The analyses of secondary data sources undertaken for this project and of the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey emphasises this point.

Analysis of the age breakdown of NINo registrations of overseas nationals in 2006/7 shows that overall two-fifths were to people aged under 25 years and a further two-fifths aged 25 to 34 (see Table 5.4). The breakdown by broad geographical region of the world reveals that those from A8 countries were even younger on average, but the percentage of older workers was also higher than that for people born in the New Commonwealth (the other major source of overseas labour). Amongst Poles, 8,000 from the total of 18,600 allocated NINos during 2006/7 were aged under 25. People from the Old and New Commonwealth, Other Europe and the Rest of the world were most likely to be aged 25 to 34.

Table 5.4 Age profile by broad geographical region of NINo registrations of overseas nationals in the West Midlands, 2002/3-2006/7

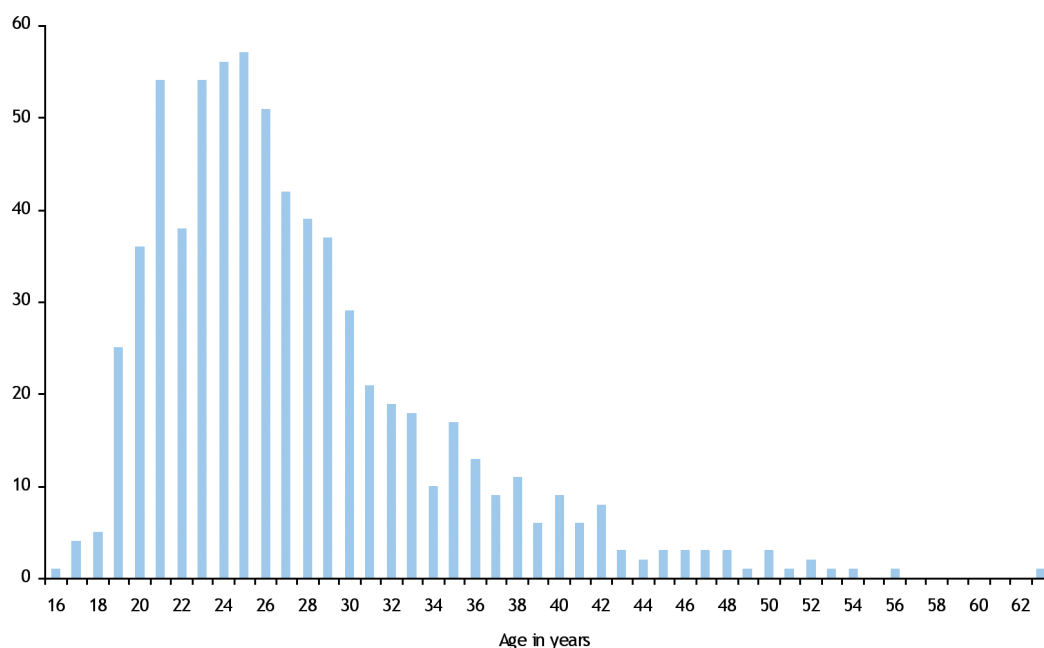
Broad geographical region of the world	Under 25 (%)	Aged 25 to 34 (%)	Aged 35 to 44 (%)	Aged 45 to 64 (%)	65 and over (%)	All ages (n)
Accession 8	43.5	38.7	10.6	7.1	0.0	25010
Bulgaria / Romania	37.9	48.3	13.8	3.4	0.0	290
EU 15 countries	34.3	36.5	20.0	8.9	0.0	4140
Ireland	48.6	34.3	8.6	5.7	0.0	350
New Commonwealth	38.7	44.4	11.0	4.3	0.2	11820
Old Commonwealth	38.0	44.3	8.9	6.3	0.0	790
Other Europe	37.5	45.8	12.5	4.2	0.0	720
Rest of world	33.3	45.8	15.7	3.3	0.0	4830
<b>All origins</b>	<b>40.4</b>	<b>40.9</b>	<b>12.2</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>48000</b>

NINo registrations data, DWP

Over four-fifths of WRS applicants are aged between 18 and 34 years. Over the period from May 2004 to March 2007 45% of applicants were aged 18-24 years. This highlights the youthful age profile of WRS applicants, but it should be borne in mind that younger migrants tend to come to the UK for the shortest durations. Hence a cumulative count, such as the WRS, tends to exaggerate the youthfulness of the migrant stock at any one point in time.

Figure 5.2 shows the age profile of migrants included in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey. It is clear that labour migrants are concentrated in the younger age groups.

Figure 5.2 Age profile of respondents to the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey



#### West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey

Of the total sample around two-thirds are in their twenties, with the majority of the remainder in their thirties. In general A8 migrants are concentrated in the younger age groups to a greater extent than those of other nationalities.

### 5.5 Household profile

The information presented here is from the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey. The majority of sample members had not brought family members to the UK and did not plan to do so in the future.

The survey shows that:

- 23% had brought family members to the UK
- 77% had not.

Those respondents who were more likely than average to bring family members to the UK:

- the self-employed
- those aged 30-39 years; (many migrants in this group are likely to be in the family formation stage and could have dependants in their home country)
- those who were 'very satisfied' with life in the UK.

The majority of the sample of migrant workers did not intend to bring other family members over to the UK with them in the future: only 16% planned to bring other family members over to the UK (leaving 84% who did not plan to do so).

In interpreting these findings it is important to keep in mind the youthful age profile of sample members (i.e. that many will have yet to form families of their own) and that intentions and plans may change in the future.

Information from WRS statistics underlines the relatively small number of registered workers with dependants. Over the period from May 2004 to March 2007 4,765 dependants were recorded by the WRS (compared with 48,000 workers). Slightly over half of dependants were aged 16 years and under; (amongst the remainder aged 17 years and over there may be some double-counting as spouses and older children may register under WRS in their own right).

## 5.6 Qualifications

Given changes in the nature of qualification systems over time and differences between countries in education, training and qualification systems, the collection of good quality data on qualification levels for purposes of international comparison is more challenging than collection of data on many other topics. These challenges are exacerbated when information is collected from many different national qualification systems (as is the case here, given the range of nationalities covered). Hence, it is inherently difficult to make firm statements about whether migrant workers are more or less qualified than the existing population.

Previous research on migrant workers and on refugees suggests that in aggregate migrant workers and refugees are at least as well qualified as the UK population, although there are important differences between national groups. Sachdev and Harries (2006) suggest that new migrants from A8 countries tend to be highly qualified but lacking in English language skills. As such they may represent 'high quality workers' in 'low-waged work' (Anderson et al., 2006). A local study in south Lincolnshire indicated that recent migrants from central and eastern Europe were better qualified than the indigenous population (Zaronaite and Tirzite, 2006). Likewise, at national level the Government Consultation Paper Making Migration Work for Britain (Home Office, 2006) reports LFS analysis showing that migrants (defined as foreign-born) are more likely to have higher qualifications (at 21%) compared to 17% of the UK-born population.

A question on qualifications was asked in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey. Respondents were able to write in details of all qualifications that they held, starting with the highest level qualification. An individual could provide details of up to five different qualifications (see Owen [2007] for a copy of the questionnaire).

This question was not well answered, and this needs to be kept in mind when interpreting the results of an analysis of qualifications. For each individual, the responses given (providing details of up to five qualifications) were combined into a single variable measuring their highest qualification. In coding the responses to this question there was no information on qualifications for 80 individuals<sup>9</sup> (11.2% of the sample). For 233 individuals (32.7% of the sample) the qualification is coded as 'not provided'. Of those who had a qualification coded (399 out of 712 individuals - i.e. 56% of the sample), 82 individuals (11.5% of the sample) have their qualifications coded as 'other'. Amongst those with a recognisable qualification, counts by highest qualification are as follows:

- Driving license (including HGV) - 35
- Secondary/high school certificate - 77
- GCSE equivalent - 12
- College certificate - 3
- Diploma - 17

<sup>9</sup>It is possible that these individuals refused to respond to the question.

- Degree - 115
- Masters -58.

A simple analysis of a list of qualifications classified as 'other' was undertaken. These can be roughly classified as follows:

- Business/administration related - 14
- IT-related - 5
- engineering-related - 4
- general academic - 21
- skilled manual - 29
- care/personal service - 5
- languages - 6.

The rest of the 'other' qualifications were too poorly described to be classified. In most cases, only a general description of the qualification was provided (e.g. 'business studies', 'computer programming', 'engineering qualification from Russia', 'translation', etc). However, several migrants hold trade certificates (e.g. 'certificate of joinery', 'inspection and testing of equipment') or business/professional certificates (e.g. 'secretarial certification in Hungary'). Some said that they were still studying for a qualification; this is consistent with the youthful age profile of migrant workers and the fact that a significant proportion identified their economic position as 'student' prior to coming to the UK (see 5.7 for further details). Some named qualifications are country-specific and in other cases there is insufficient information to relate them to UK qualifications.

Given the shortcomings in the quality of the data collected on qualifications it is difficult to make a comparison of the qualification levels of migrant workers compared with the qualification levels amongst the population of the West Midlands. Given that at sub-degree level, in particular, there may be difficulties in mapping non-degree qualifications into the UK system, comparison here is restricted to degree-level qualifications. Of 399 individuals in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey for whom a qualification could be coded, 115 (28.8%) had a degree-level qualification and 58 (14.5%) had a Masters degree. Hence 43% of migrant workers included in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey for whom qualifications could be coded had a qualification at degree or equivalent level or above. This contrasts with 16% of the population of working age and 20% of those aged 20-39 years (i.e. a younger age group more akin to the age profile of the sample of migrant workers) in the West Midlands in 2006.<sup>10</sup> At face value this suggests that this sample of migrant workers is more likely to have degree-level qualifications than the West Midlands population.

However, it seems likely that those with degree-level qualifications or above would have been more likely to complete the question more accurately than the sample of migrant workers as a whole, so overstating the proportion of migrant workers with degree level qualifications and above. Expressed as a proportion of the entire sample of 712 migrant workers those with degree-level qualifications and above constitute 24%. This is a higher proportion than the share of the West Midlands population with qualifications at degree-level or equivalent and above. On this basis it seems reasonable to say that based on this sample, the migrant worker population is slightly more likely to have qualifications at degree level or above than the West Midlands population as a whole.

<sup>10</sup> Based on data from the Annual Population Survey 2006.

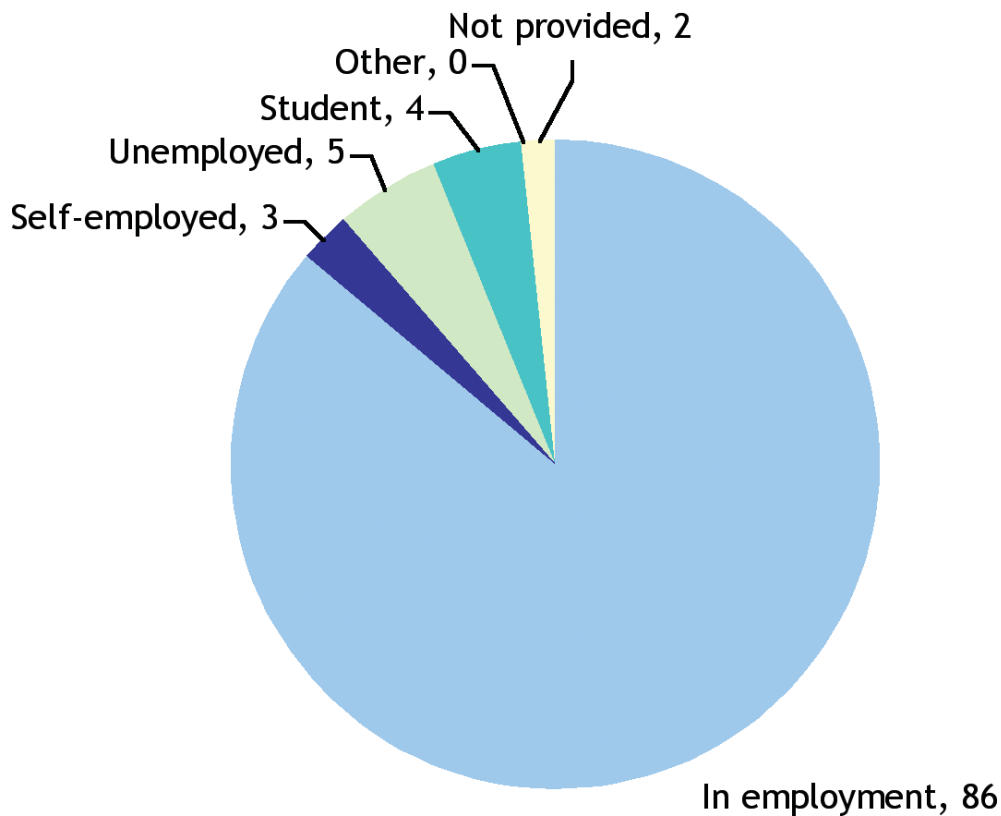
The results outlined above relate to the sample of migrants in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey. An analysis of 2006 LFS data for the West Midlands reveals that 12% of migrants who entered the UK from 2002 onwards had degree or equivalent level qualifications. This proportion is lower than the West Midlands average.

The difficulty of comparing qualifications of migrants with UK nationals is illustrated by the fact that 49% of post 2002 migrants have 'Other qualifications' as their highest qualification, compared with less than 10% of UK nationals. The share of post 2002 migrants with no qualifications is slightly higher than for UK nationals. Hence, it is difficult to say with any certainty how qualification levels of migrant workers compare with the general population.

## 5.7 Economic position

Of the sample of migrants in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey, a large proportion (87%) was in employment at the time of the survey (see Figure 5.3).

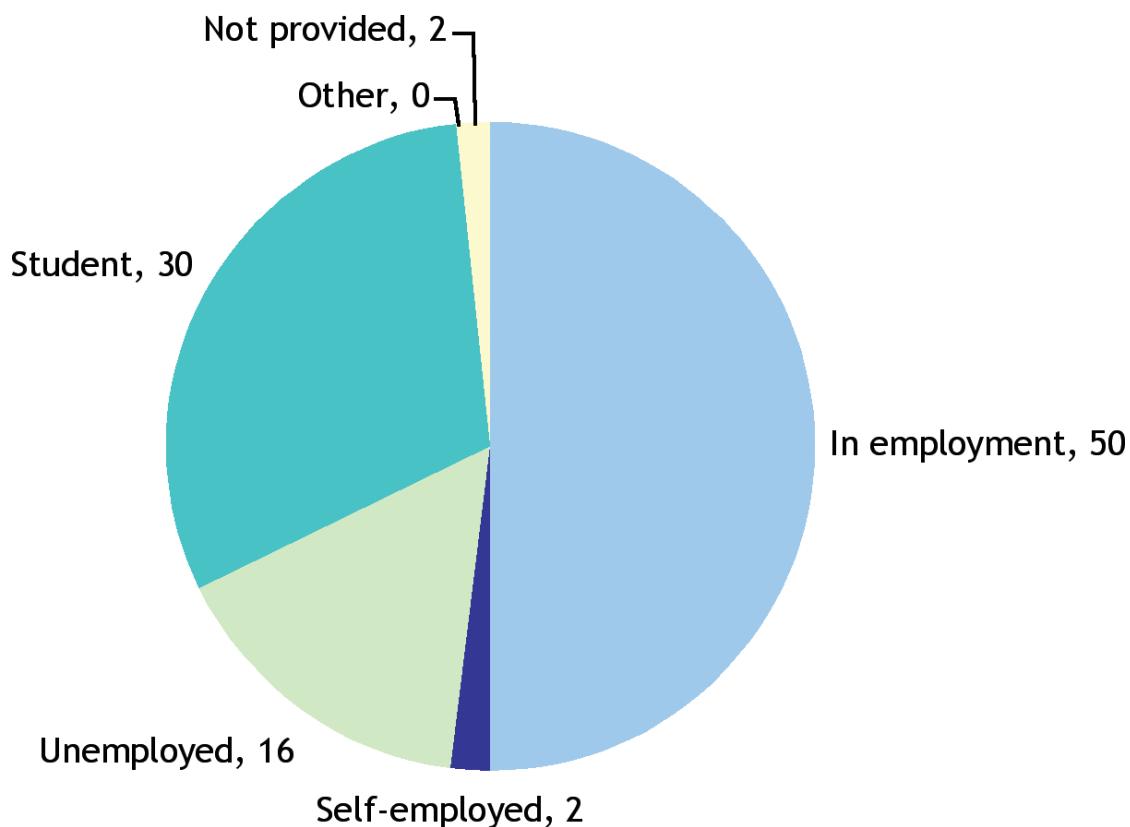
Figure 5.3 Current economic position (%)



West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey

By contrast just over half of the sample (52%) was in employment prior to coming to the UK, 16% were unemployed and 4% were students (Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4 Economic position prior to coming to the UK (%)



West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey

Key features of the previous economic position profile of different migrant sub-groups by broad geographical region of the world prior to coming to the UK include:

- migrants from the Old Commonwealth were most likely to be in work prior to coming to the UK
- those from A2 countries, the Rest of Europe and the Rest of the world were more likely than the sample average to be students prior to coming to the UK
- 60% of A8 migrants were in work prior to coming to the UK, 17% were unemployed and 20% were students.

Table 5.5 shows the economic status transitions made by those currently in work in the UK.



Table 5.5 Economic status prior to coming to the UK for migrants currently in work in the UK

Migrant group	In Work to In Work (% of respondents)	Not Working to In Work (% of respondents)	Student to In Work (% of respondents)
<b>Total</b>	<b>49.5</b>	<b>15.3</b>	<b>25.3</b>
A8	59.6	18.1	15.8
A2	23.3	2.3	60.5
EU15	28.6	57.1	14.3
New Commonwealth	45.6	14.4	25.6
Old Commonwealth	77.8	11.1	11.1
Other Europe	13.3	0.0	80.0
Rest of World	33.8	13.8	43.1
16-24	35.2	11.4	42.4
25-29	46.1	18.7	21.9
30-39	74.2	15.2	6.0
40 plus	64.7	19.6	7.8

West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey

This shows that:

- only half of all respondents in work in the UK were previously in work before coming to the UK;
  - the percentages in work prior to coming to the UK were higher than the sample average for the Old Commonwealth and A8 countries.
- 15% of respondents were not working prior to working in the UK;
  - the majority of labour migrants (57%) from EU15 countries were unemployed prior to entering employment in the UK.
- 25% of respondents were students prior to coming to the UK;
  - migrants from A2 countries, other European countries and the 16-24 year age group are particularly likely to be in this category.

## 5.8 Industrial profile

### 5.8.1 Background

Previous analyses of secondary data show that migrant workers are unevenly distributed by industry. They are found in sectors experiencing both employment growth and decline.

Much recent attention has focused on A8 migrants. They are most commonly found in distribution, hotels and catering, manufacturing and agriculture - but this varies between regions (Gilpin et al., 2006; LSC, 2007).

### 5.8.2 Information from secondary data sources

#### 5.8.2.1 Labour Force Survey

Using the LFS it is possible to define 'migrant-dense' industries. These are industries where migrant workers have a greater propensity to be employed than their UK national counterparts; (see the desk-based study [Green et al., 2007b] for further details).

Industry sectors are classified as being Migrant Dense (MD) areas of work, based on all migrants. Table 5.6 shows that the MD sectors are spread across the whole of the economy: including manufacturing and private and public service sector-based activities. These sectors account in total for 59% of all migrant employment (65% of post-1991 migrant employment and 71% of post-2002 migrant employment). This is compared to only 42.5% of employment of UK nationals. The increasing proportion of employment within these sectors for post-1991 and post-2002 migrants indicates an increasing concentration of migrant employment in particular 'migrant-dense' industries (see Chapter 8 for further discussion) - i.e. increasing segregation.

**Table 5.6 Migrant Dense Industry Sectors (% of employment by group)**

Industry Sector	Migrant Employment			
	UK-nationals	All migrants	Post 1991	Post 2002
D: Manufacturing	19.9	23.3	21.7	25.7
H: Hotels & Restaurants	3.9	8.1	8.7	9.7
I: Transport, Storage & Communication	6.8	7.6	8.8	8.9
N: Health & Social Work	11.6	19.8	25.3	26.0
P: Private Households	0.3	0.6	1.0	0.7
<b>All MD industry sectors</b>	<b>42.5</b>	<b>59.4</b>	<b>65.4</b>	<b>71.0</b>
<b>All sectors</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Labour Force Survey. The analysis is restricted to the West Midlands region based on place of work.

#### 5.8.2.2 Worker Registration Scheme

The WRS does not use the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) for coding industry. The coding scheme used in the WRS includes some categories which are wide and general in scope - for example, Administrative, Business & Management Services (which will include recruitment agencies and other industries that recruitment agencies may be active in engaging workers for) and other categories which are much more industrially-specific.

40% of all WRS registrations in the West Midlands over the period from May 2004 to March 2007 have been in Administration, Business and Management Services. 19% of registrations have been in Agricultural Services. Patterns of registration in this sector display pronounced seasonality, with more registrations in the summer than the winter months. The third largest sector is Hospitality and Catering (11% of total registrations), followed by Manufacturing (9% of registrations).

### 5.8.2.3 Work permits

Migrants on work permits display a different industrial profile. Work permits are coded to a non-standard industrial classification, so it is not possible to make direct comparisons with other data sources. Nearly half of all migrants on work permits are in Health and Medical Services (48% of work permits). Industries with the next largest shares of migrants on work permits are Hospitality and Catering (15%), Administration, Business and Management Services (8%) and Education and Cultural Activities (7%).

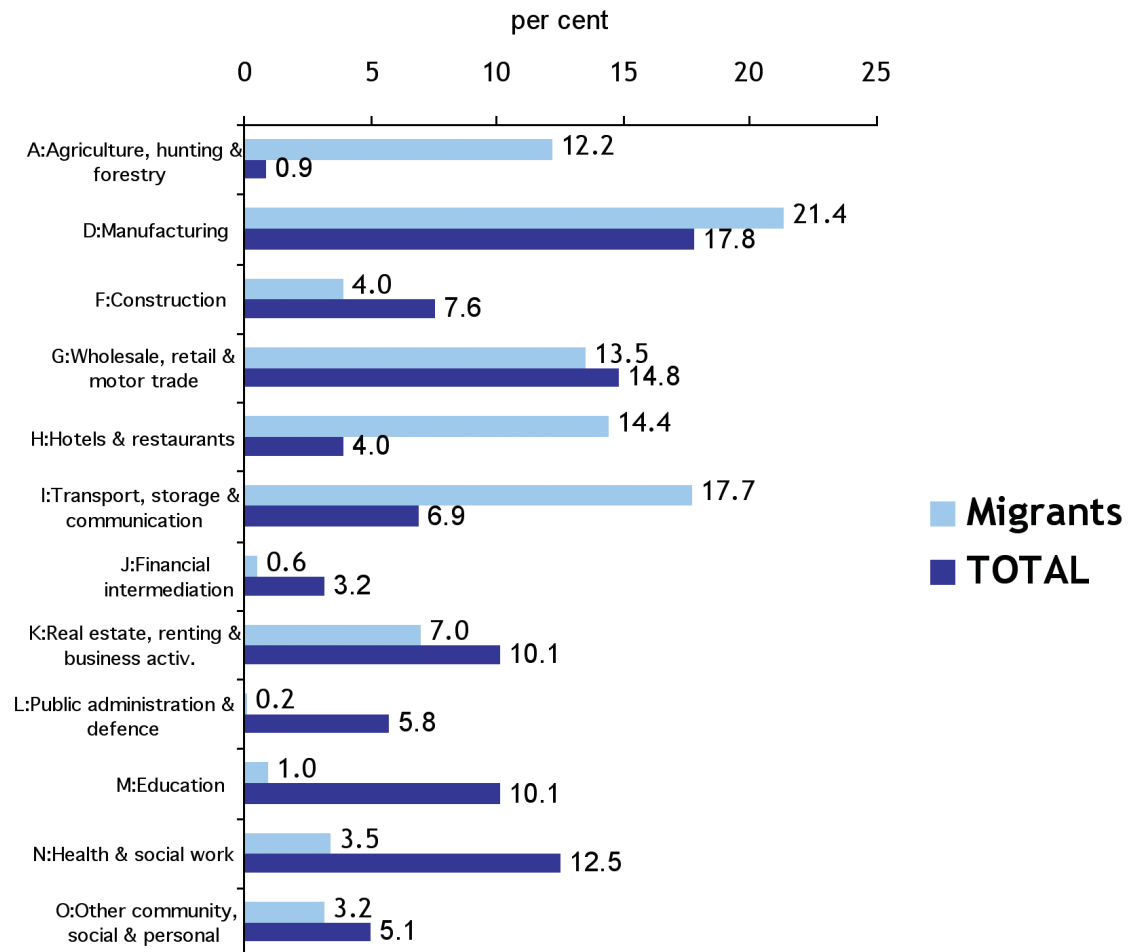
## 5.8.3 Current industrial profile of sample of labour migrants

Figure 5.5 shows the industrial profile of labour migrants and compares it with the industrial profile of employment in the West Midlands. The sectors accounting for the largest shares of migrants in the sample are:

- Manufacturing (21.4% of the sample)
- Transport, storage and communication (17.7%)
- Hotels and restaurants (14.4%)
- Wholesale, retail and motor trade (13.5%)
- Agriculture (12.2%).

Together these sectors account for 79% of migrant workers in the sample, but for 44% of total employment in the region. Migrant workers in the sample are over-represented relative to the total regional workforce in all of the sectors above with the exception of the Wholesale, retail and motor trade.

Figure 5.5 Industrial profile of labour migrants compared with the regional industrial profile of employment



West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey and Labour Force Survey 2006.

## 5.9 Occupational profile

### 5.9.1 Background

Analysis of secondary data sources shows that migrants are concentrated in certain professional occupations (notably as health professionals and business & public service professionals) and also in elementary, operative and caring personal service occupations. Given the changing importance of different migration 'routes' - notably the impact of A8 migration - there is some evidence away from a 'bi-polar' occupational distribution of migrants towards a greater share in less skilled occupations (Gilpin et al., 2006).

## 5.9.2 Information from secondary data sources

### 5.9.2.1 Labour Force Survey

Table 5.7 Migrant-Dense 2-digit Occupations (% of employment by group)

Occupation (2 digit SOC)		UK-nationals	Migrant Employment					
			All		Post 1991	Post 2002		
12	Managers & Proprietors in Agric. and Services	2.8	4.1	*	2.2		1.2	
22	Health Professionals	0.7	4.1	*	6.0	*	2.9	*
31	Science & Technology Associate Professionals	1.6	1.8	*	2.2	*	1.5	
32	Health & Social Welfare Associate Professionals	3.4	7.2	*	9.5	*	9.4	*
54	Textiles, Printing and Other Skilled Trades	2.1	4.0	*	4.4	*	3.0	*
61	Caring Personal Service Occupations	5.6	7.0	*	8.2	*	11.3	*
81	Process, Plant & Machine Operatives	5.4	11.3	*	11.0	*	16.1	*
91	Elementary Trades, Plant, Storage Related	4.1	5.8	*	7.0	*	7.0	*
92	Elementary Administration & Service Occupations	8.3	10.6	*	12.4	*	18.3	*
<b>Total MD Sub-major group occupations</b>		<b>34.0</b>	<b>55.8</b>		<b>62.8</b>		<b>70.7</b>	
<b>All occupations</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>100</b>		<b>100</b>	

LFS; (1) \* Indicates a migrant-dense occupation with respect to the particular migrant (sub) group; (2) The analysis is restricted to the West Midlands region based on place of work

'Migrant-dense' occupations (where migrant workers have a greater propensity to be employed than their UK national counterparts) at the 2-digit SOC level are shown in Table 5.7.

Nine of the 25 SOC sub-major group occupations can be classified as being Migrant Dense (MD) areas of work based on all migrant employment. These occupations, in total, account for only 56% of employment of all migrants (63% of post-1991 migrant employment and 71% of post-2002 migrant employment). This compares with only 34% of employment of UK national workers.

Analysis at a finer level of occupational disaggregation shows that the main occupations of migrant employment based on (descending) ranked order based on percentage of migrant employment are:

- 321: Health Associate Professionals (6.0% of migrant employment; 8.2% for post-2002 migrants)
- 611: Healthcare, Related Personal Services (5.7% of migrant employment; 9.1% for post-2002 migrants)
- 813: Assemblers and Routine Operatives; (4.2% of migrant employment; 5.4% for post-2002 migrants)

- 923: Elementary Cleaning Occupations (4.2% of migrant employment; 5.4% for post-2002 migrants)
- 221: Health Professionals (4.1% of migrant employment; 2.9% for post-2002 migrants)
- 811: Process Operatives (4.1% of migrant employment; 6.9% for post-2002 migrants).

The analysis of occupations reveals a notable bi-polarisation of migrant workers by major group occupation (i.e. the first digit of the SOC2000 code), with employment of migrant workers tending towards both the upper and lower part of the skills spectrum. Many of the MD occupations are either professional or associate professional occupations (SOC major group 2 or 3, respectively). These include in particular professional activities relating to health, but also to business, ICT and so on. At the other end of the spectrum we observe a clustering of migrant-dense sectors amongst process and elementary occupations (SOC major groups 8 and 9). These are routine and low skilled jobs.

Over time migrant employment is becoming increasingly concentrated in certain occupations. Higher proportions of post-2002 migrants are employed in the lower skilled areas of employment than of earlier migrants. All of the following occupations are becoming increasing migrant-dense - i.e. taking up larger proportions of migrant employment:

- Process Operatives
- Plant and Machine Operatives
- Assemblers and Routine Operatives
- Elementary Goods Storage Occupations
- Elementary Personal Service Occupations
- Elementary Cleaning Occupations
- Elementary Sales Occupations.

The evidence of higher concentration of recent migrants in the West Midlands in lower skilled employment is supported in research at the national level by Salt (2006).

#### 5.9.2.2 Worker Registration Scheme

The WRS contains limited information on occupations of registered workers from A8 countries. Figures show the 'top 10 occupations' in each local authority area, and as such, these vary between areas. Hence it is not possible to aggregate across authorities to gain a comprehensive regional picture. The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) is not used in WRS reporting - information is provided on job titles.

On the basis of aggregations across West Midlands local authorities in the period from May 2004 to December 2006, the largest single occupation was Process Operative (Other Factory Work)' accounting for about a quarter of the total. Farm Workers and Farm Hands and Warehouse Operatives each accounted for about a tenth of the total. The next largest occupational group was Packers. This distribution of occupations emphasises the predominance of less skilled occupations, with WRS applicants, working in agriculture, manufacturing and distribution. Low skilled service sector jobs and jobs such as bus drivers also appear in the list of 'top 10 occupations'.

### 5.9.2.3 Work permits

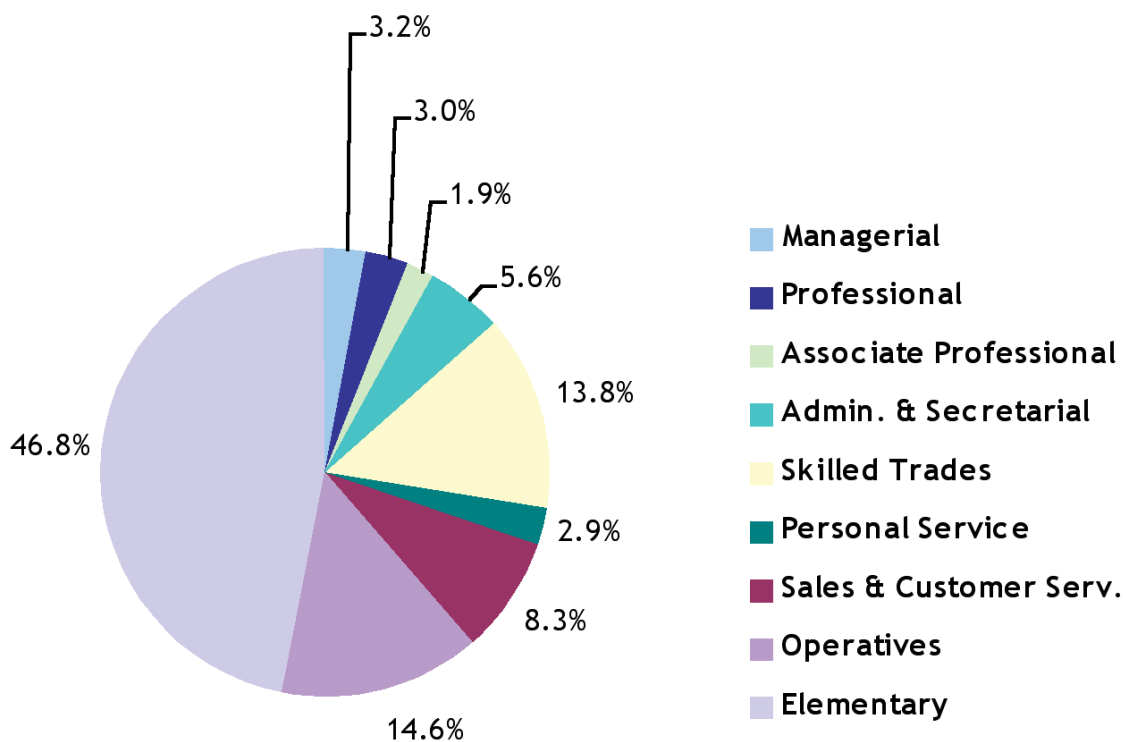
Migrants on work permits display a different occupational profile. The largest occupations are nurses (32% of work permits) (underlining the contribution of migrants to the health sector highlighted above), chefs, and other healthcare related occupations, together accounting for more than half of all work permits.

### 5.9.3 Current occupational profile of migrants surveyed

In the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey, Elementary occupations predominate, accounting for 47% of respondents for whom an occupation could be coded (see Figure 5.6). The next largest SOC Major Groups were Operatives (15%) and Skilled Trades (14%). Hence, many of the jobs that migrant workers are employed in do not require more than low level skills:

"... in a warehouse you don't have to think, you don't have to use your brain, you're just picking" (Polish man, late 20s).

Figure 5.6 Occupational profile of sample of labour migrants



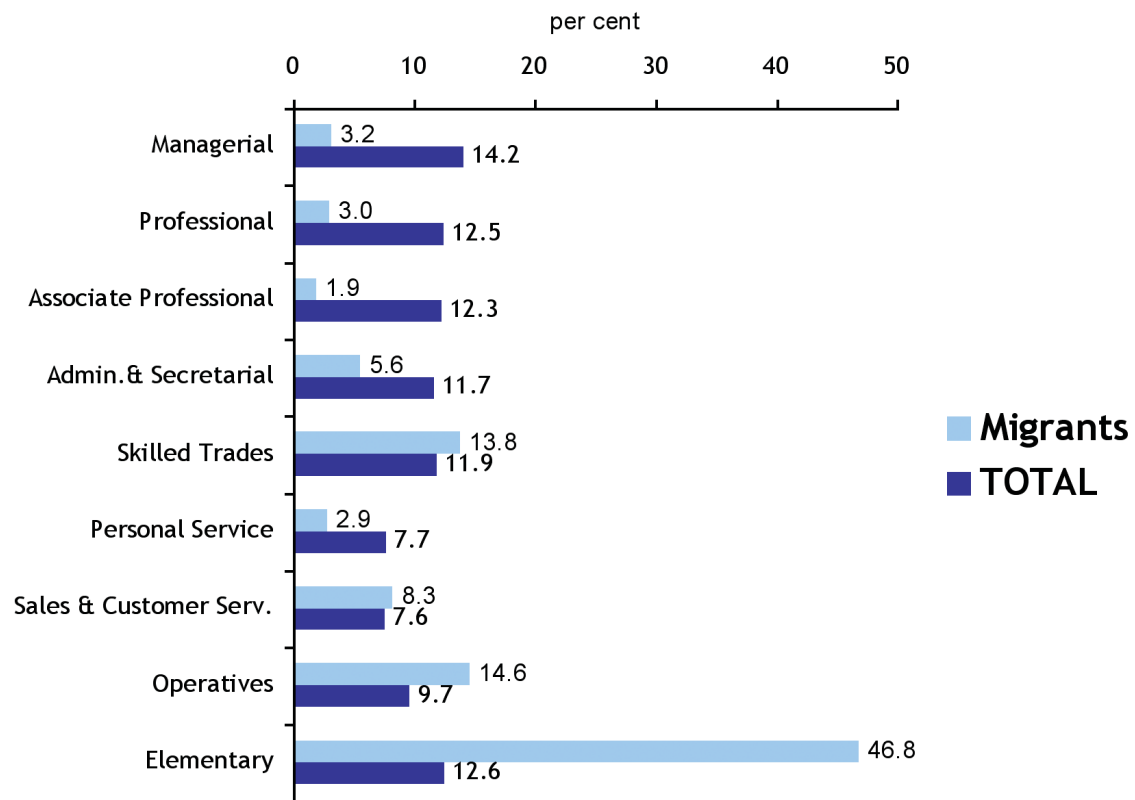
West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey

Relative to the sample as whole:

- Polish migrants are disproportionately concentrated in Operative and Elementary occupations
- Indians are disproportionately concentrated in Professional, Managerial and Associate Professional Occupations.

Figure 5.7 contrasts the occupational profile of labour migrants in the sample with the occupational profile of residents of the West Midlands. The marked over-representation of the sample in Elementary Occupations is apparent. There is also an over-representation of migrant workers as Operatives and in Skilled Trades and Sales and Customer Service Occupations relative to the West Midlands average.

Figure 5.7 Occupational profile of labour migrants compared with the regional occupational profile of employment



West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey and Labour Force Survey 2006.

### 5.9.4 Previous activity and occupations

West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey respondents were asked whether the job that they were doing in the UK was different from the one that they were doing or were looking for prior to coming to the UK. On the basis of their responses the sample can be divided into thirds, as follows:

- a third reported that the job that they were doing was different from the jobs that they had or were looking for before they came to the UK
- a third reported that the job they were doing was not different from the job that they had previously or were looking for
- a third had not had a job before coming to the UK.

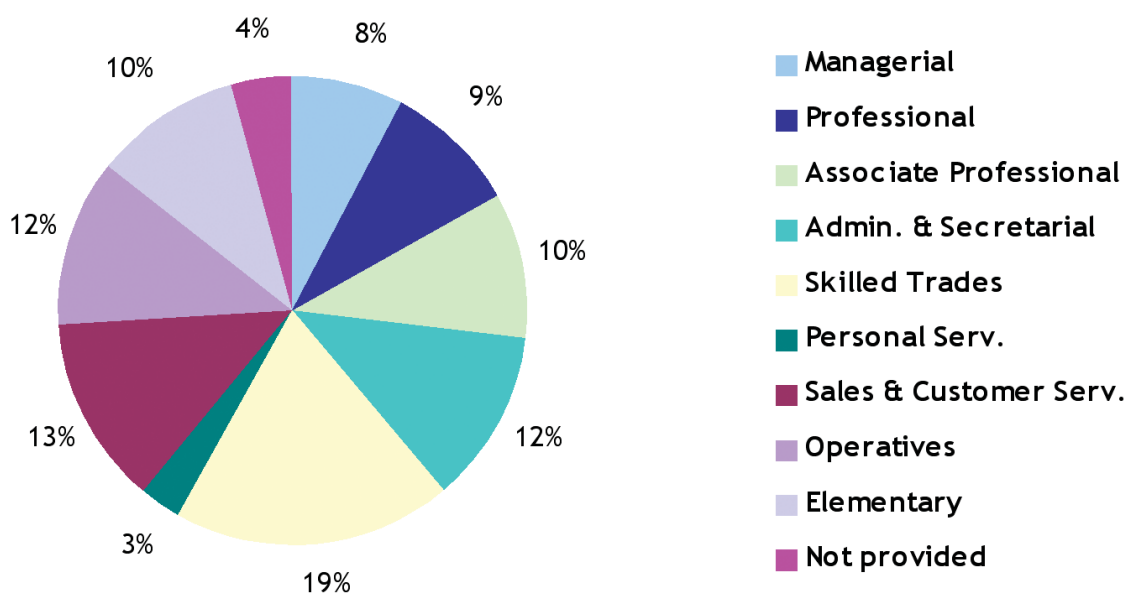
Some (often younger) respondents who had not had a job prior to coming to the UK seemed to be happy to combine less skilled work with further study while in the UK:

*"It's easy in England doing the study and working, you can combine the work and study as well and it's better."* (Polish woman, 20s)



Figure 5.8 shows the previous occupational profile of those who were doing a different job prior to coming to the UK. A comparison with Figure 5.6 shows a larger share of individuals in more highly skilled occupations previously than currently. This is indicative of an overall trend towards occupational downgrading on coming to the UK.

**Figure 5.8 Previous occupation of labour migrants doing a different job prior to coming to the UK**



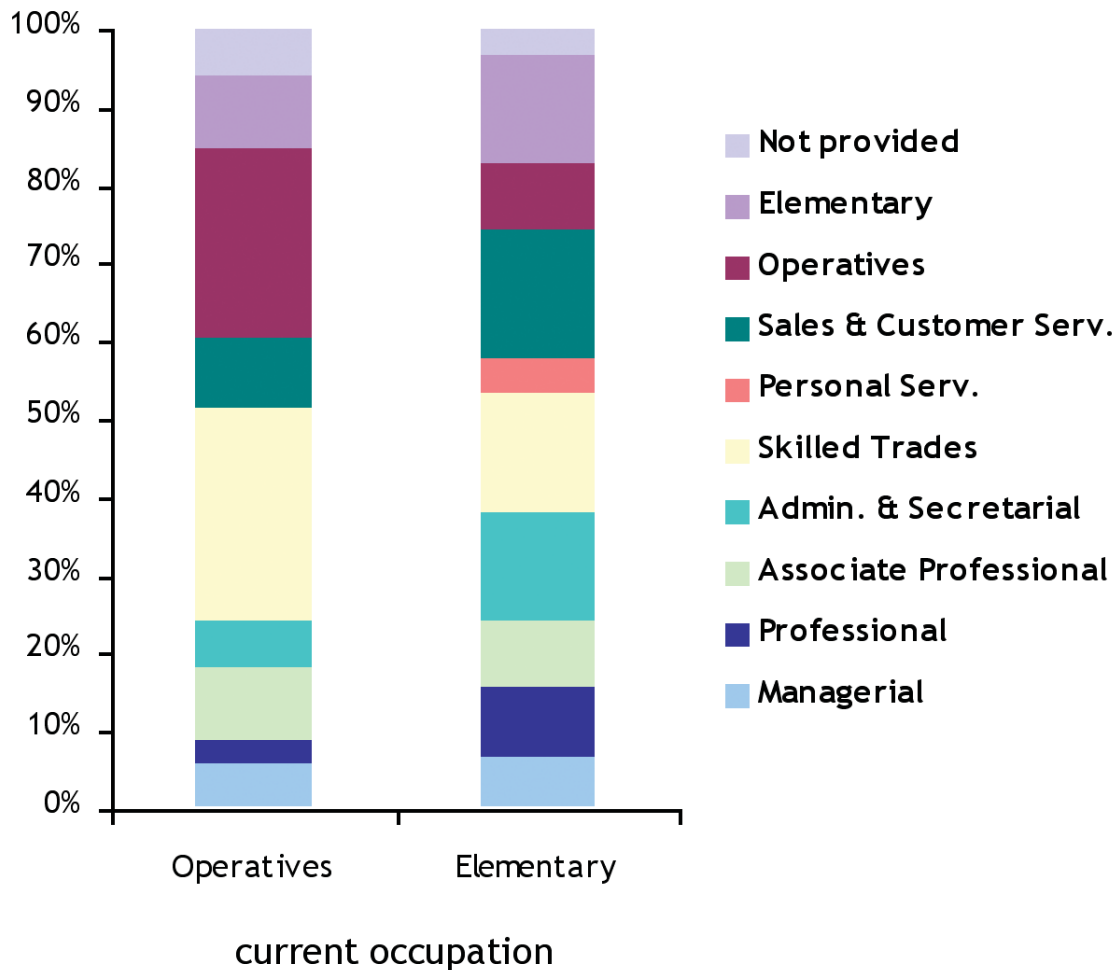
#### West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey

This is illustrated further in Figure 5.9, which shows the previous occupation for those migrants reporting that they were doing a different job prior to coming to the UK and currently working as Operatives or in Elementary Occupations (i.e. the two largest occupational groups for sample labour migrants in the West Midlands). It is clear that substantial numbers of migrants have previously worked in occupations demanding higher skill levels - for example:

- 27% of those currently working as Operatives worked previously in Skilled Trades
- 16% of those currently working in Elementary Occupations worked previously in Skilled Trades
- 24% of those currently working in Elementary Occupations worked previously in higher level non-manual occupations (i.e. Managerial, Professional and Associate Professional and Technical Occupations).

This is indicative of under-utilisation of previous experience and skills in current jobs.

Figure 5.9 Previous occupation profile of labour migrants currently working in Operative and Elementary Occupations who did a different job prior to coming to the UK



West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey

### 5.9.5 Reason for doing a different job in the UK

Those migrants in the sample who were doing a different job in the UK from the one they did previously were asked to provide information on the reason for the difference. Of the 226 (out of 240 migrants in this category) providing information, the most frequently cited reasons (together accounting for 60% of responses) were:

- that the current job was the first or only job that they could find
- that their English was poor (so they had to take what they could find)
- it was difficult to find the same/similar work to that done previously.

Hence the picture is one of migrants taking those jobs that they could (at least in the first instance) and facing difficulties in finding the same/similar work - sometimes because of poor English. A Polish woman in her late 20s described her own experience as follows:

"When I came here I tried to get a job in my profession [dental technician] because I like this job, and I need qualification, experience so I thought it would be for me easier to get this job here. But maybe it's because I don't speak very well in English, and I didn't know how to prepare to get this job, so I couldn't find anything for me. So I decided to work in a warehouse."

Likewise, a Polish man in his late 20s working in the UK in an unskilled occupation said:

"I have finished at University of Technology, I'm an Engineer. But I couldn't find a job. So I came here." He tried to get engineering jobs: "but two problems, I don't have experience and language."

Understanding how the labour market worked and lack of awareness of work culture and recruitment practices in the UK was one difficulty faced by migrants highlighted in focus group discussions. A focus group discussion including young men from Pakistan with degree-level qualifications and currently working in unrelated jobs (e.g. as security guards) highlighted how using recruitment consultants had not yielded the results expected. One explained:

"Well you see here there are a lot of recruitment consultants, for example X, and literally they're not genuine, all of these posts they advertise, they're not genuine. ... You see the fact is that that job does not actually exist. That job is only used to attract CVs. ... I mean nothing is happening and no-one is guiding you. ... I wasn't aware of the work culture in the UK and what I thought was that perhaps, what's happening, am I so bad ... and nothing substantial was happening and it's like hitting yourself against a brick wall ... nothing happens."

He reported that he had since followed a friend's advice: "Apply for jobs which are advertised by the employers." However, he felt that employers felt more comfortable with English people and so in a circumstance where an English person and a migrant had the same qualifications and experience, the former would be appointed. However, participants in a focus group of Indian men expressed a preference for working for a British, as opposed to a Punjabi, employer, partly on the grounds that they perceived that they would be treated more fairly in work.

A Pakistani migrant with a background in accountancy who had found that his qualifications and experience were not valued in the way that he had expected in the UK highlighted that he had undertaken voluntary work in order to get UK-based references and to gain contacts to help obtain a position in his field:

"In terms of myself, I have worked as a volunteer for several charities in the finance department and then I've built up that experience and now that I've seen that, begun to get short-listed more than I used to. I'm sure that there would be other prospects. ... Well basically, what happened was that obviously with a lot of foreign experience on the CV, it was just a foreign experience on the CV and obviously what I did was I worked for Charity X ... as a volunteer in the finance department, to learn to develop those skills. Then I worked for Charity Y, the reason why I came to Birmingham was to work for Charity Y, in their finance department as well."

An Indian migrant explained how he had originally sought work teaching chemistry in the UK, but had ended up as a Quality Manager:

"I was lecturer of chemistry in India and here I'm working as a Quality Manager in a food group. ... When I came here I was really disappointed, wherever I go they want some UK education. They want experience from here, they won't count any experience from India, any education from India. ... Whenever I go to some employers basically they are looking as if for UK qualification and UK experience."

He described his experience of trying to get a teaching post:

“When I go for some secondary schools or high schools, they said you must do QTS [Qualified Teacher status] something now, some experience if you want to join us. Okay I seem to have come a little bit down; I've gone to the primary schools. When they look at my CV, sorry can't give you a job because you're over-qualified, so where are we. Are we qualified, when you go to the secondary education they said you are not qualified, when you go to primary education they said you are over-qualified, so are we actually qualified or not?”

Eventually, he had taken a job as a packer and his talents had been recognised by an individual in a more senior position in the firm:

“[I] start my career as a packer, packing ... and then the one Quality Manager ... over here, I have a word with her and show me all qualification and everything and she has just recognised my skills and my talent and all that and she just put me forward as a quality assurer. Then I worked as a Quality Supervisor, then worked as a Quality Protector and now I'm as a Quality Manager.”

He reported: “I'm getting quite a good salary” and so had given up the idea of teaching posts.

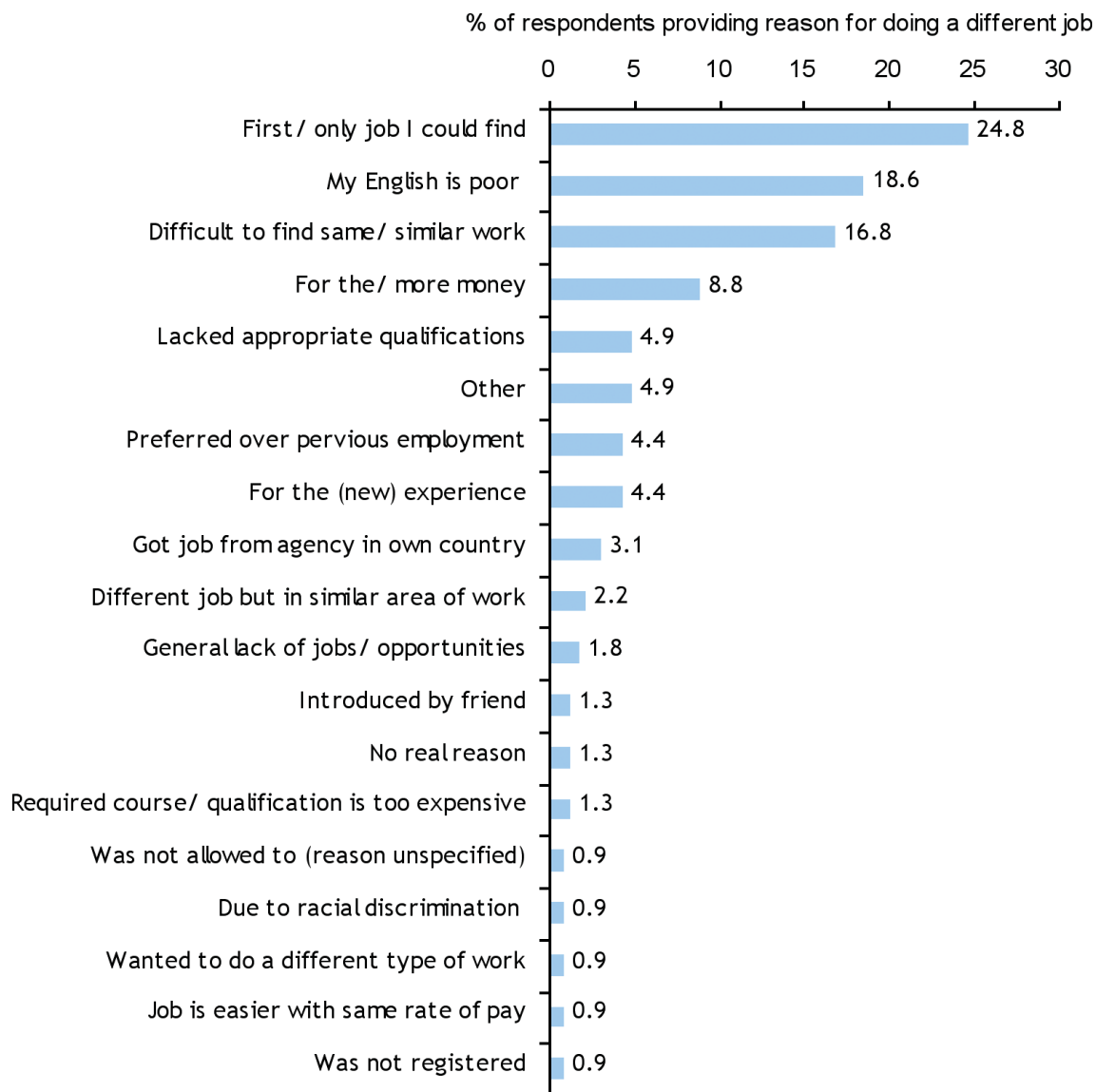
Likewise, participants in a focus group of migrant workers from India seeking professional jobs highlighted the need for UK-based references and work experience in order to find relevant employment. One Indian man summed up the sentiment of focus group participants:

“I went to the agency they said we need at least three months or six months reference, work reference. That's two from the UK, not from India, that's our main problem.”

These experiences suggest that there is scope for improving availability of, and access to, information for migrants on how the UK labour market works. This may help migrants to find more suitable jobs more quickly and/or start the process of gaining the necessary experience and references to move into jobs utilising their skills sooner after arrival in the UK.

The full range of reasons provided for doing a different job in the UK is shown in Figure 5.10.

Figure 5.10 Reason for doing a different job in the UK



West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey

Migrants from A8 countries were more likely than the sample average to cite poor English as a reason for doing a different job, as are older migrants.

## 5.10 Recruitment channels used by migrants

The jobs that labour migrants end up in may in part be a function of the recruitment channels that they use. It is useful also to contrast the channels used by migrants with the employers' perspectives outlined in 7.3.

The West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey included a question about how migrants had obtained their first job on coming to the UK:

- 32% had obtained their job via an agency in the UK
- 31% via a friend or family member
- 16% had contacted an employer when they had arrived in the UK
- 13% had obtained their job via an agency in their home country.

This underlines the importance of agencies in shaping migrant employment experiences - especially for their first job in the UK. 45% of labour migrants used agencies to get their job. For example, some nurses from the Philippines were recruited by an agency in the Philippines. Likewise, a Slovakian woman in her early 20s who got her first job as an au pair explained:

"[I got a job] through an agency at home, there's like au pair agencies at home you can register with and they will find a family for you, so that's how."

Others came to the UK and then registered with an agency for work. For example, a Polish woman in her late 20s who had run her own beauty/hairdressing salon in Poland reported:

"... people told me in Poland who has a family or friends who worked in the UK [that it would be easier to get a job], but when I came here I have to register in an agency and wait for a job. I don't remember exactly how much but it was about 1 or 2 weeks. So it was very difficult, it's not so easier to get a good job here."

Focus group discussions highlighted how, once in the UK, some migrants moved between agencies (for better money/conditions) and/or made use of friendship networks to move around. A Polish woman in her 20s explained how many Polish migrants start with an agency job (often in a warehouse), but then move on quite quickly:

"It's good to start there [in the warehouse] because I think a lot of Polish people start there and then after 3-4 weeks they left this place and go somewhere different."

Another Polish woman in her 20s who had been recruited by an agency to work in a food factory but who had then found another job reported:

"It was difficult first it was work, the job wasn't expectancy about 20 miles far. There was very, very hard work and there was always cold, wet ..... So when we see ... other agency and other people friends, we met old friends, so we ask each other and try to find some more job. I know we were five; I think and just one stayed work for a cheese factory ... but the others found another job."

Several migrants interviewed felt that it was better to move away from agencies and have your "own contract" with an employer. As a Polish man in his 20s explained:

"I worked for an agency in Manchester, this is for a company, for me it is better, I know I have contract and everything. At the agency you can work there maybe 1 week, if you finish work they don't have work for you, you work 1 month, I have worked 2-3 days and it's finished. I like this job."

Evidence emerged from one of the focus groups of initial placements in the UK being secured through unofficial 'under the table' payments, on top of official payments for papers, flights, insurance, etc. However, it appeared that this practice was diminishing.

Overall, the research highlights the use of agencies in entering and getting established in the UK, but the use of social networks (mainly of friends as opposed to longer established community organisations) in

moving on. Several participants in focus groups outlined how they had found jobs “through friends” or other “informal” means. For example, one young Polish man working at a food outlet described how he had got a job through friends when an employer recruited new staff through existing workers; he said: “My friends call me, they say we have a job for you.” The ease of moving to and from the UK for work through links of family and friends is illustrated by a young Polish woman:

“I finished college and I came to my brother because he told me there was a very good chance for me, I can try and do something here, and I found the job, I was working for the agency at the airport. .... There's a lot of cheaper airlines, I get my luggage and I paid for [my ticket] £9.00.”

By the time some other family members and friends move on, young migrants may have formed new friendship groups. As a Polish woman in her late 20s explained:

“I came here to my friend's father, so I wasn't alone, and I spent the first summer here with my brother and sister, now they are in Poland and Czech Republic, I'm alone, but I have lots of friends, because I spent 1 year it's not so difficult now.”

Table 5.8 shows the recruitment channels used by broad national groups of migrants. This reveals some differences in experience by different groups:

- A8 migrants and migrants from EU15 countries are more likely than average to have used agencies in the UK to obtain a job
- migrants from A2 countries and the Rest of Europe (including parts of the former USSR) are much more reliant on agencies in their home countries to find employment
- New Commonwealth migrants (especially Pakistanis) and migrants from the Rest of the World are more likely to cite friends and family than other national groups.

There are also variations in recruitment channels by other migrant characteristics:

- By age:
  - those in the youngest age groups are more reliant on agencies in their home country
  - those in the older age groups are more likely than average to obtain jobs via friends and family.
- By occupation:
  - those working in Operative and Elementary Occupations were more likely than average to say that they had got their job via agencies in the UK
  - those working in Elementary Occupations were also more likely than average to say that they had got their job via an agency in their home country
  - those in Skilled Trades and Sales and Customer Service Occupations were more likely than average to cite friends and family as a recruitment channel.
- By industry:
  - 50% of migrant workers working in Agriculture obtained their job via an agency in their home country
  - 61% of those working in Manufacturing obtained their job via an agency in the UK

- those working in Transport, Storage and Communication were more likely than average to have obtained their job via an agency (either in the UK or in their home country)
- those working in Construction, the Wholesale and Retail Trade and Hotels and Restaurants were more likely than average to have obtained their job via a friend/family member.

Table 5.8 How respondents found their current (or first) job in the UK

How respondents found their job	A8	A2	EU15	New Commonwealth	Old Commonwealth	Other Europe	Rest of World	Not stated	Total
Via a recruitment/ employment agency in the UK	37.9	9.3	42.9	26.4	22.2	13.3	27.3	57.7	32.3
Via a recruitment/ employment agency in home country	10.2	62.8	0.0	2.2	66.7	80.0	6.1	7.7	12.9
Via a friend/ family member	30.2	14.0	28.6	39.0	11.1	0.0	39.4	19.2	31.0
Contacted employer directly when had arrived in the UK	13.5	4.7	28.6	21.4	0.0	0.0	25.8	7.7	15.6
Contacted employer directly whilst in home country	2.5	0.0	0.0	8.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.5	3.9
Other	3.8	9.3	0.0	2.2	0.0	6.7	3.0	3.8	3.7
Not provided	4.1	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4
<b>Total (n)</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>712</b>

West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey

## 5.11 Housing circumstances

### 5.11.1 Housing tenure

The majority (59.3%) of migrant workers in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey lived in private rented accommodation. Several young single migrants who participated in focus groups described how they lived in privately rented accommodation with groups of friends and other family members. One young Polish woman who had come to the UK with her husband (who had good English and was working as a salesperson in a retail outlet) and other family members explained:

"My family are renting our house because we are living with my mother, two babies and my brother. That is a family house. We are renting a house by the agency, for £550.00 per month, yes. We get Housing Benefit, it is good."

There were some concerns amongst third-party interviewees that migrant workers might push up the price of private rented housing in some areas. However, such concerns were not widespread amongst the third-party organisations interviewed. However, one interviewee noted that local residents in a small town with a relatively large migrant worker population were "buying houses and renting them out to migrants" as "an investment".

The next most frequently cited tenures were houses and flat being bought outright (10.7%), staying with family and friends (8.4%) and a caravan (6.5%). At the time of the survey, only a small minority of labour migrants (6%) lived in social rented housing. However, it is possible that more labour migrants will move into this tenure as they become established in the UK. Likewise, it is also possible that the number of migrant workers in owner-occupation will increase; one representative of a third-party organisation highlighted that there was a tendency for migrant workers to share accommodation in the private rented sector at first, but then to move up the housing ladder.

Only a small proportion (3%) of respondents lived in accommodation rented from an employer (other than dormitory-style rented accommodation). However, in some circumstances this could lead to individual migrants feeling 'trapped' in specific accommodation/employment, as a Slovakian woman in her 20s explained:



"I feel a bit trapped because I'm renting a flat from my boss's brother. So what I'm thinking now if I leave this job I need to move as well."

Table 5.9 shows the housing tenure profile of all migrant workers in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey and contrasts the tenure profiles of different national groups.

**Table 5.9 Housing tenure profiles of labour migrants by broad region of origin**

Broad region of origin	Owning or buying	Private renting	Social renting	Staying with friends/family	House/flat provided by employer	Dormitory/communal accommodation provided by employer	Bed & breakfast accommodation	Caravan	Other	Not provided
A8	2.7	68.4	6.9	9.9	2.7	4.7	0.3	3.0	0.5	0.8
A2	4.7	20.9	0.0	0.0	7.0	25.6	0.0	41.9	0.0	0.0
EU15	0.0	85.7	0.0	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
New Commonwealth	29.1	53.8	2.7	9.9	0.5	2.7	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0
Old Commonwealth	11.1	11.1	0.0	11.1	66.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other Europe	0.0	13.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	86.7	0.0	0.0
Rest of World	13.6	65.2	12.1	4.5	3.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0
Not stated	3.8	53.8	19.2	3.8	0.0	7.7	0.0	11.5	0.0	0.0
<b>ALL</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>59.3</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.4</b>

West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey

This highlights some important differences between different national groups:

- New Commonwealth migrants are much more likely to be in owner- occupation than A8 migrants - although it is possible (and likely) that more A8 migrants may move into owner-occupation as they become more established in the UK
- A2 migrants are more likely than the sample average to be living in communal accommodation provided by their employer or in caravans.

Other features of sub-group variation in tenure profiles include:

- the relatively high proportion of the self-employed who are owner-occupiers (55.6%, compared with the sample average of 10.7%)
- a higher share of labour migrants from higher skilled non-manual occupations than from less skilled occupations in owner-occupation
- younger migrants are more likely to be in caravans and communal accommodation provided by employers and they are less likely to be owner-occupiers than are older people.

Key features of tenure profile by sub-region include:

- the importance of private renting for labour migrants in all parts of the region -ranging from 72.6% of respondents in Coventry and Warwickshire to 45.9% in Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire
- the higher than average proportion of labour migrants in caravans in Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire (21.5% compared with the sample average of 6.5%) - in part reflecting the presence of a seasonal agricultural workforce in some rural areas
- a larger than average proportion of labour migrants in social rented accommodation in the Black Country (16.3%) compared with the sample average (6%).

### 5.11.2 Sharing accommodation with friends and family

The West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey asked respondents how many members of their family and how many people who were not members of their family they lived with. In summary:

- 28 out of 712 individuals (3.9% of the sample) lived alone
- 227 (31.9%) lived with other family members only
- 386 (54.2%) lived with non-family members only
- 71 (10.0%) lived with both family and non-family members.

The relatively high proportion living with non-family members only reflects the youthful age structure of the population. There was some disagreement amongst focus group participants as to how acceptable this situation was and about the relative ease of securing housing in Poland and the UK. One Polish woman in her 20s indicated:

“In Poland you live alone, but look what is happening here, of course people can't afford it; people live 5, 4, 6 sometimes in the house. So you all the time you have to live with somebody. For example for me it's terrible, when I have to live with 5 people in the same house. Of course it's cheaper because I pay for only 1 room.”

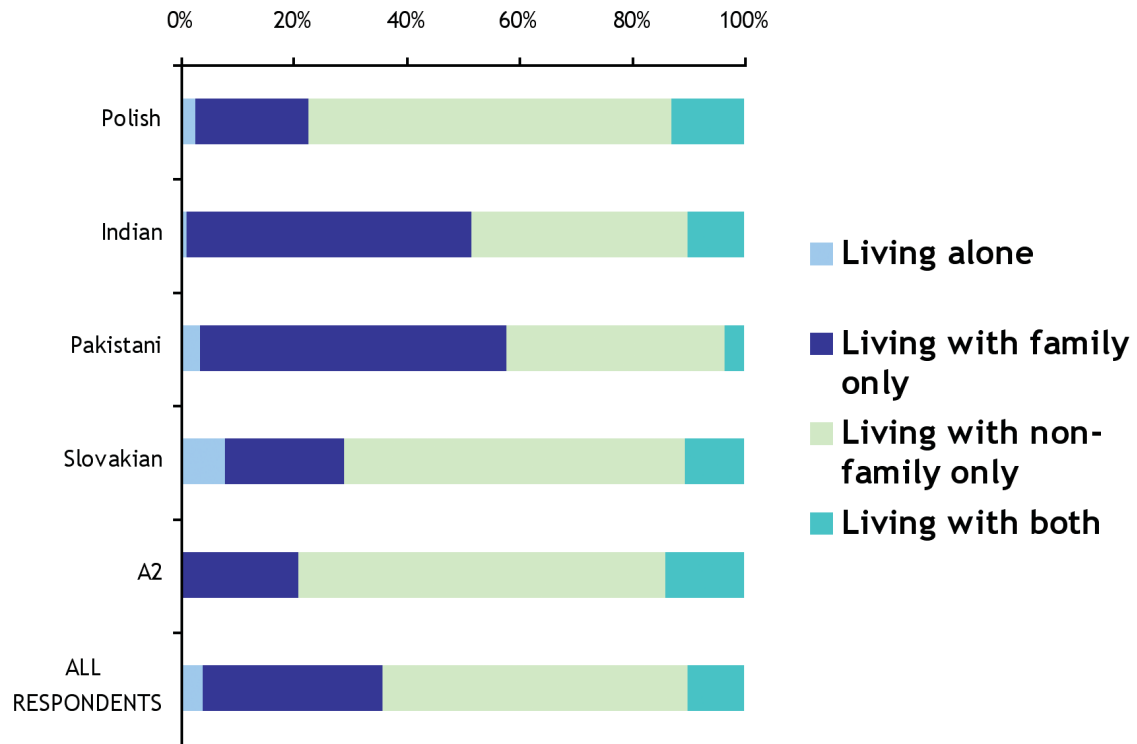
By contrast, another Polish woman relished the ease of being able to live independently from her parents now that she was in the UK:

“I don't agree because in Poland I lived with my parents, because even if I worked in my profession I couldn't afford to rent a room, not a flat, a room and live alone. And here I have 2 part-time jobs and I can afford to rent a room. In the next month I will pay £50.00 per one week, it's not a problem for me.”

Figure 5.11 shows patterns of sharing accommodation with friends and family for different national groups. This highlights that:

- Pakistani and Indian respondents are more likely than the sample average to share with family and less likely to live with non-family members
- A2 migrants are least likely to live alone
- A2 migrants, Polish and Slovakian migrants are more likely than average to share accommodation with non-family members.

Figure 5.11 Sharing of accommodation with family and non-family members - selected national groups and all labour migrants



West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey

### 5.11.3 Household size and number of bedrooms

By aggregating the number of family and non-family members each respondent to the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey shared with and then adding one person (i.e. the respondent) a measure of household size was derived. Table 5.10 shows the household size for migrants in the sample.

The modal household size is 4 persons (just over a quarter of the sample). A further 22.2% of migrants in the sample are in 5-person households. In these modal categories sharing with family members predominates but sharing with non-family members is also important. In larger households migrants are most likely to be sharing with non-family members.

Table 5.10 Household size and type

Household size	Living alone	Living with family	Living with non-family	Living with both family and non family	Total	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
1	28	0	0	0	28	3.9	3.9
2	0	35	72	0	107	15.0	19.0
3	0	41	53	11	105	14.7	33.7
4	0	74	91	18	183	25.7	59.4
5	0	55	84	19	158	22.2	81.6
6	0	16	50	11	77	10.8	92.4
7	0	3	18	6	27	3.8	96.2
8	0	1	10	2	13	1.8	98.0
9	0	1	2	1	4	0.6	98.6
10	0	0	4	0	4	0.6	99.2
11	0	1	1	1	3	0.4	99.6
12	0	0	0	1	1	0.1	99.7
13	0	0	1	0	1	0.1	99.9
14	0	0	0	1	1	0.1	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>712</b>	<b>100</b>	

West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey

The number of bedrooms in properties that migrants reported that they lived in is shown in Table 5.11 (this excludes dormitory accommodation). The modal category is a 3-bedroom property (36.5% of the sample), followed by a 2-bedroom property (25.6%). Overall 10.7% of sample members live in properties with 5 or more bedrooms. (Note that a comparison with the general housing stock is difficult because the Census collects information on 'number of rooms' and not 'number of bedrooms', while the Survey of English Housing has a relatively small sample, and a number of other sources with information on 'number of bedrooms' cover only part of the housing stock).

Table 5.11 Number of bedrooms of properties lived in by migrant workers

Number of bedrooms	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	3	0.4	0.4
1	67	9.9	10.4
2	173	25.6	36.1
3	247	36.5	72.7
4	111	16.4	89.2
5	51	7.5	96.7
6	13	1.9	98.7
7	6	0.9	99.6
8	2	0.3	99.9
9	1	0.1	100.0
<b>Total (excluding dormitories)</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>99.6</b>	
<b>Missing</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0.4</b>	
	<b>677</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey

It is not easy from the information provided to gain insights into whether and the degree to which properties are overcrowded. Table 5.12 shows household size by number of bedrooms with dormitory-type accommodation excluded. On the basis of information presented here it appears that overcrowding is an issue only in a relatively small number of cases (where the number of people is appreciably larger than the number of bedrooms). In a minority of cases, representatives of third- party organisations expressed concerns about overcrowding. In one instance it was noted that gangmasters were buying up properties as cheaply as possible and installing bunk beds in order to accommodate nine or ten people in a property suitable for a family of five or six people. It was also noted that some migrant workers chose to “live very cheaply in order to send money home”. As another interviewee pointed out:

“You are prepared to live at a more basic standard for a short period; and then move on.”

Some interviewees noted that it was difficult to know how many people were in particular houses, because in some instances migrant workers may be “kipping on floors” without the knowledge of letting agents.

Table 5.12 Household size by number of bedrooms

Household Size	Number of bedrooms										Total
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
1	0	10	10	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	25
2	0	30	36	20	7	0	1	0	0	0	94
3	0	12	33	41	13	2	1	0	0	0	102
4	2	2	61	74	21	9	0	2	0	0	171
5	0	11	25	72	27	12	3	0	0	1	151
6	1	1	4	25	31	12	1	2	0	0	77
7	0	0	4	6	8	8	1	0	0	0	27
8	0	0	0	5	1	2	3	2	0	0	13
9	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	4
10	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	4
11	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	3
12	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
13	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
14	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	3	67	173	247	111	51	13	6	2	1	674

West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey

## 5.12 Overview

The profile of migrant workers has shifted to some extent over recent years. The inflow of migrant workers from the A8 countries of central and eastern Europe - notably Poland - has been particularly important here, although immigration from the New Commonwealth remains important. Migrant workers are overwhelmingly young and males outnumber females. They are unevenly distributed by industry and occupation and there is evidence for an increasing concentration of migrant workers in less skilled jobs in recent years, although many have experience and/or qualifications at higher levels.

The majority of migrant workers live in the private rented sector, often sharing with friends and/or other family members.

The information presented relates to a particular period in time and it is possible that the profile of labour migrants will continue to change over time.

## 6. Migrants' motivations, aspirations and intentions

### Key points:

Migrant workers are heterogeneous: their motivations, aspirations and intentions vary.

One in ten of the migrants in the West Midlands Migrant Survey had been to the UK prior to their current stay. The median duration of their current (ongoing) stay for migrant workers surveyed was 17 months.

In most cases location in the West Midlands is attributable to serendipity - it was where they 'were sent' or where 'they ended up'.

Economic motives for coming to the UK predominate amongst migrants in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey - 62% of respondents cited working/finding a job/earning money as their main reason for coming to the UK. Learning/improving English is an important secondary factor for many migrant workers.

Some migrants intend to stay for a few months only whereas at the opposite end of the spectrum some migrant workers intend to settle permanently. Migrant workers from the New Commonwealth are amongst the most likely to contemplate permanent settlement. Substantial numbers of individuals change their intentions (predominantly, but not exclusively, revising their plans upwards towards longer stays), and approximately 20% are uncertain about how long they will stay.

Interviewees from third-party organisations had mixed views about whether substantial numbers of migrant workers would stay in the UK long-term or whether they would return to their origin countries as economic conditions there improved.

Overall satisfaction levels with life in the UK are high, with 76% of respondents to the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey saying that they were quite/very satisfied.

Aspects of their current job that migrant workers were least satisfied with were rate of pay and level of employment (i.e. working below their qualification/skills level); although more migrant workers are satisfied than dissatisfied about these aspects.

### 6.1 Introduction

There is no such thing as a 'typical' migrant worker. Migrants' motivations, aspirations and intentions vary. Nevertheless, there are some common themes and issues, as highlighted in this chapter.

Local studies in the UK have addressed the issue of migrant motivations and intentions and the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey does so too. While some migrant workers come for 'temporary' stays, others plan to stay 'permanently'. Other local studies have emphasised that for many migrants the future is uncertain (Zaronaite and Tirzite, 2006; UHIPolicyWeb, 2006).

Information from the WRS collected at the time of registration indicates that in the West Midlands around a third of A8 migrants covered by the WRS over the period from May 2004 to March 2007 did not know how long they would stay and nearly half planned to stay for less than 3 months, so endorsing this picture

of uncertainty for many individuals. Whether initial intentions of migrants are fulfilled or change depends on circumstances in origin countries and competing destination countries as well as the UK. Hence, from a policy perspective what happens in the UK matters, but circumstances/trends outside the UK have a bearing on migrants' intentions in a way which may run counter to aspirations of those concerned with strategic planning at regional and national levels.

The information presented in this chapter draws largely on information from the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey, supplemented with some perspectives from interviewees from third-party organisations.

## 6.2 Previous migrations to the UK and current duration of stay

### 6.2.1 Background

The West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey included questions on:

- When did you first arrive in the UK?
- When did you arrive in the UK for this stay (disregarding any short visits home since arriving)?

From these questions theoretically it is possible to calculate whether respondents had been to the UK prior to their current visit and also to calculate the duration of stay. In practice, these questions proved difficult to answer for a substantial minority of migrants. The findings presented below are based on 490 valid responses to these questions (out of a sample of 712 migrants). Hence they should be interpreted with caution, as non-respondents could have different characteristics.

### 6.2.2 Previous visits to the UK

It is estimated that 10.4% of migrant workers with valid responses had been to the UK prior to migrating to the UK for their current stay. In absolute terms the largest group of respondents who had been to the UK previously were Poles, followed by Bulgarians and Romanians. 12.6% of Poles with valid responses had been to the UK previously, compared with 53% of Romanians and 35% of Bulgarians; (the latter two figures reflect the fact that Romanians and Bulgarians are employed on the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme) and may return for several consecutive years (as was the case for a member of a Bulgarian focus group interviewed in Herefordshire).

Relative to respondents with valid responses, characteristics of those who were more likely than average to have visited the UK previously included:

- By broad geographical region of the world:
  - Migrants from A2 countries (42% had been to the UK previously)
  - EU15 countries (17%)
  - A8 countries (12%).
- By age:
  - Young people aged 16-24 (14% had been to the UK previously).
- By gender:
  - Females (15% had been to the UK previously, compared with 8% of males).



- By type of employment:

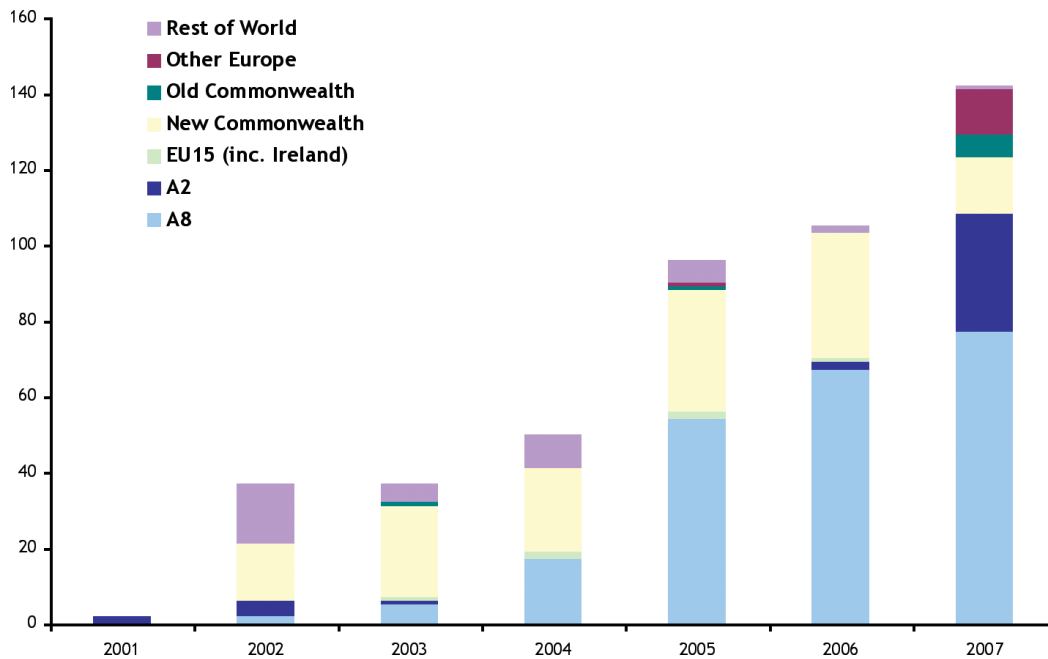
- Those employed in Agriculture (33% had been to the UK previously)
- Those in Elementary Occupations (12%).

### 6.2.3 Year of arrival in the UK

Figure 6.1 shows year of arrival in the UK, by broad region of the world. As noted above, the figures here should be treated with caution due to the quality of responses to the relevant questions.

The majority of those with valid responses arrived in the UK from 2005 onwards. Changes in the profile of migrants by broad geographical region of the world mirror some of the trends documented in Chapter 5, with A8 migrants arriving in significant numbers in each year from 2005 and nearly all migrants from A2 countries arriving in 2007.

Figure 6.1 Year of arrival in the UK for current visit



West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey

### 6.2.4 Duration of current stay

The median duration of current stay for all migrants with valid responses was 17 months. It should be noted that the current stays are by definition unfinished at the time of the survey, so completed stays will be of longer duration.

Key features of variation in median duration of current stay by migrant sub-group include:

- Origin by broad geographical region of the world:
  - shortest stays for Other European (2 months) and A2 migrants (3 months)<sup>11</sup>
  - shorter than average stays (12 months) for A8 migrants
  - longest stays for New Commonwealth (26 months) and EU15 migrants (29 months).
- Age:
  - shortest stays for younger migrants - 6 months for those aged 16-24 years; (this is in keeping with the wider literature on migration and the life course, with young people in this age group being the most migratory)
  - longest stays for older migrants - 30 months for those aged 30-29 years and 33 months for those aged 40 and over.
- Gender:
  - shorter median stays for females (11 weeks) than for males (20 weeks).
- Occupation:
  - those in elementary occupations have the shortest median stays (10 months); (it may be that pay and working conditions in these jobs, and the fact that some migrants are working below their qualification/skills levels, is bearable because the average duration of stay is relatively short).

### 6.2.5 Experience of living elsewhere in the UK

About one in five migrants (21%) in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey had lived elsewhere in the UK. Sub-groups who are more likely than average to have had experience of living elsewhere in the UK include:

- those aged 25-29 years;
- Chinese, Indians and Bulgarians;
- respondents who rated their English language skills as 'very good' or 'fluent'.

61% of those who had lived elsewhere in the UK had lived outside the West Midlands. Some participants in focus groups reported experience of living and working in other parts of the UK - including Manchester, Southampton and London - and in other parts of the world (for example, one nurse from the Philippines had also worked in Saudi Arabia).

Of course, some of the migrants in the sample may move away from the West Midlands to other regions. It is possible that those with good English language skills who advance in employment (and so who may be particularly valuable to the West Midlands economy in terms of value added) are also more likely than average to be lost to other regions.

### 6.2.6 Why come to the West Midlands?

The West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey did not include a question on why respondents came to the West Midlands. However, some insights into this question can be gleaned from focus groups and interviewees from third-party organisations.

<sup>11</sup> These are the groups most likely to be working as seasonal agricultural workers.

The evidence suggests that location in the West Midlands is largely attributable to serendipity, rather than a positive choice. While a minority of interviewees acknowledged the importance of family or ethnic ties in coming to the region - for example:

“Why I came here and Midlands is, Indian people here so I prefer to live here” (Indian male, late 20s).

for others it happened to be ‘where they were sent’ (by an agency) or ‘where they ended up’. Once in the UK some focus group participants indicated that they had, or intended to make use of social networks (mainly of friends for A8 migrants) to move around in the UK or to pursue opportunities. Relatively few seemed ‘tied’ to a West Midlands location in the way that a middle-aged male healthcare worker from the Philippines was to Walsall:

“I think I would prefer the Walsall area, a bit more quiet, you know, that’s why now I am still in Walsall.”

Having arrived in the West Midlands, advantages of location in the region mentioned in focus groups with A8 migrants included:

- cheaper cost of living than London - “comparing to London it’s much easier, if I am in London I am not able to get a car or something”
- Birmingham for the range of job opportunities on offer and as an ‘exciting’ place for social life.

For some focus group participants the multi-cultural nature of West Midlands cities was a positive feature. Others were less sure that this was a positive feature. Some of those from environments with little experience of other nationalities/other ethnic groups, expressed surprise (and also in some instances a sense of being uncomfortable/fearful) about the multi-ethnic profile of major urban areas (see Chapter 10 for further details).

### 6.3 Motivations for coming to the UK

A review of the literature suggests that key economic ‘push’ factors from origin countries include a lack of life chances, lower wages and living standards and a lack of available opportunities to utilise skills in the home country (often as a consequence of high unemployment). Key economic ‘pull’ factors include higher wages and job opportunities, and the financial returns that might be realised in the short or medium-term. However, the literature suggests that alongside these economic factors, broader quality of life and life chances factors are important, including a desire for a better quality of life for themselves and their families, career development opportunities and a desire for travel and adventure. Younger people, especially, may be coming for shorter periods, to experience new environments, to learn or improve their knowledge of English or to earn money to return or move on (MacKay and Winkelmann-Gleed, 2005). Once a migration flow has been established, the momentum created can be an important driver of subsequent migration flows.

For the sample of labour migrants in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey the motivations for coming to the UK are overwhelmingly economic. Easily the most important reason for coming to the UK (cited by 62% of respondents) was to work/find a job/earn money. This was also apparent in comments made by focus group participants. A middle-aged healthcare worker from the Philippines explained:

“Better job, better life [than at home].”

Likewise, one Polish man in his late 20s explained:

“[I left Poland] because it’s hard to find a job in Poland, even if you have qualifications and you finish University or something, it’s difficult”.

In one focus group of A8 migrants there was general agreement that the main motive for coming to the UK was monetary:

“Good money. All of us that's why we come here.”

Wage differentials between Poland and the UK matter, as one participant explained:

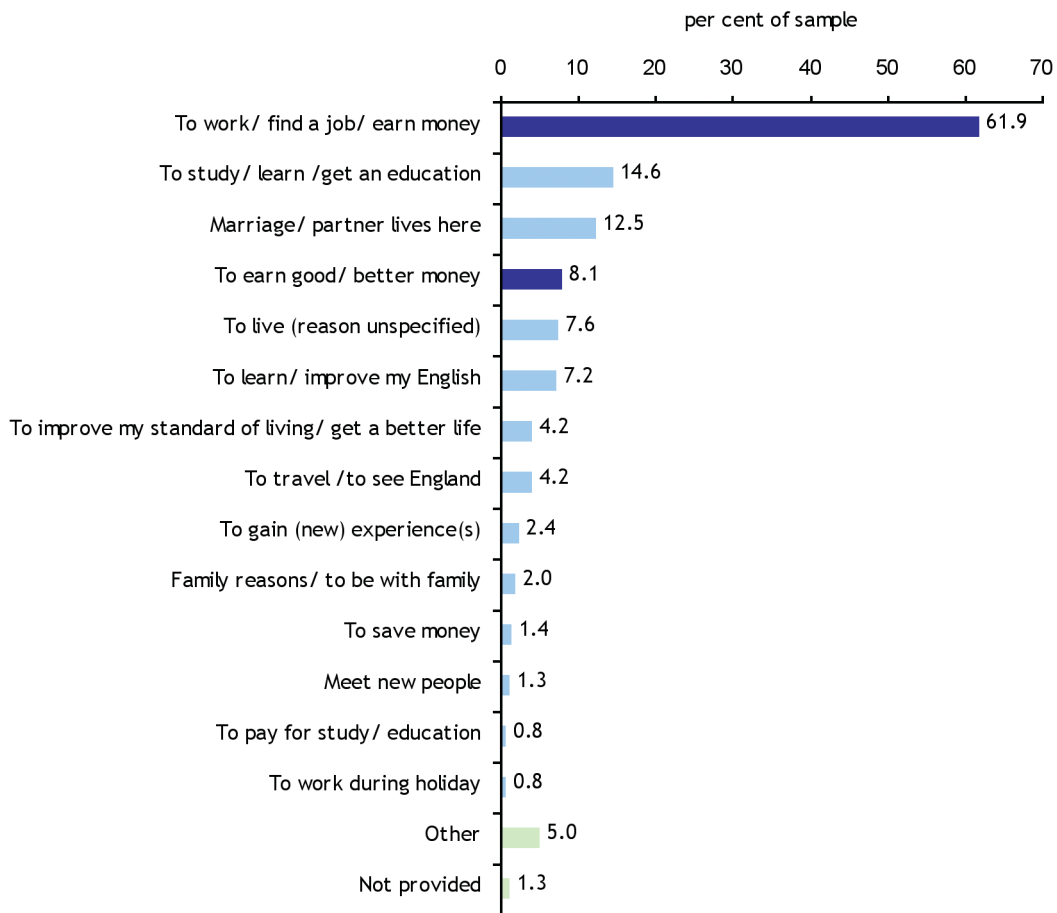
“For example at the moment the minimum in Poland is £2.00 per hour minimum. Here it is minimum of £5.25.”<sup>12</sup>

Likewise, a representative from an employment agency noted that with pay for migrant workers varying from the minimum wage to £7-£11 dependent on the skill level of the job involved, a migrant worker could earn more in a month in the UK than in 6 months in their country of origin.

Around three-quarters of respondents to the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey who were not working prior to coming to the UK cited to work/find a job/earn money as their reason for coming to the UK, so underlining the economic motivations of migration (see Figure 6.2). Even in less skilled jobs, wages in the UK are higher than for skilled work in Poland. As a Polish woman in her late 20s, currently working in a job involving picking and packing DVDs in a warehouse, explained:

“I finished at Medical College, I'm a Dental Technician and I was working in Poland 3-4 years in my profession, but the problem was that the wage wasn't very high.”

Figure 6.2 Motivation for coming to the UK (unprompted)



West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey

<sup>12</sup> The West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey was undertaken in Spring/Summer 2007.

The opportunity to earn more in a less skilled job in the UK than would be possible in a more skilled job at home was attractive to some migrants as a way of getting some financial backing to enable them to establish themselves back home in their country of origin. As a Polish man in his late 20s explained:

"If I stay here with my language and everything, I will be an average guy. In Poland I can stay here 5 months and take that money from here back to my country and then I can set up myself, you know. Actually I don't know what but I can."

Sub-groups who were more likely than average to cite economic reasons for migration include:

- A8 migrants, A2 migrants and migrants from other parts of Europe
- migrants working in Skilled Trades and Elementary Occupations
- males.

Learning/studying/improving English were also amongst the reasons cited for coming to the UK. For example, one Slovakian woman in her early 20s explained:

"I just wanted to learn the language, I just graduated from High School at home and I desperately wanted to learn some English and I figured the best way to learn it is to come to England and learn it from native speakers. So I was an au pair, I came as an au pair and I was going to colleges."

However, the desire to learn/study/improve English was of secondary importance (in aggregate terms) for survey respondents - as a Polish woman in her late 20s, who was keen to improve her English, explained:

"Money is the most important thing. But not only of course."

In focus group discussions the desire to learn/improve English emerged as an important 'pull' for migration to the UK, even if it was not the primary factor for coming to the UK. Some migrant workers working in labour market segments where fellow nationals and other non-UK nationals predominated expressed dismay that opportunities to use English in the workplace were more limited than they would have liked - for example:

- One interviewee working in a fast food outlet at emphasised how working as a cashier was much better than working in the kitchen (where the language was Polish) because of opportunities to practise English
- A Bulgarian interviewee working at a fruit farm in Herefordshire highlighted that the common languages used by workers were Polish and Russian and hence the tendency was to pick up these rather than English - which was used only "between the airport and the farm gate".

It is relevant to note here the trends for increasing industrial and occupational segregation of migrant workers revealed by analysis of LFS data (see sections 5.8 and 5.9). Some interviewees expressed the view that working in 'migrant-dense' workplaces can have disadvantages - notably in limiting opportunities to use English in some circumstances (as highlighted above). However, it was also noted that such environments could provide a lot of social support and a positive 'multi-national' experience in circumstances where the workforce is internationally diverse (see chapter 10). However, this was often not the case, and opportunities for using English were limited, as noted by an interviewee from a third-party organisation:

"Some live with Poles and work with Poles and watch Polish TV and read Polish magazines".

Amongst survey respondents, A8 migrants were more likely than average to cite learning/studying and improving English as a motivation for migration. Women were more likely than men to cite

learning/improving English as a particular motivation for migration. Family reasons are relatively unimportant as a motivation for migration for A8 migrants.

Economic reasons are a primary motivation for students to come to the UK. Students are also more likely than other sub-groups to cite travel/seeing England as a motivation for coming to the UK alongside economic reasons. In focus groups several participants expressed disappointment about not having as much opportunity for travel as they had hoped for - often because of long hours of work.

## 6.4 Intended length of stay in the UK

### 6.4.1 Migrants' perspectives - original and current plans for length of stay

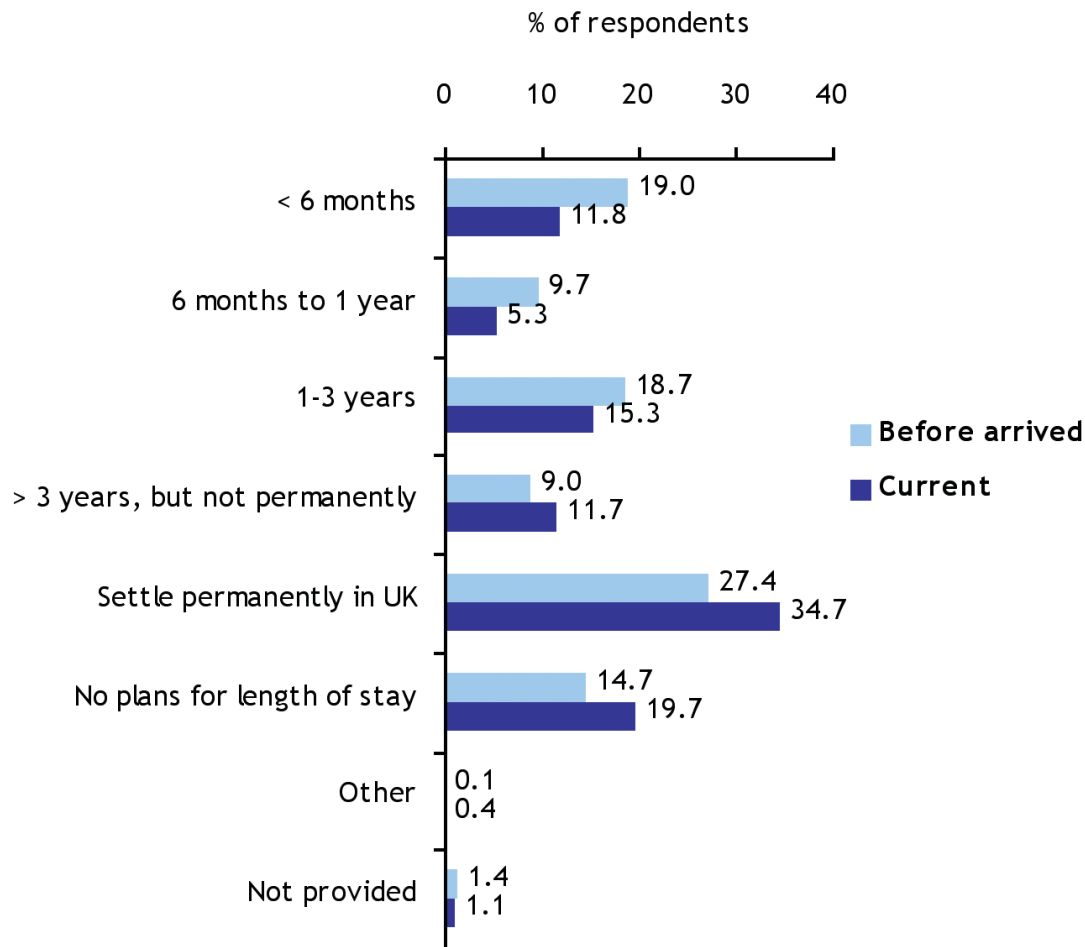
The literature on labour migration suggests that there is likely to be a diversity of migratory strategies and intended lengths of stay. Some migrants are likely to come to the UK for a fixed period, earn money and return home, whereas others come with the intention of settling permanently.

Recent research has highlighted the importance of networks in shaping migration intentions and behaviour (Ryan et al., 2007). For some migrants who intend to come to the UK for a short stay it may be more important to keep networks with home than to create new and strong networks in the destination country. However, it is important to note that networks are neither spatially bound nor static. This helps explain why some migrants change their intentions (as highlighted below) in accordance with their experiences.

In the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey respondents were asked about their plans for staying in the UK both before their arrival and currently. Before coming to the UK around a fifth planned to stay in the UK for less than 6 months and a tenth for between 6 months and a year. Just over a quarter planned to settle in the UK permanently. Around 15% had no clear plans about the length of stay.

Having come to the UK the proportion of the sample currently contemplating shorter stays (of up to 3 years) had reduced to around a third of the sample, compared with nearly half beforehand. The proportion planning longer stays had increased, with over a third contemplating permanent settlement. This trend towards longer planned lengths of stay is illustrated in Figure 6.3.

Figure 6.3 Original and current plans for staying in the UK



West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey

This simple comparison shows changes in aggregate profiles of planned length of stay in the UK. Around a fifth of the sample (more than originally) had no definite plans. So on coming to the UK, migrants tend to stay longer than expected, and uncertainty about length of stay increases also.

To gain an insight into the dynamism of migration plans it is necessary to examine original and current plans regarding length of stay in the UK at an individual level. Such analysis of current vis-à-vis original plans for length of stay at individual level highlights that:

- relatively few migrants intending to settle permanently when coming to the UK change their plans, but over 20% of individuals currently planning permanent settlement originally had plans for a shorter stay;
- although the trend is towards longer stays than originally intended, some individuals revise their intended length of stay downwards when they come to the UK;
- there is more flux in plans for staying in the UK at the individual level than is portrayed in the aggregate statistics.

Analyses by sub-group reveal that:

- A8 migrants in the sample are more likely than average to have changed their migration plans and are also characterised by a greater degree of uncertainty about their migration plans than the sample as a whole
- A2 migrants and those from the Rest of Europe were most likely to have plans for shorter stays; (this is in accordance with the nature of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme which some of them will be employed on)
- the youngest age group (16-24 years) generally intend to stay for shorter periods than average; (this chimes with the plans reported by some young people in focus groups and by interviewees from third-party organisations for young people to use labour migration to the UK to help pay for University studies in their home countries)
- those from the New Commonwealth are most likely to contemplate permanent settlement; (this is especially the case for respondents of Pakistani origin).

These results are in keeping with results of other research that indicate that:

- a substantial number of labour migrants are unsure how long they will stay
- plans change over time.

The focus groups conducted for this research provided useful insights about 'being unsure' and about 'changing plans.' A Polish man in his 20s said:

"I think I would like to go back to Poland but not now, I just have to stay here for a while, we will see what happens. Now is too early to decide."

Likewise, a compatriot responded to the discussion about how long she planned to stay in the UK by saying:

"Maybe all life or maybe 5 years, I don't know."

The account of a Slovakian woman, who came to the UK to work as an au pair and to study English, with a view to returning to Slovakia to start a University course, illustrates how easily plans and quickly plans can change:

"So actually after this really nice experience of 9 months [working as an au pair] I went home, and on the plane I met a Slovakian guy who was from London and we flew home together and his sister was an au pair, and he was like oh you know, what have you been doing this and that, and I told him yes I'm going home, and he goes, well I could find a new family for you if you want, and I was like yes okay whatever if you want. So I went home because it was my cousin's wedding, I stayed, after 2 weeks the guy came back and like the second day he calls me, I've found a family for you do you want to come back. And I'm like, oh okay, okay, I want to, because I guess after 9 months I'd kind of changed, I was a really quiet girl previously and I guess I just kind of opened up more, you know, got to know the language and the people here and I was kind of feeling bored at home. So yes I came back and went to London and then I was an au pair there."

Many of the younger migrants were enjoying independence in a new country away from their parents - for example:

"I finished school in Poland and I start here ... so I don't live with my parents and this is a new life for me. Now I want to stay here, maybe later I change my mind, I don't know."

Some migrants with specialist skills were aware that they could take their skills elsewhere, as a middle-aged nurse from the Philippines explained:



"I don't know [whether I will stay or not], because nurses can really go anywhere you know, they can work any part of the world, can go to Australia, America, anywhere else."

To some extent having children in school tied some of the older migrants with families to the UK, but on the other hand those with a history of being internationally mobile also valued the experience of living in other places and some expressed the view that experience of international mobility was good for their children.

#### 6.4.2 Will they stay or will they go?

Historically, much of the literature on migration views migration as permanent. However, it is clear from the evidence presented in this report that much migration is temporary rather than permanent (see also Dustmann and Weiss, 2007).

From a policy perspective it is important to note, as indicated above, that migrants' plans, and their decisions about investing further in qualifications and skills, will be influenced by a variety of factors (as outlined above) including:

- Labour market experiences in the UK
- Non-economic factors in the UK - including lifestyle factors
- Economic circumstances in the home country
- Non-economic factors in the home country
- Economic and non-economic factors in other competing destinations.

For migrants from the New Commonwealth - especially those with degrees from universities in South Asia, how things develop career-wise appears an important influence on (changing) intended length of stay:

"But now after two years, I'm thinking of staying two, three, four more years over here. It all depends on your career progression over here. If you are still after four, five, six years, if you are still struggling a lot ... just go back to India and start your career" (Indian male, late twenties, frustrated by being unable to find a job commensurate with his skills level).

In focus groups some of the migrants from A8 countries, in particular, highlighted that they liked the 'freedom' of a 'less conservative' society in the UK. For some of the interviewees it was their first experience of independent living at a time of their lives when their plans were not settled and when they welcomed new experiences (as outlined in 6.4.1). As an interviewee from a FE College noted:

"When you are young it's nice to travel and see something different, see other parts of the world when you are young."

in the same way that young people from the UK may wish to travel to other parts of the world in a 'gap year', or before settling into a career, a willingness to take less skilled work to pay their way is evident amongst many young migrant workers. For these migrants with no family ties they could change their plans and arrangements quickly. They are at the stage in their life course when the propensity to migrate is highest.

By contrast, for those with children, or bringing children to the UK, who then settled, it is more complicated to go back. For those with children 'back home' there is more of a 'pull' to return - as an ESOL trainer explained:

"The older guys, they talk about short-term and they want to go back to their families; the younger ones are likely to stay - they like it".

It is also important to keep in mind that the A8 migration to the UK is still relatively new, and so is subject to development and change. Views amongst interviewees from third-party organisations about how many A8 migrants would stay in the UK long-term were mixed:

- Some expressed surprise about how many A8 migrants were undecided about how long they would stay - suggesting that many of them were “surprisingly aimless” (employer representative)
- Others considered that many A8 migrants would stay for the long-term and that they would become established in UK society and succeed - for example:
  - “I think there was a mythology 18 months ago that they would just come here, earn, send the money back and then move back to Poland. ... I think people are setting down roots here and will be part of our economy for years and years” (trade unionist); and
  - “Give them a generation and they’ll be living in the big houses in Edgbaston and they’ll be the doctors and lawyers of the future” (FE representative).
- On the contrary, another suggested:
  - “They’re all really just waiting for Poland to get on its feet and they’ll go home.” (ESOL trainer).

The latter comment chimes with some of the views expressed by some A8 migrants themselves - for example:

- “If somebody gives me the job right now in Poland in my country you know, for very good money, it’s 1 second and I would go back. A lot of people, believe me, stay over here only for money.” (Polish woman, 20s).
- “Now is not a good time to go back to Poland. Maybe I think that next 3-4 years will be better.” (Polish man, late 20s).

Clearly, economic improvements in their home countries are an important consideration and as one interviewee noted:

- “The economy is getting better and better in Slovakia.” (Slovakian woman, 20s).

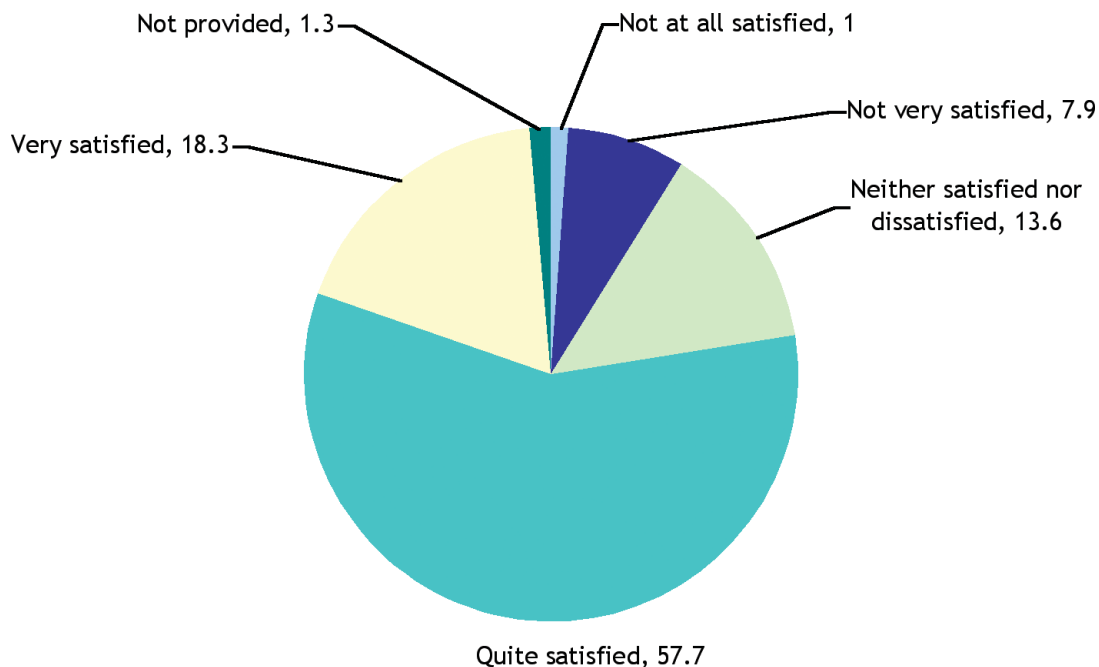
## 6.5 Satisfaction levels

### 6.5.1 Overall satisfaction levels

The West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey included a question asking respondents to rank how satisfied they were with the way things had worked out since coming to the UK.

Overall satisfaction levels are high (see Figure 6.4), with 76% of the sample indicating that they were quite/very satisfied.

Figure 6.4 Overall satisfaction levels with how things have worked out in the UK (%)



West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey

When asked to supply reasons for being satisfied, the most frequently cited reasons were economic ones:

- Better life/standard of living (identified by 19.6% of satisfied respondents)
- I can earn good/better money (18.5%)
- I can work/found a job (16.3%).

In focus group discussions A8 migrant workers expressed the view that even if they were working below their qualification/skills levels, there were opportunities for progression in the UK and so the outlook was positive:

"We start from the bottom like me and then I work ... and then I have chance if I'm good, I have chance to stay, second chef, then head chef that is the difference." ... "You can start at the bottom and work your way up" (Polish man, 20s, explaining how without previous experience of kitchen work he could progress in his work in the UK).

Several interviewees from third-party organisations noted the willingness of A8 migrants to move from job to job and to travel to different areas to take advantage of better opportunities.

Satisfied respondents also identified a range of other socio-economic factors, relating to:

- Friends/family
- Friendliness of people (although several focus group participants reported that they would like more English friends - a feature also highlighted in other research [Spencer et al., 2007])
- The fact that life is easier/lack of stress (Poles were more likely than average to provide this reason)
- Seeing new places.

One Slovakian woman in her early 20s summed up her overall satisfaction as follows:

"It's a good place, it's better in England than in Slovakia, of course I miss my family and stuff like that, my friends there."

The most commonly cited reasons given by the 13.6% of respondents who indicated that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied include reasons relating to family, characteristics of jobs and social life:

- Missing family (mentioned by 12.4% of respondents in this category)
- Need better pay (11.3%)
- Have qualifications for higher level jobs (7.2%)
- Poor social opportunities (6.2%)

Respondents who were not satisfied (8.8% of the sample) cited economic reasons primarily, relating to lack of satisfying employment and low pay. The reasons most frequently given were:

- Need better job/job satisfaction (19% of dissatisfied respondents)
- Unemployed/need a job (15.9%)
- Dislike UK/prefer own country (12.7%)
- Don't earn enough (11.1%)

Other reasons cited included disliking the weather (the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey fieldwork was undertaken during an uncharacteristically wet period in late Spring/Summer 2007) and high levels of racism. Each of these reasons was cited by 8% of dissatisfied respondents. 5% of respondents in this category mentioned poor levels of accommodation.

Overall, economic reasons are paramount in understanding overall satisfaction with life in the UK, but social and other factors also have a bearing on experience. For example, a Slovakian woman in her early 20s summed up comments of several focus group participants when she said:

"Maybe people here are more open-minded I would say."

In general, the migrants surveyed were pleased to have the opportunity to work and to earn more money than they would be able to in their homeland, but the answers are also indicative of some frustration over under-employment (i.e. feeling that they could work in more highly skilled and satisfying jobs with higher rates of pay). In this context it is salient to note that satisfaction levels were particularly high amongst the self-employed (94% satisfaction level). It might be considered that relatively good command of English is a key factor here - on the basis that it is likely to be difficult to be self-employed without English language skills. However, this is not supported by the data, since there is no clear pattern of satisfaction levels increasing with higher self-assessed language skills.

### 6.5.2 Satisfaction levels with current job

Given the importance of economic factors in understanding overall satisfaction levels, it is interesting to investigate migrants' satisfaction levels with different aspects of their current job.

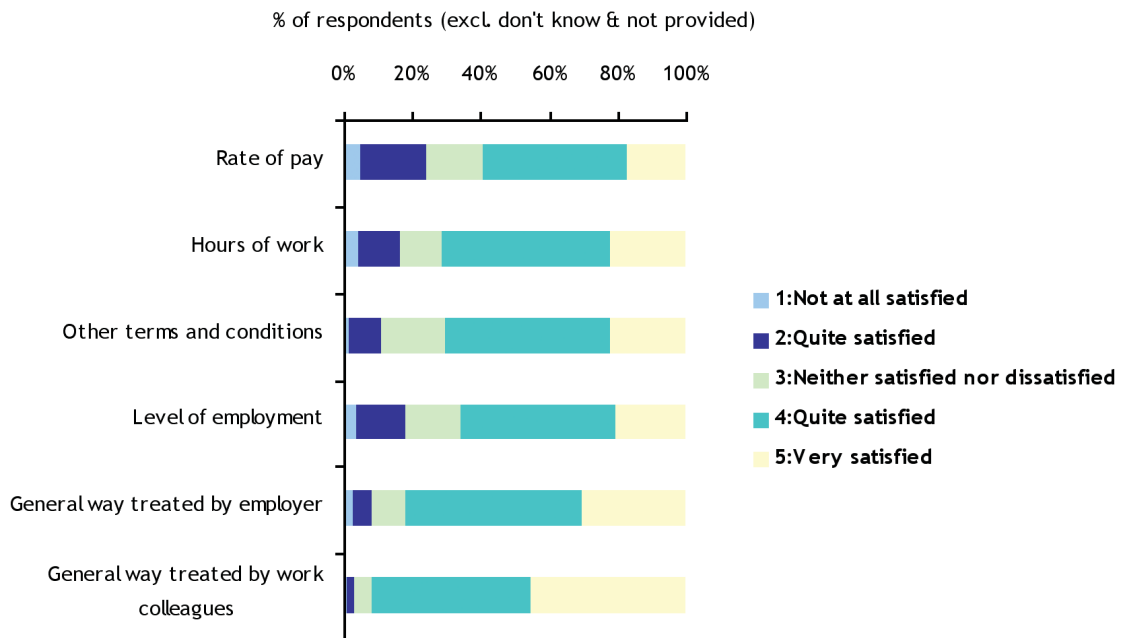
Table 6.1 provides details of responses, while Figure 6.5 provides a comparison across the different aspects of migrants' current job (excluding those 'don't know' and those who did not answer).

Table 6.1 Satisfaction levels (per cent) with different aspects of current job

Aspect of current job	1:Not at all satisfied	2:Quite dissatisfied	3:Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4:Quite satisfied	5:Very satisfied	Don't know/ prefer not to say	Not provided
Rate of pay	4.9	18.7	15.6	40.9	16.4	0.4	3.1
Hours of work	4.2	11.7	12.1	47.2	21.3	0.3	3.2
Other terms and conditions	1.8	8.6	18.1	46.1	21.3	1.0	3.1
Level of employment	3.9	13.3	15.4	42.6	19.7	1.8	3.2
General way treated by employer	2.4	5.3	9.6	48.6	28.7	2.4	3.1
General way treated by work colleagues	1.3	1.8	4.6	44.4	43.0	1.8	3.1

West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey

Figure 6.5 Satisfaction levels with different aspects of current job (excluding 'don't knows' and 'not provided')



West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey

It is clear that satisfaction levels with current jobs are generally high across all aspects.

- Satisfaction levels are highest for:
  - The general way treated by work colleagues
  - The general way treated by employers.
- Satisfaction levels are lowest for:
  - Rate of pay
  - Level of employment.

However, even in the two latter instances satisfaction levels are still relatively high at around 60%.

Table 6.2 shows how the largest national sub-groups of migrant workers rate different aspects of their current job relative to the sample average. This shows that Pakistanis rate all aspects of their current job lower than the sample average. Conversely, Indians rate all aspects of their current job, except level of employment, more highly than average. These concerns were reiterated in focus group discussions amongst Pakistanis and Indians - they expressed frustration and disappointment about lack of recognition of qualifications and experience gained outside the UK. As a Pakistani man in his mid-30s, qualified to degree level, explained:

“[I came here} basically for better job prospects, better career prospects. Obviously coming here and just doing unskilled manual work wasn't the perception. ... It's a broken dream.”

Likewise, an Indian man qualified to Masters Degree level made it clear he was satisfied with his experience of individuals in the UK, but not with the system (especially regarding recognition of overseas qualifications):

“I'm quite happy with the people and all the treatment, I'm quite happy with that. But still if we talk about my personal struggle over here, it's still disappointing. I don't know why, because people who are just having simple GCSE or simple 'A' Level or 'O' Level, they're having quite high positions, just having GCSE or GCE. Me having Masters Degree holder, doesn't recognise us.”

Table 6.2 Mean scores (1: not at all satisfied to 5: very satisfied) on different aspects of current job (excluding 'don't knows' and 'not provided')

Aspect of job	Polish	Indian	Pakistani	Total
Rate of pay	3.44	3.74	3.14	3.47
Hours of work	3.74	3.93	3.46	3.72
Other terms and conditions	3.74	4.18	3.53	3.80
Level of employment	3.73	3.52	3.40	3.64
General way treated by employer	3.85	4.40	3.98	4.01
General way treated by work colleagues	4.36	4.43	4.02	4.32

West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey

Disaggregation by broad region of the world reveals that migrants from EU15 countries and the New Commonwealth are more likely than average to be dissatisfied about rates of pay. Highest levels of dissatisfaction with the level at which they are employed are registered by migrants from the New Commonwealth and the Old Commonwealth.

Looking across the different aspects of their current job that respondents were asked about, for A8 migrants satisfaction levels were lowest for pay, followed by the level of employment and terms and conditions of employment. Several focus group participants commented unfavourably on the experience of working below their skill levels. One Polish woman in her late 20s was dissatisfied with under-employment in her current job, but the economic returns of doing so were greater than working at a level commensurate with her skills in Poland:

"I would like to work in my profession; I don't want to spend all my life in a warehouse. So it's very difficult. And in Poland I might have another job in my profession but the wage is so low it's better work here in the warehouse than in your profession."

A compatriot, also working in a warehouse, expressed similar sentiments:

"It's very boring. ... Yes I tried [to get a better job] but it's very difficult. First of all I have to improve my English. ... Sometimes you feel it's shame for our, for us, for our country. We are good educated ..... But we have working as a packers, it's quite difficult situation to understand us, how we feel."

One Polish woman, who had trained as a dental technician in Poland, explained her rationale for having two part-time jobs in the UK - one in a warehouse (for the money) and one in a restaurant (in order to improve her English):

"When I'm tired in the restaurant or warehouse I have a question of what am I doing here, what is my profession, what's my job. But I can't say that I love this job because it's only for money. I need this job [in a warehouse] because I need money to survive, I need a restaurant job because I need to improve my English, because in this warehouse I work with Polish people. ... I prefer my second job in the restaurant, the problem is that for 1 hour in the warehouse I get £5.75 per 1 hours, and in the restaurant I get £5.50 so it's less but the job in the restaurant is much better, much more interesting. ... If you work with people I think it's always more interesting, you can learn, you can improve your English. I try new things in my job, not only serve people for me it's a challenge because I need more English. But I try to learn how to prepare cocktails or something like this. I am not sure if I in future will work in similar job because I want to work as a Dental Technician but it's better."

A8 migrants are also characterised by lower than average levels of satisfaction with the way they are treated by their employer than the sample average. As one Polish woman commented:

"I think that sometimes they treat us worse than English."

A Polish man in his late 20s felt that in some instances employers took unreasonable advantage of Polish workers because they were hard working (see 7.5 for further discussion on this issue).

"I think they're pushing all the Polish people... they want them to work faster and faster and even if you finish a shift, at the end of the shift the Manager says oh you were great today, your performance was perfect but the next day they want more. They want more, because they know that we can work so hard, so they always want more."

In a similar vein, an interviewee from a third-party organisation suggested that there is:

“Fear amongst some of the recruitment agencies that the Poles would learn the British way of things and they would be back to square one.”

However, all of the comments above need to be interpreted in the context of high overall satisfaction levels amongst the migrant workers surveyed.

A2 migrants have higher than sample average satisfaction levels with all aspects of their current job that they were asked about. This is despite the fact that in relative terms (see Chapter 8) this group tend to be particularly concentrated in less attractive jobs. This underlines the fact that self-assessed satisfaction levels are likely to be shaped both by prior expectations and relative to alternative opportunities (in the country of origin or elsewhere), and by current/planned length of stay in the UK. However, self-assessed satisfaction levels are important because they are a factor in shaping behaviour.

Across all aspects of their current job, mean satisfaction scores were highest for those in Associate Professional and Technical Occupations. The comments of nurses from the Philippines, explaining how they could work in the same occupation in the UK as they were trained for at home, are salient here, as are the comments about how they felt that their professional skills were valued:

“Basically they were accepting foreign nurses from the Philippines, that is the main basic qualification in order to come and work in the UK. I don’t think they accept other qualifications except for the BSN [Bachelor of Science in Nursing], you have to be registered back home before you would be allowed to work here. ... [It is] Less formal and then it is more open [in the UK than elsewhere], there is very good professional conversation, you know, they are really to listen to you.”

Mean satisfaction scores on pay were lowest for Sales and Customer Sales Occupations (i.e. occupations which are characterised by low pay), but on all other aspects of their current job, Elementary Occupations registered the lowest mean scores.

## 6.6 Overview

Migrant workers are coming to the UK primarily for economic reasons, although the opportunity to learn/improve English is an important secondary consideration for many from eastern Europe. Overall satisfaction levels with life and work in the UK are generally high, although some migrant workers expressed disappointment about working below their qualifications/skills levels.

Some migrants intend to stay for a short period only, whereas others plan to come for longer periods or to settle permanently in the UK. However, plans are subject to change and some migrant workers are uncertain about how long they will stay. Changes in economic circumstances in their home countries, in the UK or in competing destinations may influence the direction and size of migrant flows. Opinion is mixed amongst interviewees from third-party organisations about how many migrant workers will stay in the UK for the long-term.



## 7. Employers' perspectives

### Key points:

The information on employers' perspective is drawn from the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey covering 223 organisations employing migrant workers; (the sample is not representative of all employers in the region). Some organisations approached to take part in the survey appeared reluctant to admit to employing, or to talk about, migrant workers.

The main rationale emerging for employing migrant workers was to address labour shortages, although in some cases migrant workers were employed to fill skill shortages. Several employers indicated that migrant workers were less reluctant to do certain types of jobs (often relatively unskilled jobs) than UK nationals.

In the majority of organisations surveyed migrant workers were used to meet an ongoing steady demand for labour throughout the year.

Employers surveyed reported that migrant workers are engaged primarily on direct, permanent contracts.

The main advantages cited for employing migrant workers were that they were hard working/had a good work ethic (mentioned by over half of employers surveyed), reliable and meticulous. It is clear from the focus groups conducted with migrant workers that many of the migrants themselves were aware of their reputation for working hard and doing a good job.

The main difficulty of employing migrant workers cited by employers was communication problems due to poor English (cited by over half of employers surveyed).

The employers in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey reported high levels of satisfaction with their experience of employing migrant workers: 71% were 'very satisfied' and 19% were 'quite satisfied'.

Around half of employers in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey indicated that they were not sure whether they would employ more or less migrant workers in the future, but of the remainder the balance was in favour of maintaining or increasing employment of migrant workers.

### 7.1 Introduction

#### 7.1.1 Scope of the chapter

This chapter focuses on migrant workers from the perspective of employers. It begins by presenting an overview of the numbers and characteristics of migrants employed. It then highlights key features of the rationale for employing migrant workers. It goes on to explore recruitment channels and contractual arrangements. The advantages and difficulties of employing migrant workers are outlined. Finally, an overall assessment of employers' experience of migrant workers is presented and implications for policy are outlined.

#### 7.1.2 The West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey

The evidence presented in this chapter draws primarily on the findings of the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey. The survey was conducted by telephone and covered only those employers employing migrant workers. Quotas were set for sector (focusing on sectors with a greater propensity to employ migrant workers and organisation size (number of employees)). For further details see the accompanying Technical Report (Owen, 2007).

The survey team experienced greater difficulty than expected based on experience of many other employer surveys on a range of general and more specific topics in recruiting organisations to take part in the study. This is an important finding in itself, since it suggests that some employers are reluctant to admit to and/or talk about their experiences in recruiting migrant workers. A comment from an interviewee from a third-party organisation backs up this suggestion:

“Some employers are nervous that they employed migrants.”

In some sectors (such as contracting and warehousing) it proved more difficult to elicit survey respondents than in others (such as hotels). The team administering the survey considered that some employers were saying that they had no migrant workers when it was felt that they did have and the word 'migrant' elicited a negative response. It is not possible to unravel the relative importance of employers genuinely having no migrant workers and resistance to employing migrant workers when they did have relevant employees.

The characteristics of the final sample of employers are shown in Table 7.1. The results reported here relate mainly to the entire sample of employers, although some references are made to variations by industry and organisation size where key differences are apparent.

**Table 7.1 Characteristics of sample of employers**

Sector	Number of organisations	Organisation size (number of employees)	Number of organisations
Agriculture	11	1-4	4
Manufacturing	29	5-9	10
Construction	10	10-24	41
Wholesale and Retail	13	25-49	78
Hotels	96	50-99	46
Transport Storage/ Communication	13	100-249	35
Health and Social Work	33	250-499	3
Other Services	5	500-999	4
Other	13	1000+	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>223</b>

**West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey**

It is important to note that the findings presented here relate to the specific sample of employers who took part in the study; (the sample of employers was not intended to be representative of all employers in the region). Relative to targets set (informed by analysis of secondary data sources on the industrial

distribution of migrant workers), the hotels and restaurants sector is significantly over-represented amongst respondents, while construction, wholesale and transport sectors suffered greatest under-representation. It is not possible to make statistical inferences from the sample to the entire population of employers in the West Midlands. Nevertheless, the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey provides important insights into employers' perspectives on, and experience of, migrant workers.

#### 7.1.2.1 Numbers of migrants employed

In general the total numbers of migrant workers employed by the employers in the sample is modest. Of the organisations included in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey:

- 49% had 1-4 migrant workers
- 15% had 5-9 migrant workers
- 20% had 10-24 migrant workers.

Small numbers of employers had employed hundreds of migrant workers in the past year.

36% of those questioned reported that the number of migrant workers they employed had increased in the last year, compared to 31% who reported an overall increase in the size of their workforce. The sectors where increase in migrant workers was most marked relative to the size of the workforce were Manufacturing; Hotels; Transport, Storage and Communication; and Health and Social Work. This mirrors some of the findings from analysis of LFS data (see 5.8).

10% of those questioned reported a decrease in the number of migrants employed in the last year. This is a similar proportion to those reporting an overall decrease in the size of their workforce.

#### 7.1.2.2 Nationalities of migrant workers

Of the nationalities of migrant workers employed by organisations surveyed, the most frequently cited were:

- Poles (58% of employers)
- Indians (18%)
- Lithuanians (14%)
- Slovaks (13%)
- Czechs (11%)
- Hungarians (11%).

There are variations in nationalities of migrant workers employed by sector, with over three-quarters of those in Agriculture, Manufacturing and Transport/Storage/Communication reporting that they employed Poles. Contrastingly, employers in most service sectors were more likely to report that they employed Indians than across the sample as a whole.

#### 7.1.2.3 Occupations in which migrant workers are employed

Of the occupations in which migrant workers are employed, the most frequently cited are:

- Elementary occupations (48% of employers)
- Process, plant and machine operatives (15%)

- Personal service occupations (14%)
- Skilled trades occupations (14%).

This accords with the findings of other research (and the findings in 5.9) that migrant workers are concentrated predominantly in less skilled jobs.

## 7.2 Rationale for employing migrant workers

### 7.2.1 Introduction

A review of the literature highlights two main reasons why employers engage migrant labour:

- to perform jobs requiring specialist skills not available locally/regionally/nationally - i.e. to address skill shortages and deficiencies
- to fill other vacancies for which there are not enough UK applicants - i.e. to address labour shortages.

Vacancies in the second category may arise for a number of reasons, including the tightness of the labour market and the unwillingness of UK workers to fill unskilled/menial and/or seasonal or temporary jobs which they perceive as unattractive.

### 7.2.2 Key reasons identified for employing migrant workers

In the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey, employers were asked to identify the key reasons why they chose to employ migrant workers; (interviewees were not prompted and could mention as many key reasons as they liked). The five key reasons (and the percentage of sample employers identifying them) were:

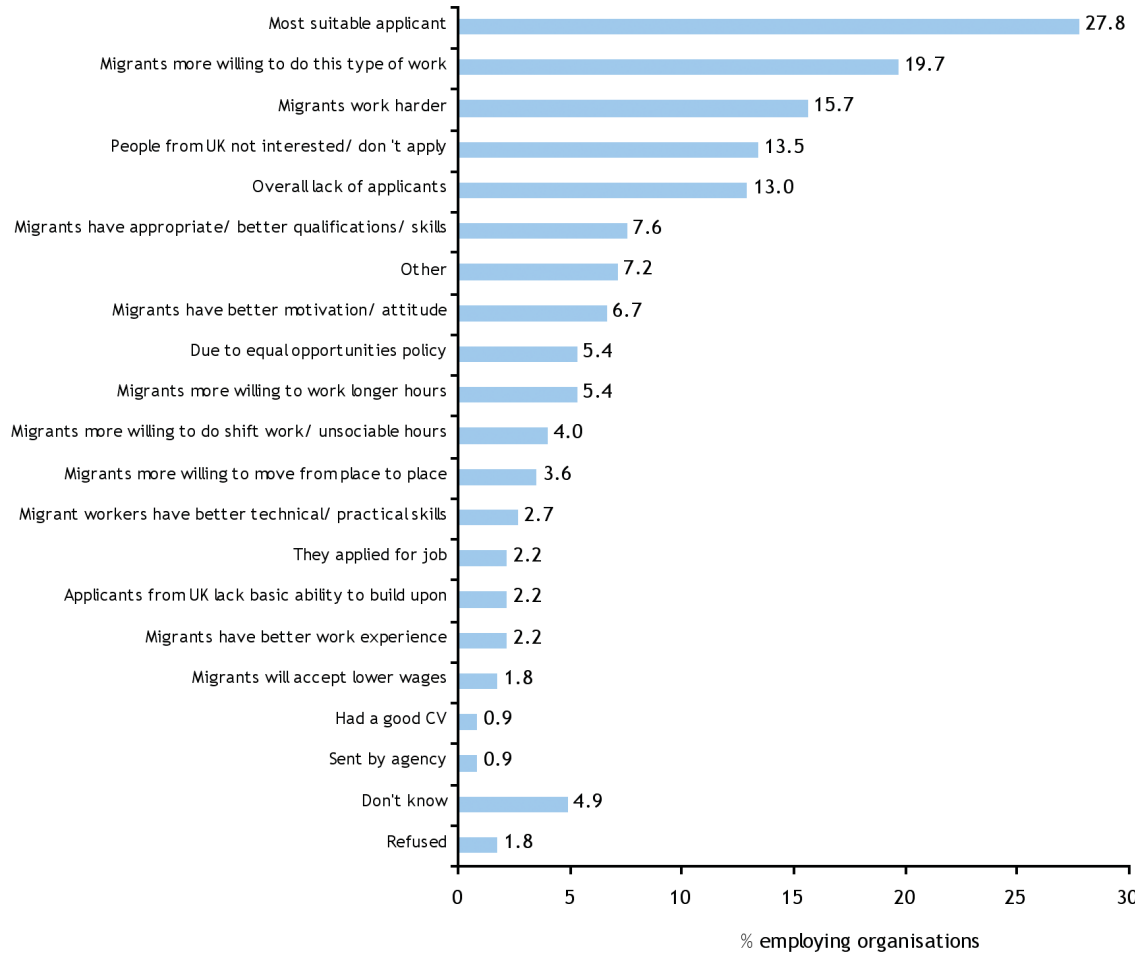
- a migrant worker was the most suitable applicant (28%)
- migrant workers are more willing to do this type of work (20%)
- migrant workers work harder (16%)
- people from the UK are not interested in doing that type of job/don't apply (14%)
- overall lack of applicants (13%).

It is clear that the main rationale for employing migrant labour is to address labour shortages, as opposed to skill shortages. This finding is endorsed by findings from interviews with third-party organisations.

However, in some instances migrant workers were meeting shortages requiring specific skills - for example, in the NHS or for bus drivers. In other cases they were meeting more general labour shortages not requiring specific skills.

Migrant workers were also valued for their attitude, productivity and skills (see also section 7.5).

Figure 7.1 Key reasons for choosing to employ migrant workers



West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey

### 7.2.3 Usage of migrant workers to meet demand

For the majority of employers in the survey, migrant workers were used to meet an ongoing steady demand throughout the year. Employers reported the following patterns of usage of migrant workers to meet demand:

- Steady demand throughout the year (64%)
- Irregular pattern of demand, with no pattern (17%)
- Seasonal or other periodic pattern of demand (14%)
- Don't know (5%).

There were some variations in this pattern of usage by sector, with at least 90% of sample employers from Transport, Storage and Communication, Wholesale and Retail and Manufacturing indicating that migrant workers were employed to meet steady demand throughout the year. Use of migrant workers to meet irregular patterns of demand, with no clear pattern was greatest in Health and Social Work (39% of employers reported use of migrant workers in this way).

Seasonal or other periodic patterns of usage of migrant workers was greatest in Agriculture (46% of sample employers). Across all employers in the sample reporting a seasonal or other periodic pattern of demand for migrant workers, demand peaked in the period from May to September and was lowest from January to March.

### 7.3 Recruitment channels

Employers were asked how they went about the process of recruiting migrant workers. Around a third of employers in the sample (32%) indicated that the process was the same as for UK nationals. 18% mentioned direct approaches to the company (a practice particularly prevalent in hotels, where 25% of respondents mentioned this recruitment channel). 14% cited agencies as a recruitment channel. Respondents from Agriculture, Construction and Manufacturing were more likely than average to use agencies. 12% mentioned Advertising. 17% of the sample highlighted some 'other' channel.

When prompted to identify channels used to recruit migrant workers, those emerging as most important were:

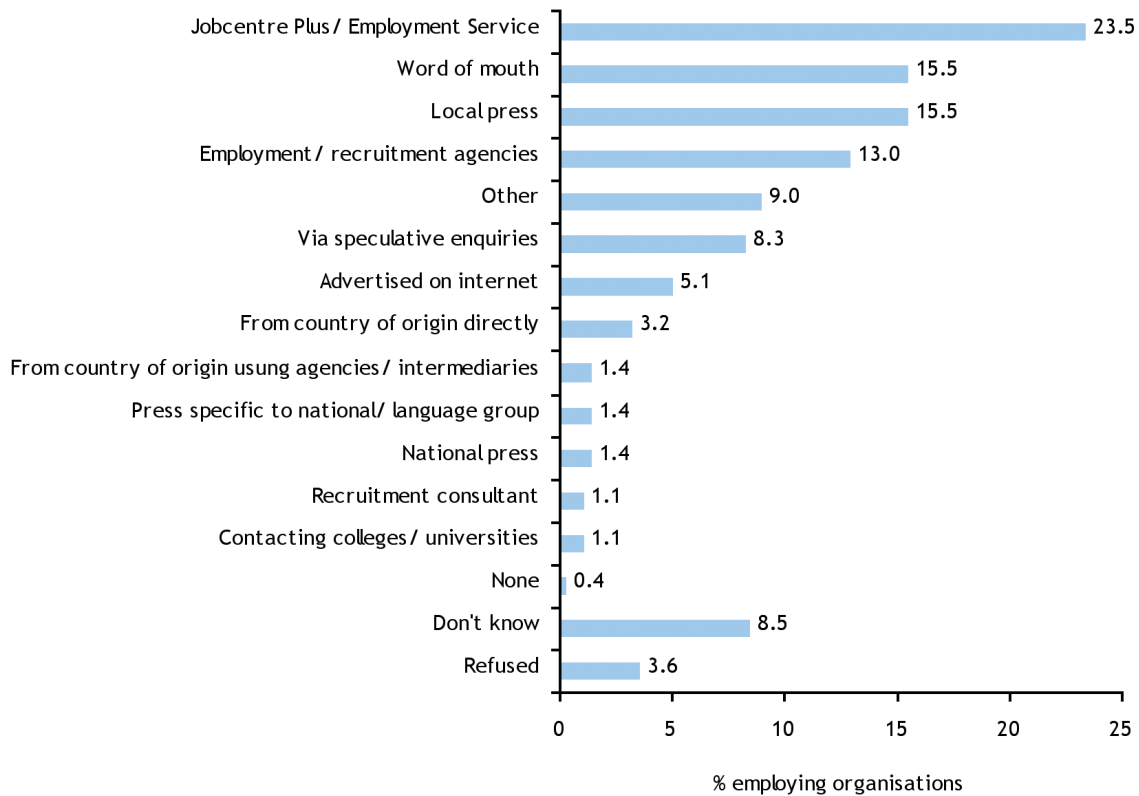
- Jobcentre Plus/Employment Service (29%)
- Word-of-mouth (19%)
- Local press (19%)
- Employment/recruitment agencies (16%).

For an overall picture of the relative importance of different recruitment channels see Figure 7.2.

Other local studies and surveys of migrant workers have pointed to the importance of recruitment/employment agencies as a recruitment channel for migrants. One of the reasons employers may use agencies is because they can provide help with documentation checks, as well as with the recruitment process more generally. Over 20 different employment/recruitment agencies were identified by survey respondents in this study.

Word of mouth emerges as one of the most important recruitment channels for employers and is one that is emphasised by the migrant workers themselves. For instance, highly qualified Pakistani migrants participating in one of the focus groups highlighted the importance of 'knowing someone' in order to get a job. Word of mouth may become increasingly important after an initial phase of recruitment - hiring migrant workers can develop a dynamic of its own, with migrant workers bringing friends and family members to join the same business.

Figure 7.2 Ways in which organisation recruits migrant workers



West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey

## 7.4 Contractual arrangements

The majority of organisations surveyed employed migrant workers primarily on direct, permanent contracts. Employers may use a variety of contracts for migrant workers within the same occupational group. The occupational groups least likely to be employed on such contracts were:

- Process, plant and machine operatives with:
  - 70% of organisations using Direct, permanent contracts
  - 15% using Direct temporary, casual contracts
  - 12% employing workers through an Agency.
- Elementary occupations, with
  - 79% of organisations using Direct, permanent contracts
  - 11% using Direct temporary, casual contracts
  - 8% employing workers through an Agency
  - 8% using Direct temporary, fixed-term contracts.

## 7.5 Advantages of employing migrant workers

Impacts of employment of migrant workers on business operation and productivity are considered in Chapter 8. In this section the focus is on identifying key advantages of employing migrant workers identified by employers. A number of other research studies (e.g. Dench et al., 2006; Anderson et al., 2006) have highlighted that employers perceive migrant workers (especially eastern European migrants) to have a good attitude to work (i.e. they are hardworking, reliable, punctual and flexible). Similarly, recruitment surveys undertaken by the Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development have shown that migrant labour is popular with employers, with some employers specifically targeting east European migrants (CIPD, 2006). Likewise, in West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey conducted for this research, a willingness to work and to work hard, are amongst the key factors cited for employing migrants (see section 7.2.2). Several of the migrants interviewed recognised that they had a positive 'work ethic' which was attractive to employers (and some expressed surprise that this was less apparent amongst many UK nationals in their workplaces), as illustrated by the following comment:

"There is 70% of Polish people in warehouses, they want Polish people because they know [we work hard]."

These same advantages were endorsed when the employers surveyed were given an opportunity to reflect on positive features of employing migrant workers. The advantages cited most frequently by those employers providing comments were:

- Hard working/good work ethic (56%)
- Reliable/good time keeping (20%)
- More meticulous/do the job properly (14%)
- Low number of sick days/time off (9%)
- Give management less problems (9%).

This endorses the point made in section 7.2.2 that migrants tend to be prized for their 'attitude' first and foremost, (although some bring skills in short supply also).

The fact that migrant workers (especially from A8 countries) have a reputation for having a strong work ethic and being hard working was a recurring theme in the interviews with third-party organisations. One interviewee made the following observation when referring to a large manufacturing company where migrant workers had been employed:

"It has been observed by the management that they (migrants) certainly work harder than some of their British fellow workers."

One interviewee from a recruitment agency highlighted a case when an employer had been reluctant to take on Polish workers in the first instance, but now asked to be sent "all the Poles you have" (i.e. expressing a preference for Polish workers - often in preference to other workers that may be available). One interviewee from a third-party organisation expressed concerns about the emergence of such preferences for particular sub-groups of workers (see also section 10.3):

"If it transcends filling labour gaps to becoming a preferred supplier of labour there are going to be bigger tensions."

The fact that migrants worked very hard, were prepared to work long and unsocial hours and unpopular shifts were cited by many interviewees, as exemplified by one of the training providers interviewed:



“The local economy welcomes those willing to do a menial job; especially those involving night shifts.”

This was summed up by an interviewee from a trade union:

“What we do know is that some employers are preferring some of the east European labour because of their attitudes, and they evidently work very, very hard, and so all those sorts of skills that they’ve come with are seen as popular.”

Willingness to work long hours (for economic reasons) was also highlighted in discussion by some of the migrants themselves:

“You find for us the better present they give us is more hours, that’s the best present for us, you know, if some guy from England can you stay, a manager says to him can you stay 5 hours longer, no, crazy, you know, but for us we say no problem, it’s great. ... We work like a horse you know.” (Polish man, 20s)

One interviewee from a third-party organisation wondered whether attitudes towards working long hours may change for those migrant workers who become more established in the UK and as their skills improve:

“I wonder if they stayed here forever whether they’d be prepared to work 12 hour days, or whether it’s only for a short period of time.”

The following two comments by Polish men illustrate that there may be a change with the passage of time (at least for some migrant workers):

- “I work more hours and I don’t have life actually ... but when I have the language I can get a better job, I can start at 8 and finish at 4 and then I can spend more ... with my wife and everything. Now it’s job, job, job.”
- “I want to earn £10.00 - £12.00 per hour; work a normal 38 hours would be good.”

The advantages of employing migrant workers were summed up by an interviewee from an employment agency as:

“They’re doing jobs that people born here won’t do, and addressing skill shortages.”

Likewise another interviewee from a third-party organisation noted:

“We have virtually full employment ... but the reality is we are short of people to do some of the lowest graded, lowest skilled jobs in this country and I think there’s a tacit acceptance that people will come to do those jobs.”

Some of the migrants recognised that they were doing jobs that ‘locals’ were loathe to do and expressed general concerns about ‘exploitation’ in circumstances where employers could pay low wages and dampen down wage levels because of the presence of migrant workers. Some interviewees felt themselves to be exploited to a degree. One reported that a particular incident on a bus, when a drunken youth had goaded him for being a ‘slave’, had caused him to reassess his position. However, this appears to be an isolated incident amongst focus group interviewees, since most reported positive experiences of interaction with UK nationals.

## 7.6 Difficulties of employing migrant workers

A review of the literature indicates that one possible disadvantage of employing migrant workers is the existence of a language barrier. Language is likely to be a particular issue in customer-facing roles or when technical jargon is used. In some circumstances English language is likely to be accorded a high priority, but in other instances employers may not perceive comprehensive language skills as very important: basic English language skills may be sufficient.

A second difficulty highlighted in previous studies is that migrants may be more complicated to recruit/employ than UK workers. The difficulty of obtaining references has been cited also; (some migrant workers themselves highlighted the difficulty in finding employment without UK references - see section 5.9).

The most frequently cited difficulties of employing migrant workers emerging from the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey were:

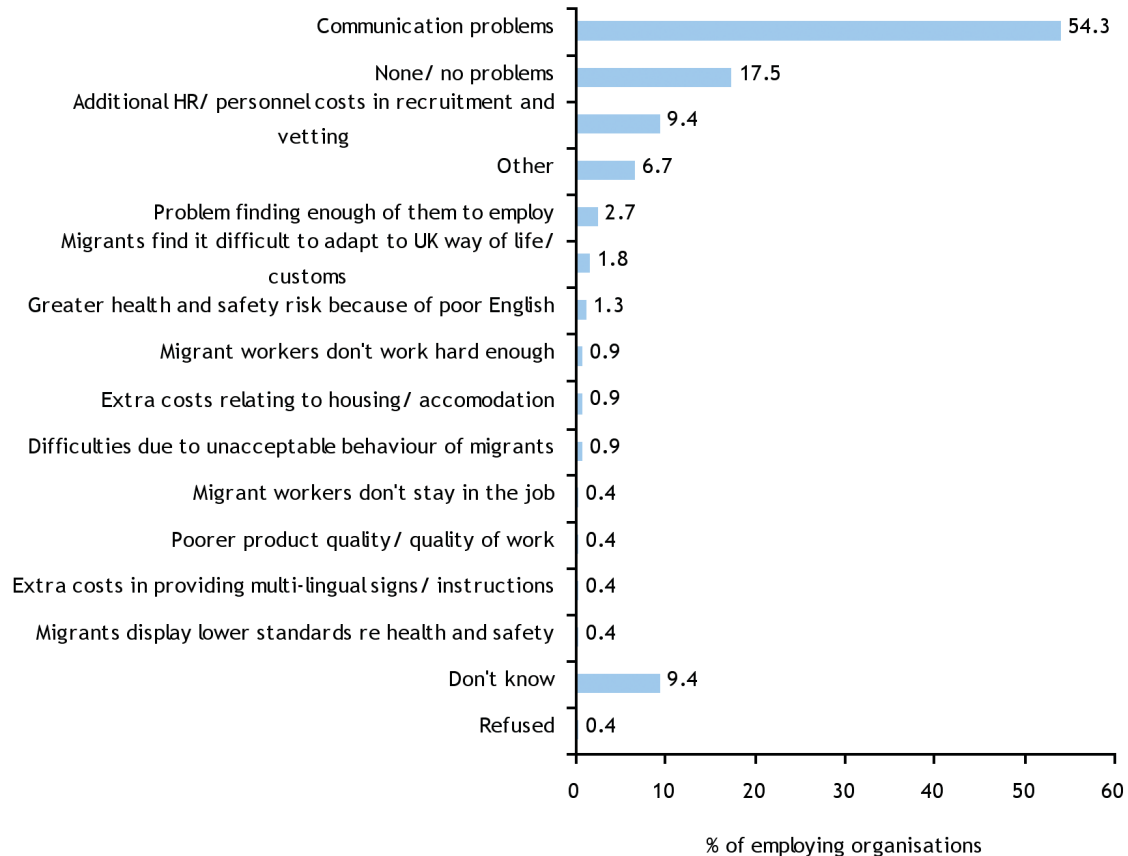
- Communication problems due to poor English (54%)
- Additional costs and time for HR/personnel in recruiting and vetting migrant worker applicants (9%).

Clearly, English language is the key difficulty identified. This is considered in greater detail in Chapter 9, which looks at skills and training issues. Some of the interviewees from third-party organisations also highlighted issues concerned with communication. One stated:

"I find it quite incredible that they [i.e. employers] go to Poland to recruit bus drivers, who then come here with very limited language; their driving skills are probably fine, but the language ..."

As shown in Figure 7.3, none of the other possible main difficulties employers were questioned about were identified in more than a few cases. Indeed, 18% of employers surveyed volunteered the fact that they had not had any difficulties, and 3% indicated that they had a 'problem finding enough of them to employ'.

Figure 7.3 Main difficulties with employing migrant workers



West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey

## 7.7 Assessment and implications

### 7.7.1 Satisfaction with the experience of employing migrant workers

Taking everything into account, the overall picture emerging from the sample of employers in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey is one of high levels of satisfaction with their experience of employing migrant workers. 71% of employers indicated that they were 'very satisfied' with their experience of migrant workers and a further 19% were 'quite satisfied', giving an overall satisfaction level of around 90%. Only 4% of employers in the sample were dissatisfied. Of the remainder, the majority felt that experience of employing migrant workers varied, depending on the worker in question.

There was little variation in satisfaction levels by size of organisation. In sectoral terms satisfaction levels were lowest in Construction (but even here the level of satisfaction was high at 70%). The next lowest satisfaction level was in Health and Social Work (with a satisfaction level of 85%). In all other sectors at least 90% of employers were satisfied with their experience.

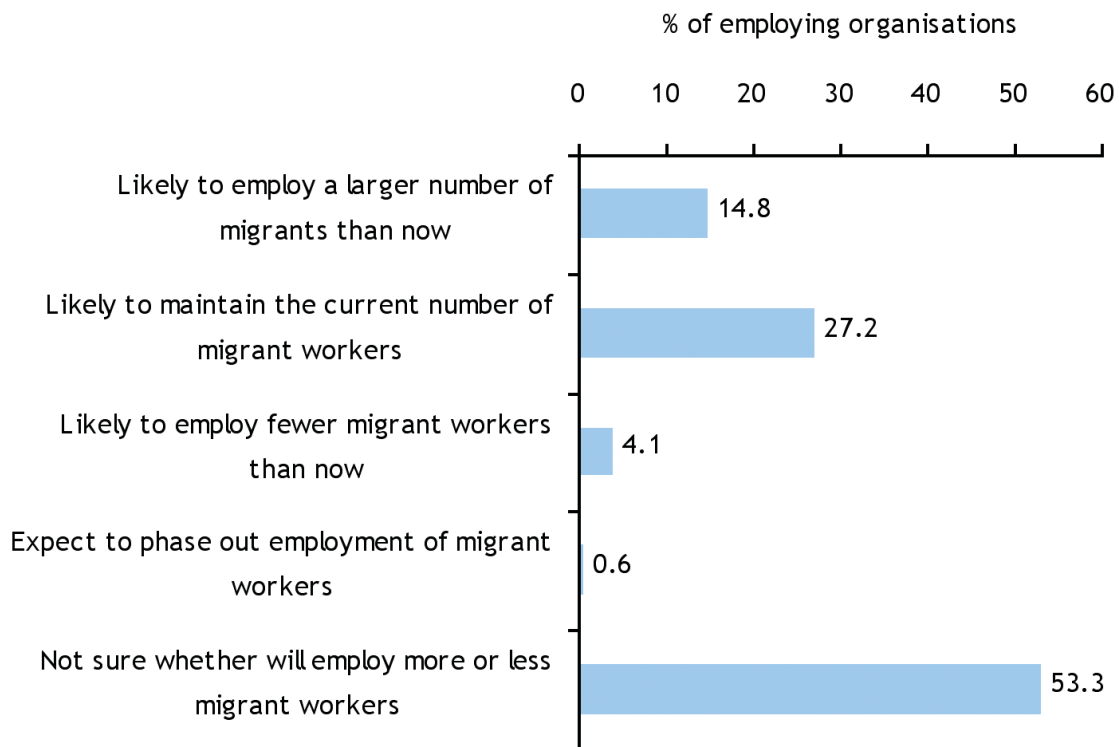
## 7.7.2 Future prospects

On the basis of the results of the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey, there is considerable uncertainty about future prospects for employing migrant workers. Excluding the 42 respondents who did not know and the 12 who refused to answer the question, 53% of respondents were not sure whether they would employ more of less migrant workers in the future. Of the remainder:

- 27% expected levels of employment of migrant workers to be maintained
- 15% expected to employ a larger number of migrant workers than currently.

Figure 7.4 shows that amongst those who felt able to answer with a greater degree of certainty, the balance is clearly in favour of levels of employment of migrant workers being maintained (27% of respondents) or increasing (15% of respondents). Only 4% of respondents considered that they were likely to employ fewer migrants than currently, and only one employer expected to phase out employment of migrant workers completely.

Figure 7.4 Numbers of migrant workers the organisation expects to employ in the future



West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey

However, it could be the case that employers were reluctant to reveal their intentions regarding future plans. What is clear is that the experience of employing migrant workers amongst this sample of employers was overwhelmingly positive.

## 8. Labour market and economic impacts of migrant workers

### Key points:

In theory, migrant workers could have a negative labour market impacts by reducing employment rates for other sub-groups of workers (especially those with poor skills), contributing to a rise in unemployment rates, reducing the number of vacancies and maintaining wages at lower levels than would otherwise be the case.

Migrant workers could have a positive economic impact via a contribution to addressing labour shortages, enhancing productivity, increasing output, maintaining or raising levels of employment and creating additional demand in the economy.

Previous studies at UK level suggest that immigration is beneficial to the economy overall and that there is no generalised negative impact, although there is anecdotal evidence that there may be some localised negative effects in particular local areas and labour market segments.

Analysis of LFS data on 'migrant dense' (MD) industries and occupations (i.e. where migrant workers have a greater propensity to be employed than UK nationals) provides evidence of 'displacement' of UK nationals by migrant workers (i.e. the employment trend of migrant workers is positive, while that of UK nationals is negative).

Analyses of data on unemployment and on transitions of UK nationals out of MD areas of work suggest that UK nationals have not suffered greater unemployment as a consequence of greater employment of migrant workers. This indicates that, in aggregate, displacement has been voluntary (i.e. it is a result of positive choice, not a result of redundancy), rather than involuntary; (although some individuals may have suffered involuntary displacement [e.g. through redundancy]).

There is no statistically significant evidence that migrant workers have contributed to a rise in unemployment at a regional level. However, in some local areas the relative increase in unemployment is significantly above the region as a whole. This indicates that local impacts may be different from that found at a regional level.

Analyses of vacancy data at regional level suggest that migrants are responding to labour shortages in particular sectors and occupations. There is no statistically significant evidence to suggest that an increase in migrant workers is associated with a reduction in recorded vacancies at local area level.

There is no evidence from analyses of LFS data that an increase in migrant workers is associated with lower rates of earnings growth.

Migrant workers in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey are disproportionately concentrated in low wage jobs. Although a few interviewees from third-party organisations expressed concerns about exploitation of migrant workers, such concerns were not widespread and evidence was largely anecdotal.

Employers in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey generally cited migrant workers as having a positive impact or as having little change on their business. The main ways that migrant workers had a positive impact on business were through working harder/working longer hours and increased work standard/quality and performance.

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Statistical estimates suggest that migrant workers make a positive contribution to the regional economy, accounting for between 4% and 5% of regional output.

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## 8.1 Introduction

The scale of recent migration flows to the UK and the West Midlands - especially in some local areas - are such that they represent a 'shock' to the labour market. The labour market and economic impacts of migrant workers are a key issue for policy and are prominent in political and popular debate.

Theoretically, from the perspective of UK indigenous workers, the recruitment by employers of migrant workers could have a number of negative labour market effects, including:

- A reduction in employment rates amongst other groups in the labour market as employers use migrants to replace UK workers (i.e. a displacement effect)
- An increase in the unemployment rate
- Lower probability of some groups (especially those with poor skills/in low wage segments of the labour market) finding jobs (in the face of increased competition from migrants)
- Reductions in vacancies notified to Jobcentre Plus - as employers use alternative recruitment channels to employ migrants and as vacancies are filled by migrant workers
- Migrant workers may be used by employers to maintain wages at a lower level than would otherwise be the case.

Riley and Weale (2006) suggest that with migrants filling jobs at the low skill end of the labour market (as outlined in Chapters 5-7) rather than matching skills levels of indigenous workers, at a UK level inflation will be less affected and unemployment will be more affected by low skill migration than by migration where the skill level matches the UK population.

Conversely, migrant workers could have a positive economic impact by:

- Addressing labour shortages
- Enhancing productivity
- Maintaining/raising levels of employment
- Creating additional demand for goods and services
- Increasing output.

## 8.2 Overview of previous studies

### 8.2.1 National scale

In general, previous research suggests that the overall impact of immigration on the UK economy and labour market is limited but positive, since migrant workers contribute more in taxes than they receive in

services, and migration probably leads to slightly higher levels of employment and wages for UK indigenous workers (TUC, 2007). Even though previous analysis of secondary data sources suggests that there is no generalised negative impact across the whole economy from immigration, there is anecdotal evidence that jobs may be lost and wages depressed in certain specific sectors/occupations in particular local areas. Hence, some evidence from the primary research conducted for this study may contradict results from secondary data analysis.

To date, empirical analysis of Labour Force Survey for the UK (Dustmann et al., 2005) has found no evidence that immigration has negative effects on employment, participation, unemployment or wages at aggregate level. Analyses by the Department for Work and Pensions have found no discernible statistical evidence to suggest that migration from A8 countries has been a contributor to the rise in claimant unemployment in the UK (Portes and French, 2005; Gilpin et al., 2006). The evidence seems to suggest that migrants are tending to go where labour demand is buoyant and are taking up the slack in the labour market and growing the economy.

On balance, studies suggest that migration is beneficial to the economy in addressing labour shortages and skills deficiencies and having a positive effect on output, and is also advantageous in fiscal terms (Home Office, 2007). It helps meet employment and skills demand from private sector businesses and also contributes to public sector service delivery.

As suggested in 8.1, UK nationals with poor skills who are already vulnerable to labour market restructuring and who are most dependent on job opportunities in the immediate local area are most at risk of suffering negative labour market impacts associated with a continuing influx of migrant workers and any preference of employers for recruitment of migrant workers in preference to British workers in general and the 'core jobless' (CIPD, 2005) in particular:

"The process of redeployment inevitably brings transitional costs, which may fall particularly heavily on those least equipped to cope with change - for example those with non-transferable skills. But the outcome for the economy as a whole is clearly positive; and there is a great deal governments can do to minimise transitional disruption to individual's lives" (HM Treasury, 2004; quoted in TUC, 2007, 12).

### 8.2.2 Local scale

Most previous studies focus on economic and labour market impacts of migrant workers at national level. However, local areas vary in their exposure to and experience of migrant workers. Since migration is inherently spatial, it is at the local level that its effects are most likely to be felt. It is possible that the impact of migration on the labour market may vary both over time and across space. Impacts are very hard to identify with any degree of certainty, and there are currently apparently contradictory trends in the labour market, with both unemployment and employment rising. Specific local circumstances may mean that negative impacts may be felt by some people in some local areas but not in others, not at the national or regional scale in aggregate (see the desk-based study [Green et al., 2007b] for further details).

## 8.3 Data and methods for assessing labour market impacts

In the remainder of this chapter a range of information from secondary data sources is utilised to provide insights into the labour market and economic impacts of migrant workers. The secondary data analyses of labour market impacts are based on analyses of a merged LFS data set covering the period from spring 2001 to summer 2006. As outlined in Chapter 5, 'migrants' are defined by nationality (i.e. non-UK nationals) and year of entry to the UK. Some of these analyses (also described more fully in the desk-based study [Green et al., 2007b]) are more technical than those presented elsewhere in this report.

Anecdotal/qualitative information on labour market impacts of migrant workers is also available from the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey, the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey, migrant focus groups and the interviews conducted with third-party organisations.

It should be noted that it is entirely possible and plausible for different results to emerge from analyses using different information sources.

## 8.4 Employment impacts of migrant workers

The aim of this section is to examine the extent to which employment of migrants in certain sectors and occupations has been associated with lower probability of employment for UK nationals. It is based largely on analyses of LFS data (for more comprehensive coverage of employment impacts and greater technical detail see Green et al. [2007b]), supplemented by findings from primary research.

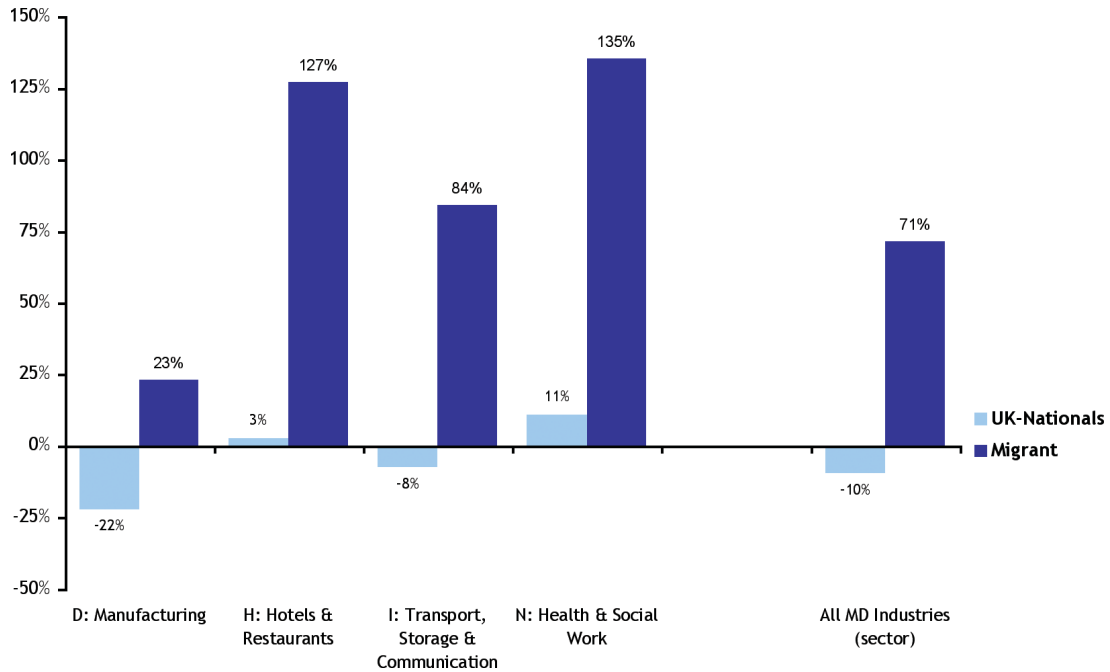
The LFS provides estimates of employment by industry and occupation for migrants and UK nationals. This is important since a useful test of the employment impact of inward economic migration is whether or not there is evidence 'crowding out' (i.e. decreasing employment) of UK nationals in 'migrant dense' areas of work (i.e. industries and occupations where migrant workers are more strongly represented than average). This is done here by measuring the average rate of change of employment (using an average compounded rate of employment growth) by industry and occupation over the period 2001-2006 from the LFS.

Figures 8.1 and 8.2 show, respectively, patterns of employment growth for migrant-dense (MD) industry sectors (the broadest categorisation of industries) and industry division (the more detailed categorisation of industries); (MD industries are those where migrant workers are more strongly represented than average). The charts show expansion of migrant employment across almost all of the MD industry sectors and divisions. Overall, migrant employment has expanded by 71% in MD industries over this period. In contrast, employment of UK nationals in these industries has fallen significantly; by 10% for all MD industry sectors and by 5% for all MD industry divisions. This provides strong evidence of displacement of UK workers as they are replaced by migrant workers, with higher rates of employment decline for UK nationals in many MD industries. For the purposes of this analysis employment displacement of UK national workers is defined as a situation where the employment trend of migrant workers is positive and the employment trend of UK national workers is negative. In particular, the fastest decline in employment of UK national workers is in the Manufacturing sector, where employment of UK nationals decreased by 22% over the period, despite rising numbers of migrants in employment. The industry-specific net trends presented here suggest that in manufacturing, migrants are filling vacancies at the expense of UK nationals, while in Hotels and Restaurants and Health and Social Work they are filling vacancies at the same time as employment for UK nationals is expanding (i.e. migrants appear to be addressing labour shortages).

The same analysis is repeated for migrant-dense occupations (i.e. occupations where migrant workers are more strongly represented than average), defined by the 2 digit SOC in Figure 8.3. The results show significant and positive growth in migrant employment across the most MD occupations. Overall the employment of migrants has expanded over the period by 91% in 2-digit MD occupations, compared with a decline in employment of UK nationals by 4%.

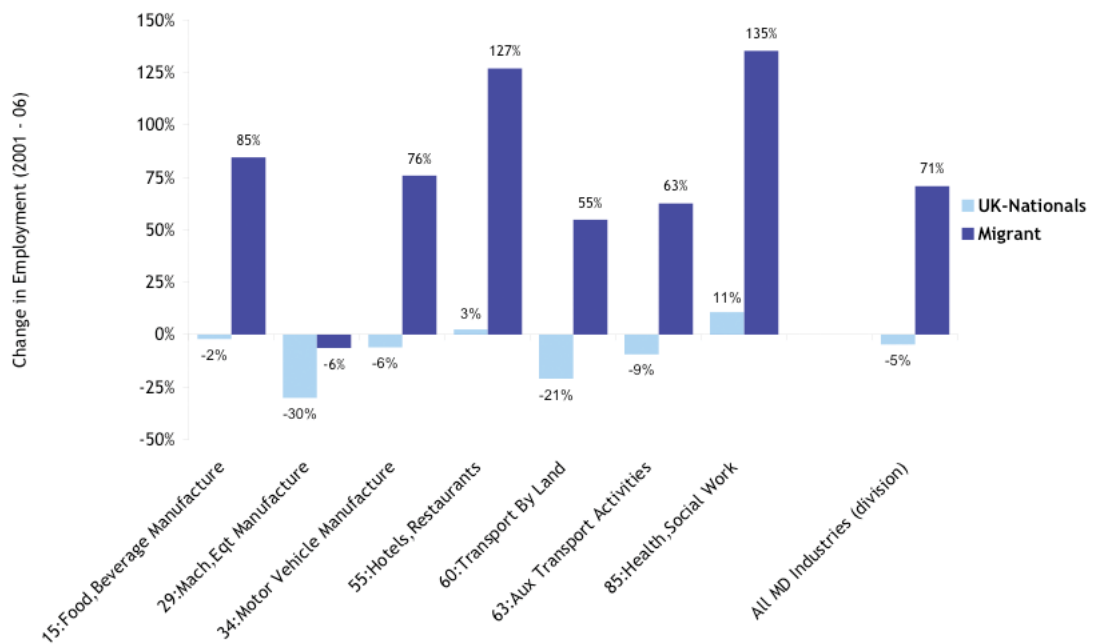


Figure 8.1 Average rate of change in employment by migrant dense industry sector



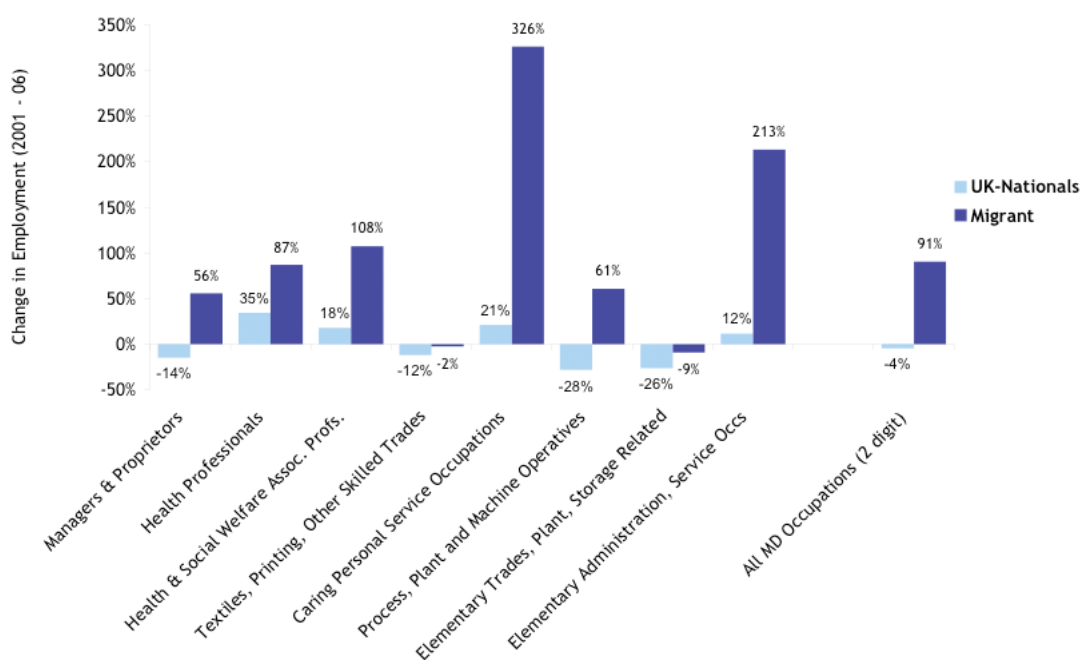
LFS. (1) The analysis is restricted to the West Midlands region based on place of work; (2) The analysis is restricted to industries where the underlying LFS sample size is greater than 25.

Figure 8.2 Average rate of change in employment by migrant dense industry division



LFS. (1) The analysis is restricted to the West Midlands region based on place of work; (2) The analysis is restricted to industries where the underlying LFS sample size is greater than 25.

Figure 8.3 Average rate of change in employment by migrant dense 2-digit occupations



LFS. (1) The analysis is restricted to the West Midlands region based on place of work; (2) The analysis is restricted to occupations where the underlying LFS sample size is greater than 25.

Whilst there is evidence of expanding employment of UK nationals over the period in health and related occupations the growth of migrant employment in these occupations is much faster. Outside professional and associate professional occupations there is evidence for decreasing employment of UK nationals contrasted against the expansion of migrant employment. This is particularly the case in process, plant and machine and elementary occupations (SOC major groups 8 and 9).

On the basis of these analyses there is evidence for displacement of UK nationals by migrants in migrant-dense industries and occupations. However an important question is, where displacement of UK nationals is apparent, has this been a voluntarily or involuntarily process? 'Voluntarily' here implies that the process has been an embryonic one by which UK nationals are choosing other areas of employment and are being replaced by migrant workers, perhaps facilitated by natural job turnover. It may be the case, for example, that indigenous workers are shunning particular types of work as a consequence of unattractive working conditions and the ongoing up-skilling of the workforce as the average level of educational attainment increases.

Evidence from the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey and from interviews with third-party organisations indicates that there are certain jobs that many UK nationals are not prepared to do, so resulting in a shortage of applicants for vacancies. In this case migrant workers appear to be playing an important labour market function of filling 'gaps' in labour demand in sectors and occupations where employers would find it difficult to fill jobs otherwise - as highlighted by the findings of the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey (see Chapter 7) and in sentiments expressed in some interviews with representatives of third-party organisations - for example:

- “I’d say they were doing jobs that local people could have done. Whether the local people would have done may be debateable.”
- “They do the jobs that we don’t want to do, so they’re not actually stealing jobs from anybody”
- “By and large they come over here and they fill a skills gap that the born and bred local person wouldn’t want to go and do.”

Some migrant workers themselves expressed an awareness of how some UK workers might fear being displaced by migrant workers:

“... immigrants from Slovakia are now coming like every day it's like thousands and thousands, Bulgarians and every sort of thing from countries, if they came to your country and they're taking your jobs, what would you think of about it, you wouldn't be happy. For example if you can find the same job and somebody from another country takes this job and what do you tell them, I am from here, I want to work here, I want this job I'm from Slovakia, why somebody from a foreign country taking my job. There's a lot of opportunities in England but you need to take it in the other way as well.” (Slovakian woman, 20s)

However, some other migrant workers who participated in focus groups questioned whether English people were prepared to work in the types of jobs that many migrant workers filled - as illustrated by a response made to the comment above:

“Yes I do understand that, but what we all say is if we weren't here the English people are not going to work.” (Slovakian woman).

In the interviews with third-party organisations there was widespread recognition of the role of labour migrants in addressing labour shortages (as indicated in Chapter 7). However, some concerns were raised about competition between migrants and indigenous workers, especially in low skilled occupations, suggesting that some displacement may be ‘involuntary’ (i.e. UK nationals may wish to stay in particular jobs, but are being replaced by migrant workers).

Others highlighted the fact that more recent migrant workers were replacing previous migrants (see also section 10.3) - as one representative of a third-party organisation highlighted:

“There is a clear substitution effect going on with A8 workers taking over jobs which had been held by asylum seekers with the right to work or refugees.”

So, the evidence from analysis of secondary data sources points in the direction of voluntary displacement, but information from interviews conducted for this research suggests that while some displacement may be voluntary, in other cases it may be involuntary.

## 8.5 Impact on unemployment

### 8.5.1 Introduction

As noted above, it is possible that employment of migrant workers may have resulted in an involuntary displacement/‘crowding out’ of the job market for UK workers, who consequently find it more difficult to obtain employment, particularly within the same sector or occupation in which they worked previously. Although it is difficult to get a precise handle on whether the process of displacement is involuntary, we would expect evidence of involuntary displacement of UK nationals in the labour market to manifest itself via increased unemployment (and worklessness) amongst UK nationals. The analyses presented in this

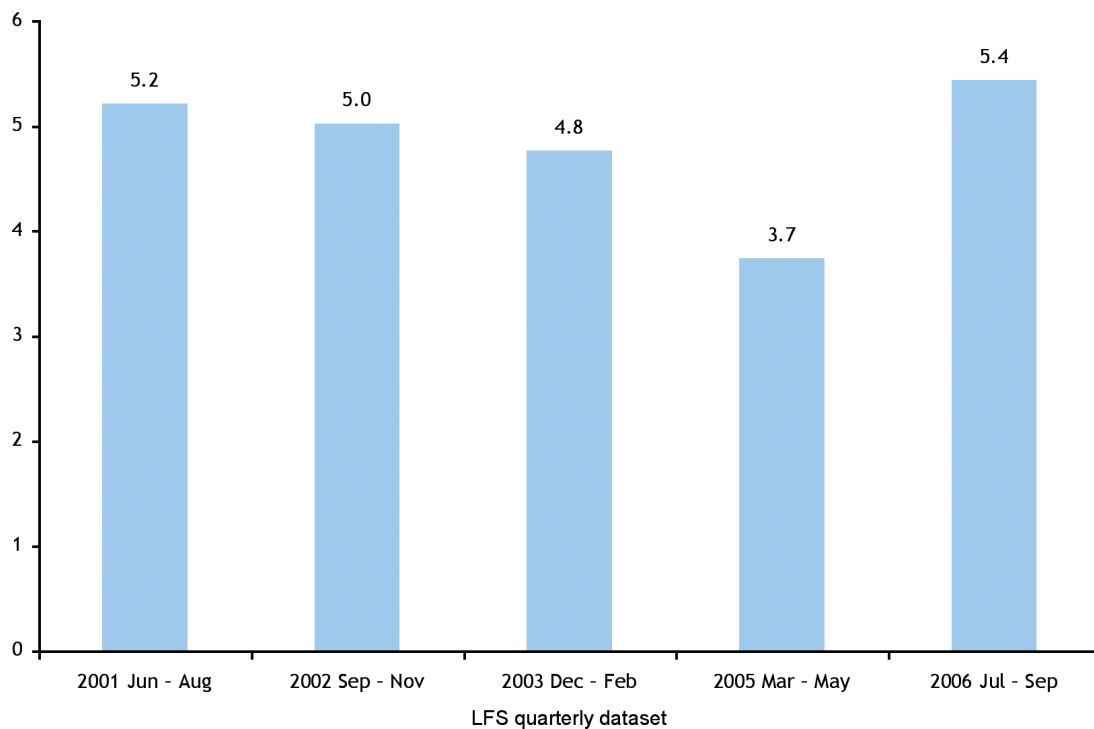
<sup>13</sup> Some analysis of transitions from employment to unemployment and inactivity using longitudinal LFS data is reported in 8.5.4.

section focus specifically on impacts on unemployment (see the desk-based study for further details [Green et al., 2007b]), but there is scope for further research to examine impacts on worklessness more generally (i.e. taking account of economic inactivity as well as unemployment).<sup>13</sup>

### 8.5.2 Unemployment rate comparisons for UK nationals and migrants using the LFS

An analysis of unemployment rates (adopting the ILO definition) using LFS data shows that prior to 2005 the regional unemployment rate was decreasing. However, between 2005 and 2006 the rate shows a marked increase (see Figure 8.4), which corresponds with the period of largest influx of migrants. However, this increase may be due to many possible causes and does not imply cause and effect (i.e. it may not be indicative of involuntary displacement of UK nationals).

Figure 8.4 Rates of unemployment amongst UK nationals in the West Midlands region

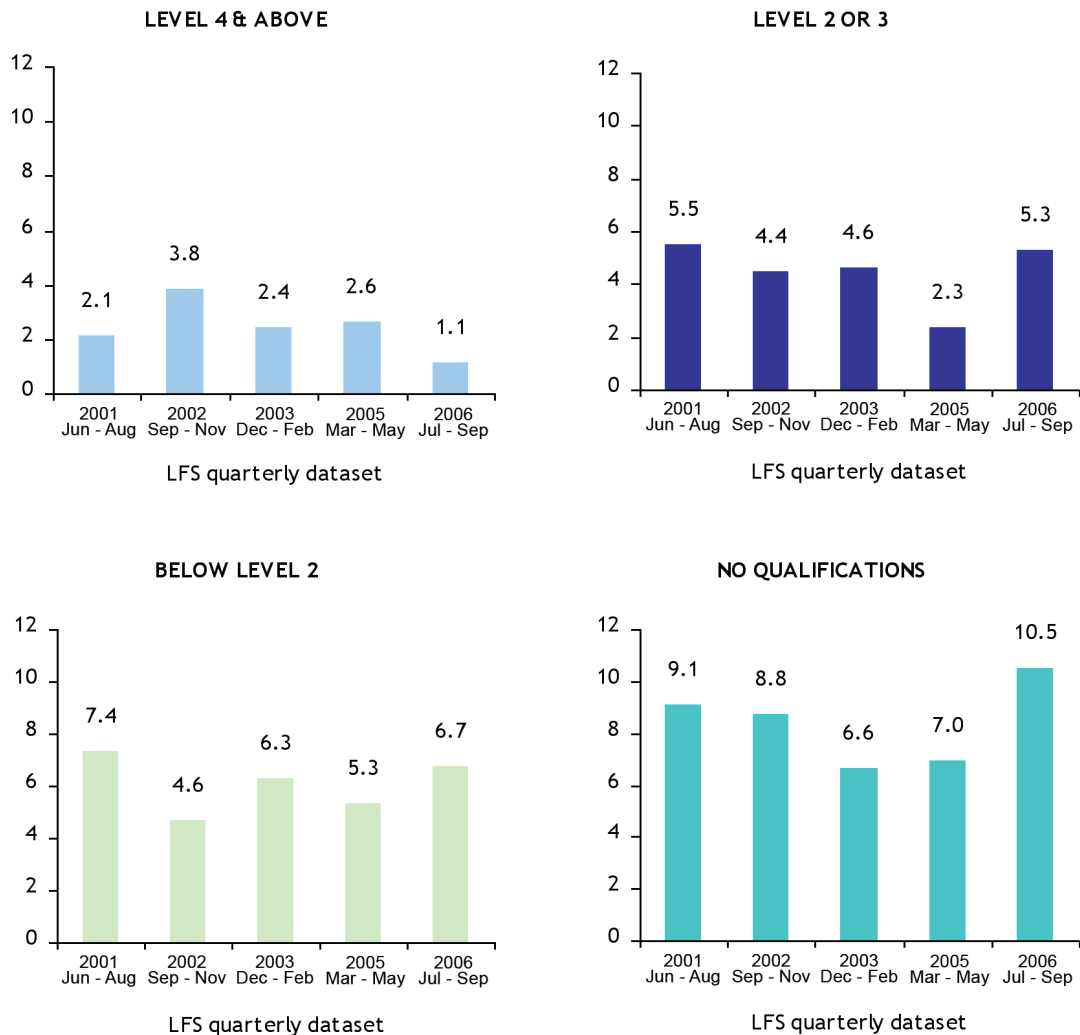


LFS; analysis based on UK-nationals resident in the West Midlands region.

Since it has been shown that migrant workers are increasingly being employed in lower skilled areas of work, it is interesting to examine whether there has been any differential impact, in terms of unemployment, for lower skilled UK-nationals vis-à-vis their more highly skilled counterparts.

Figure 8.5 also shows rates of unemployment amongst UK nationals in the West Midlands region by level of highest qualification. The results lend evidence to the fact that unemployment has increased most in the most recent months amongst those who are least well qualified (and in particular amongst those with no qualifications), while at the other end of the spectrum the trend in unemployment amongst those with highest qualifications (at level 4 or above) is still decreasing.

Figure 8.5 Rates of unemployment amongst UK nationals in the West Midlands region by highest qualification



LFS; analysis based on UK-nationals resident in the West Midlands region.

### 8.5.3 Previous industry and previous occupation of the unemployed

Although the trends in unemployment highlighted above are indicative of changing conditions in the labour market, it is necessary to link evidence regarding unemployment of UK nationals in a more concrete manner to transitions out of migrant-dense industries or occupations. An analysis of information from the LFS on 'industry of last job' at 3 digit SIC level shows that 36.3% of the UK nationals unemployed in the West Midlands last worked in one of the industries defined in the previous section as 'migrant-dense' (MD). This compares with a total of 33.2% of workers being employed in migrant-dense industries. If all things were equal we would expect that these two percentages would be the same. The figures indicate that proportionally more people than expected enter unemployment from MD industries. Most MD industries are responsible for disproportionately large numbers entering unemployment.

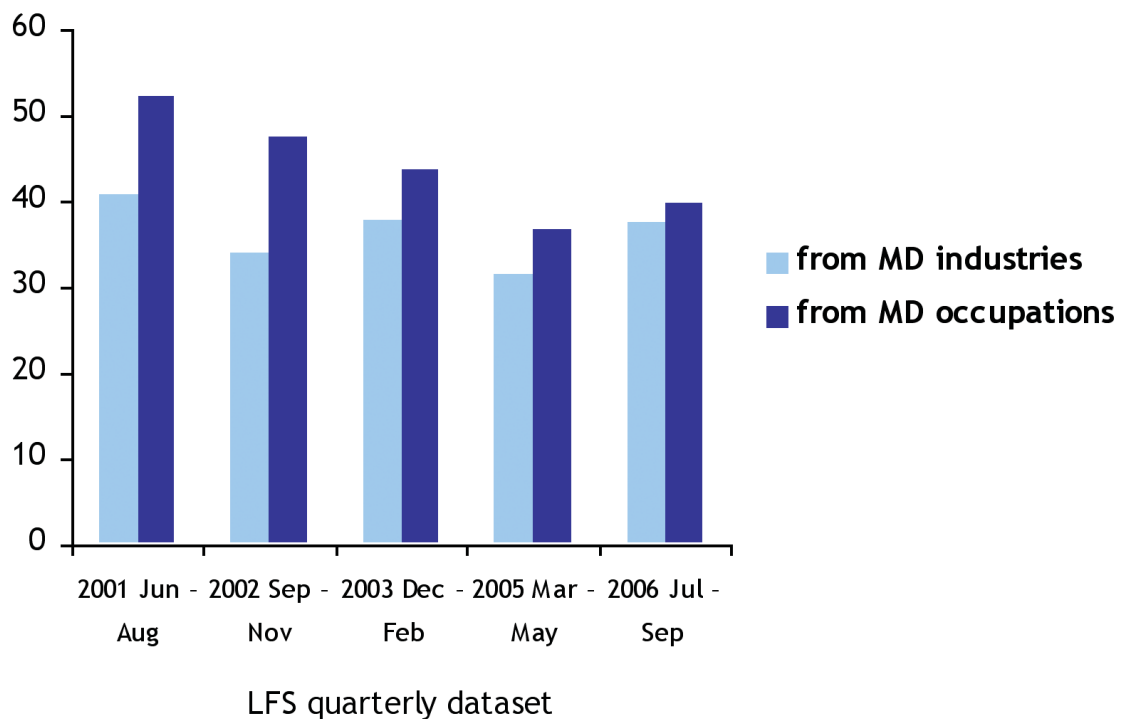
A similar analysis for MD occupations reveals that 44.1% of the UK nationals unemployed in the West Midlands last worked in one of the MD occupations. This compares with only 30.2% of workers being employed in these occupations. Disaggregation by occupation reveals that it almost exclusively the lower skilled process and elementary occupations (as opposed to higher skilled MD occupations) where higher than expected propensities of unemployment amongst UK nationals are recorded.

At face value these figures appear to indicate evidence of a disproportionately large number of unemployed coming from migrant-dense areas of work, particularly at the lower-skilled end. However, these results might have arisen as the result of higher rates of employment turnover in these sectors and occupations (i.e. greater churning through unemployment) as opposed to a systematic effect arising from migrant density per se. It is therefore most informative to examine trends over time rather than differences in cross section (i.e. a snapshot at one point in time).

Figure 8.6 plots the percentage of unemployed UK nationals (resident in the West Midlands region) whose last employment was in a MD industry or MD occupation, respectively. Comparing trends over the period 2001-2006 there is a notable downward trend in unemployed workers coming from MD occupations; (the data for MD industries is not trended).

This evidence is contrary to the hypothesis of migrant workers involuntarily displacing UK nationals and suggests that UK nationals have not suffered greater unemployment as a consequence of increased migrant employment in these sectors and occupations in recent years. This therefore supports the view of voluntary rather than involuntary displacement. Nevertheless, it is still possible that some workers suffer involuntary displacement.

Figure 8.6 Trends in the origin of unemployed workers



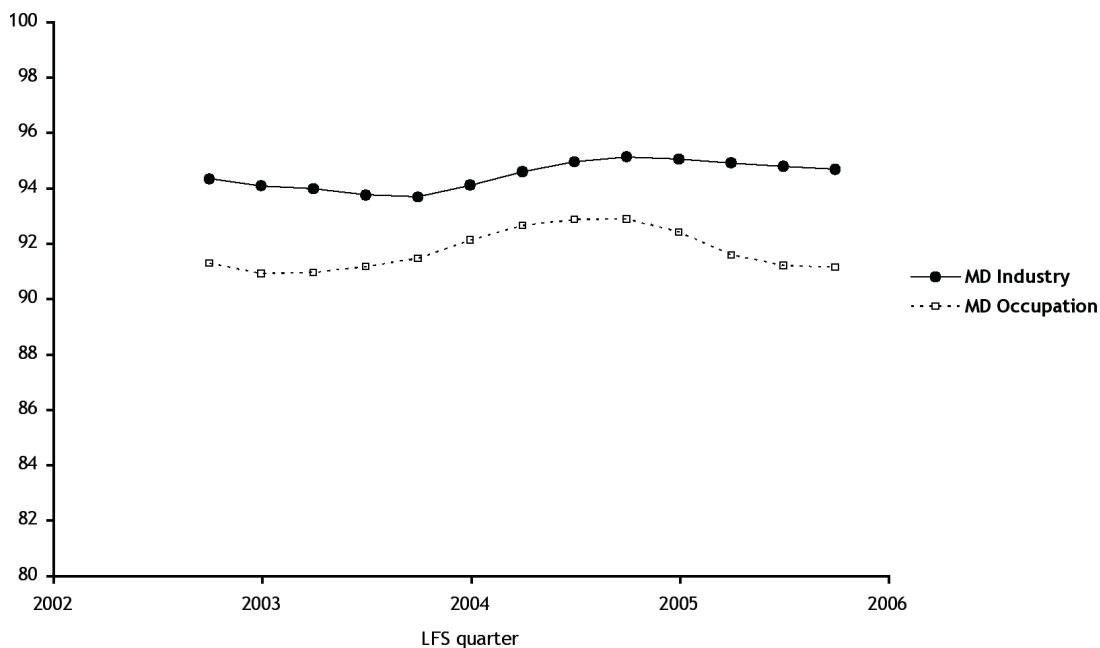
LFS; analysis based on UK nationals resident in the West Midlands region.

### 8.5.4 Transitions of UK nationals out of migrant-dense areas of work

The LFS allows us to analyse job transitions based on repeated observations of the same individuals in the LFS. In particular, we focus on individuals employed in migrant dense industries or occupations in the first quarter and observe these individuals in the next quarter to see whether their economic activity has changed.

Restricting the analysis to UK national workers in the West Midlands region, we are able to analyse the transitions out of migrant-dense sectors for individuals present in the LFS from 2002-2006. Figure 8.7 shows the percentage of UK nationals who are employed in an MD industry or MD occupation (shown separately) who are still working in the same industry/occupation in the next quarter. This can be used to detect changing patterns of exit from these sectors. As we would expect, most (80%-90%) of those employed in MD areas of employment still have the same job next quarter. We do not find evidence any evidence that these transitions are changing over time.

Figure 8.7 Probability of UK nationals staying in Migrant Dense work



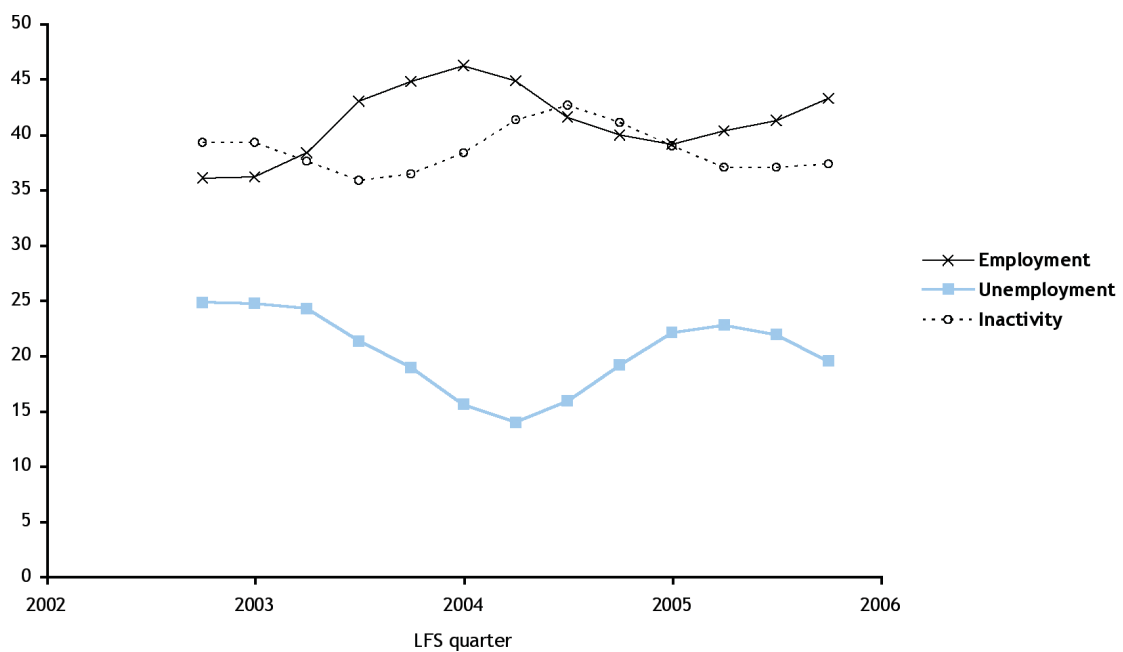
LFS; (1) Analysis based on UK nationals resident in the West Midlands region. (2) The observations are shown as 4 quarter moving averages.

It is perhaps more interesting to analyse the destination in the second period (new job, unemployment or inactivity) of those UK nationals who were observed to have moved out of their job in an MD area of work (i.e. out of an MD industry or occupation). Figure 8.8 plots the destinations over time of movers who have exited a MD industry. In a similar manner, Figure 8.9 plots the destinations over time of movers who have exited a MD occupation. The data show no discernible trend, and in particular we do not observe increased incidence of unemployment over time. Moreover, transitions out of MD occupations are increasingly to other (non-MD) employment. This evidence is in favour of the hypothesis that UK nationals are voluntarily moving out of these areas of work, or by processes of natural turnover, rather than being displaced into unemployment. (Again, it is possible that some individuals suffer involuntary displacement).

In one of the focus group discussions a Polish woman in her 20s explained how English workers were moving voluntarily out of a workplace dominated by Poles. She indicated that the recruitment of Polish workers had caused some resentment. However, she also highlighted that Polish workers also moved on to better jobs, so creating new employment opportunities for migrant workers and UK nationals:

“Polish guys can work more hard and more effectively..... So a lot of English man special young English man they resignation because yes from this job at the moment in this company are working 80% Polish people. But that’s very interesting that if they improve the language they trying to find a better job and last 2 months, three Polish people leave and they found better pay job. So that’s very interesting in my opinion.”

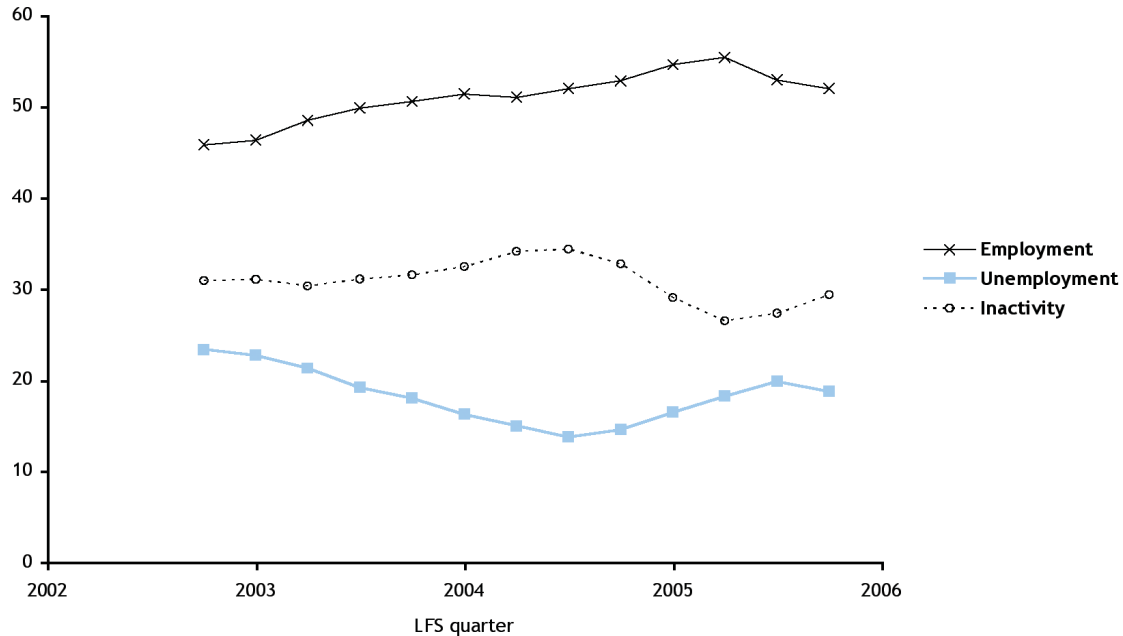
Figure 8.8 Destinations of UK nationals movers out of MD industries



LFS; (1) Analysis based on UK nationals resident in the West Midlands region. (2) The observations are shown as 4 quarter moving averages.



Figure 8.9 Destinations of UK-nationals movers out of MD occupations



LFS; (1) Analysis based on UK nationals resident in the West Midlands region. (2) The observations are shown as 4 quarter moving averages.

### 8.5.5 Unemployment at local level

The previous section focused on analysis of LFS data at regional level. This section examines patterns of NINo registrations of overseas nationals at the local area level alongside changes in local unemployment (based on local claimant rates). This analysis is restricted to local authority areas in the West Midlands region (for more details on local level analyses see the desk-based study [Green et al., 2007b]). In particular, we take the annual percentage rate of NINo registrations of overseas nationals based on:

- Average number of registrations by local area in 2004/5 and 2005/6 as a percentage of the workplace population in that area. The latter figure (denominator) utilises local area data from the 2001 Census.

This figure is compared with the trend in claimant count unemployment at local area level. In particular we consider the change in unemployment rates (as a percentage of the working age population) between May 2004 and February 2007.<sup>14</sup> Changes in the claimant unemployment rate at the local level are calculated in two ways, using a trend-absolute change and a relative change - i.e.

- Trend change in unemployment rate measures the average monthly rate of increase in unemployment rate since May 2004
- Relative change in unemployment divides the unemployment rate in Feb 2007 by the May 2004 rate at the local area level.

Table 8.1 shows selected local areas in the West Midlands region ranked by percentage NINo registrations of overseas nationals. The table shows only those areas where the level of registration has been higher than for the region as a whole, ranked in descending order. This covers 11 of the 34 local authority areas in the West Midlands region. In each case the NINo registrations are compared with unemployment trend and relative change. The sign "+" refers to an unemployment trend which is significantly above that of the

<sup>14</sup> It is noted that May 2004 is used as a starting point for the comparison since this coincides with the enlargement of the EU to include the A8 accession countries.

region as a whole. This applies in only 4 of the 11 cases, but notably in the large urban areas (i.e. Wolverhampton, Birmingham, Coventry and Sandwell) where unemployment is typically higher than the regional average per se.

Table 8.1 NINo registrations and unemployment: selected local areas

LAD/UA	NINo registrations as % of workforce population*	Unemployment trend**		Unemployment relative increase***
Coventry	3.17	0.04	+	1.31
Herefordshire	2.52	0.01		1.07
Birmingham	2.19	0.04	+	1.20
Wolverhampton	2.03	0.05	+	1.21
Rugby	1.90	0.01		1.25
Redditch	1.78	0.02		1.19
Stratford-on-Avon	1.76	0.01		1.30
Stoke on Trent	1.61	0.03		1.30
Worcester	1.56	0.02		1.37
Wychavon	1.56	0.01		1.33
Sandwell	1.51	0.04	+	1.21
<b>West Midlands</b>	<b>1.50</b>	<b>0.028</b>		<b>1.25</b>

LFS.

(a) The calculations are performed as follows:

\* NINo registrations are annual percentages based on an averaging of 2004/5 and 2005/6 registrations;

\*\* The unemployment trend figure is the monthly trend change in the rate of unemployment from May 2004 to February 2007;

\*\*\* The unemployment relative increase is the unemployment rate in Feb 06 divided by that in May 04.

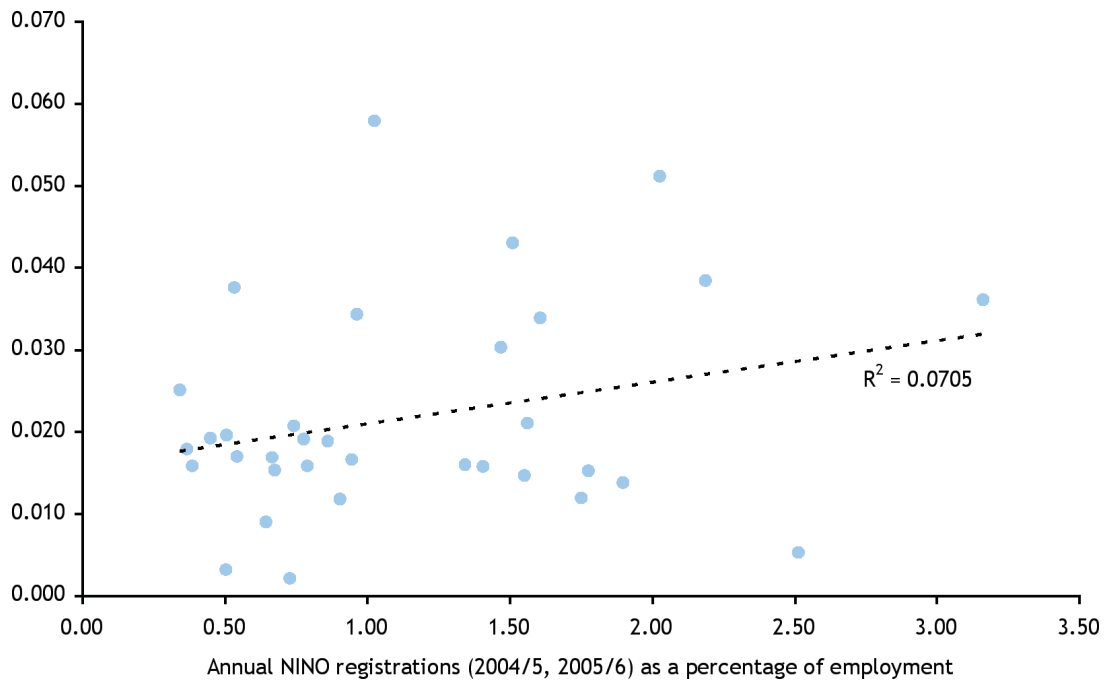
(b) "+" indicates a trend figure which is significantly above that of the West Midlands region as a whole.

We plot and compare correlations for each of the local authority areas of the West Midlands region:

- % NINo registrations versus trend unemployment (Figure 8.10)
- % NINo registrations versus relative change in unemployment (Figure 8.11).

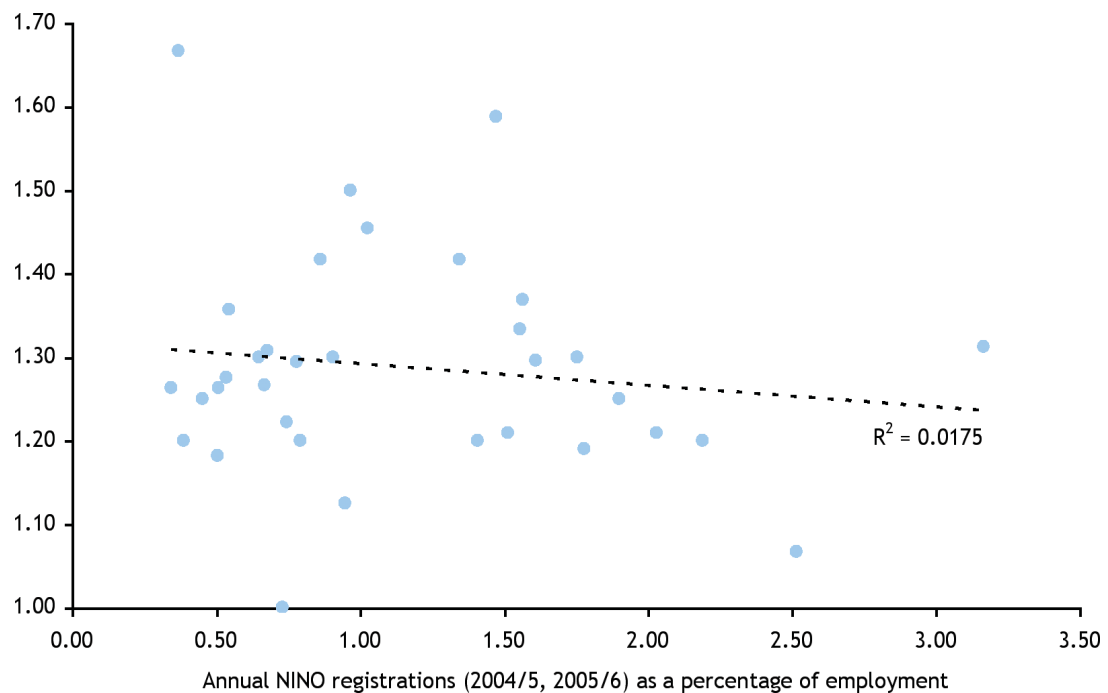
The results reveal no significant correlation in each case, suggesting on the basis of this evidence, that unemployment has not been affected by migrant influx at the regional level. However, in some local areas the relative increase in unemployment is significantly above the region as a whole. This indicates that local impacts may be different from that found at a regional level.

Figure 8.10 NINo registrations and trend increase in unemployment



Note: Each point on the chart represents a local authority area in the West Midlands region

Figure 8.11 NINo registrations and relative increase in unemployment



Note: Each point on the chart represents a local authority area in the West Midlands region

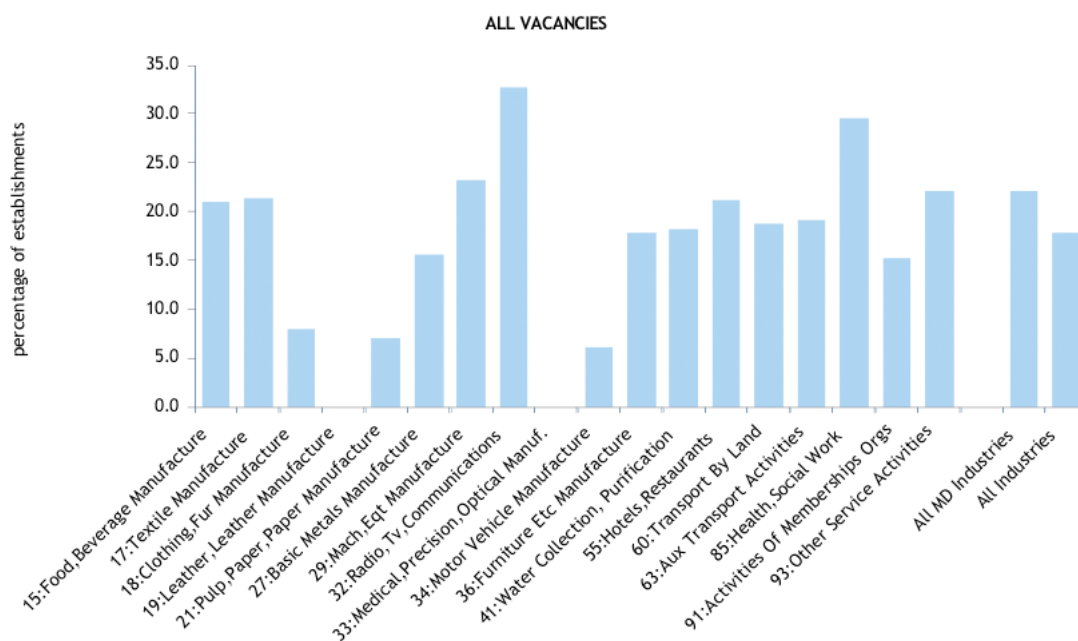
Moreover, it is also salient to note that labour migrants are overwhelmingly in employment. This is especially the case for recent labour migrants. This is illustrated by the fact that only 3.2% of overseas nationals' NINo registrations in 2006/7 were associated with the claiming of Job Seekers' Allowance within 6 months of registration, compared with 18.1% in 2002/3. There has been a consistent pattern of decrease over the 5-year period, with 12.3% of registrations associated with such claims in 2003/4, 6.5% in 2004/5 and 4.1% in 2005/6. This suggests that migrant workers have not themselves contributed to a rise in unemployment.

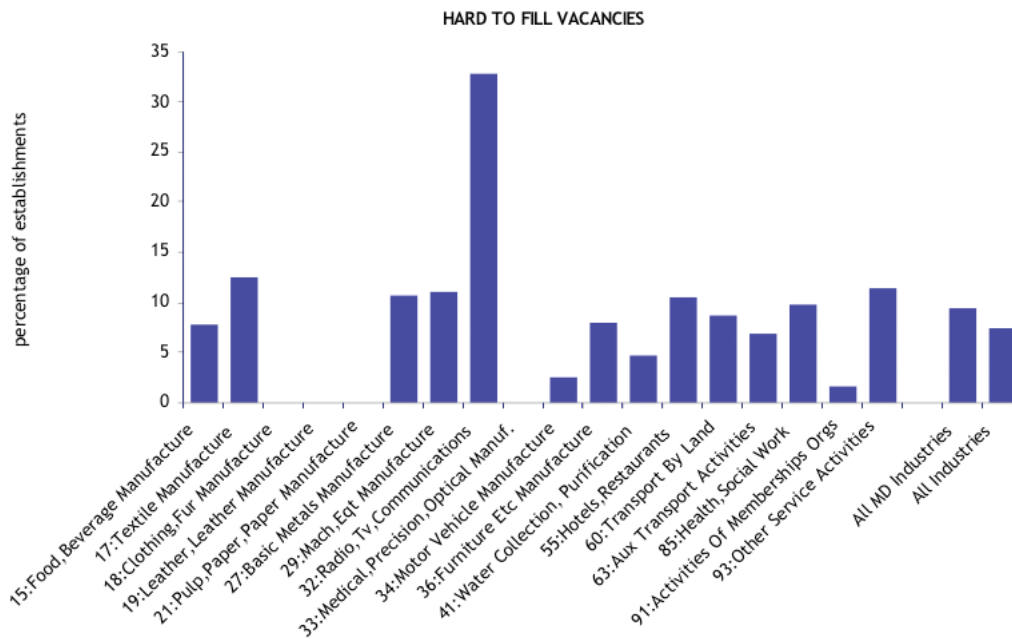
## 8.6 Trends in vacancies

It is useful to relate changes in vacancies reported to Jobcentre Plus to levels of NINo registrations of overseas nationals at the local area level. Under the hypothesis that migrant workers are associated with decreasing levels of reported vacancies we would expect to see a negative correlation between the NINo registrations and the vacancy trend. However, analyses conducted revealed no statistically significant association between trends in vacancies and NINo registrations of overseas nationals. This undermines the 'migrant impact on vacancies hypothesis' outlined above and suggests that the reasons for tightening labour markets (i.e. fewer vacancies) – particularly for low skilled workers – perhaps lie elsewhere.

At regional level the National Employer Skills Survey (NESS) was analysed to gain an insight into the patterns of vacancies by industry. Figure 8.12 shows levels of reported vacancies and so called 'hard to fill' vacancies for migrant-dense (MD) sectors, compared to all industries in the region. It is clear that recorded vacancies (and hard-to-fill) vacancies are high in many migrant dense (MD) sectors, but results are not statistically significant; (partially due to problems of sample size). This pattern suggests that migrant workers are responding to labour shortages in particular sectors. It should also be noted that where MD sectors have higher levels of vacancies this might in part reflect higher levels of job turnover.

Figure 8.12 NESS reported vacancies by Migrant Dense (MD) sector in the West Midlands





NESS, 2005.

Overall, there is no clear statistical evidence for an association between increasing numbers of migrants and a decrease in vacancies in the West Midlands in recent years.

## 8.7 Impact on earnings

### 8.7.1 Introduction

As outlined in 8.1, another important area where a large influx of migrant workers may have had an impact on UK nationals is via the suppression of earnings. A range of evidence on earnings of migrants and on the impact of economic migration on earnings is presented in this section, commencing with an analysis of LFS data.

### 8.7.2 Analysis of LFS data

Trends in earnings of UK nationals in migrant dense industries and occupations were compared to trends in earnings of UK nationals in the economy as a whole in order to ascertain whether there is evidence for migrant labour market impacts via suppression of earnings.

LFS data was used to examine trends in earnings of UK nationals in migrant-dense (MD) areas of work (industries and occupations) compared to trends in earnings of UK nationals in the economy as a whole. If, as is often hypothesised, migrants act to suppress wages then we should see evidence of this through lower wage growth at the sector or occupation level where migrant employment is most concentrated (i.e. in MD industries or occupations).

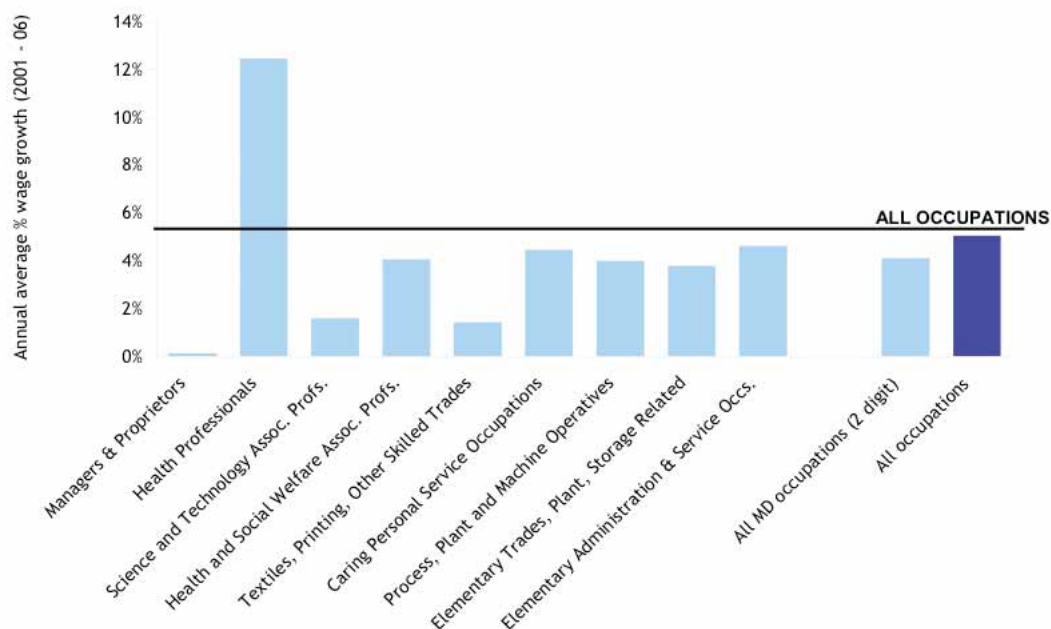
Rates of wage inflation were calculated for each of the MD industries, and as were comparable figures for all MD industries. This revealed a mixed picture of wage growth in MD industries. The average annual rate of wage growth over the period for West Midlands economy as a whole is 5.1% per annum. Some MD sectors show wage growth in excess of this figure: notably the hotels and restaurants and health and social work sectors. It should be noted that the increases in the National Minimum Wage rate over this period may well have contributed to higher wage growth in these low paid sectors. However, equally, other sectors show

lower- than-average wage growth - notably in much of manufacturing. Based on statistical tests, the average rate of wage growth for all MD industries is not significantly different from that of all sectors as a whole. For example, we notice that MD industry sectors have exactly the same rate of wage growth as the economy as a whole (5.1% per annum).

Similar analyses were undertaken for occupations. Figure 8.13 shows that there were significantly faster rates of wage growth amongst health professionals, in particular, and there were lower rates of growth in many of the other MD occupations. Overall, however, for MD occupations as a whole there is no statistically significant difference in wage growth compared to the figure for all occupations.

Hence, the LFS analyses show a mixed picture across migrant-dense sectors and occupations, but there is no evidence that growth in migrant employment is associated with lower rates of earnings growth.

Figure 8.13 Annual wage inflation by Migrant-Dense 2-digit occupation



LFS; (1) The analysis is restricted to UK nationals working in the West Midlands region; (2) The analysis is restricted to industries where the underlying LFS sample size is greater than 25.

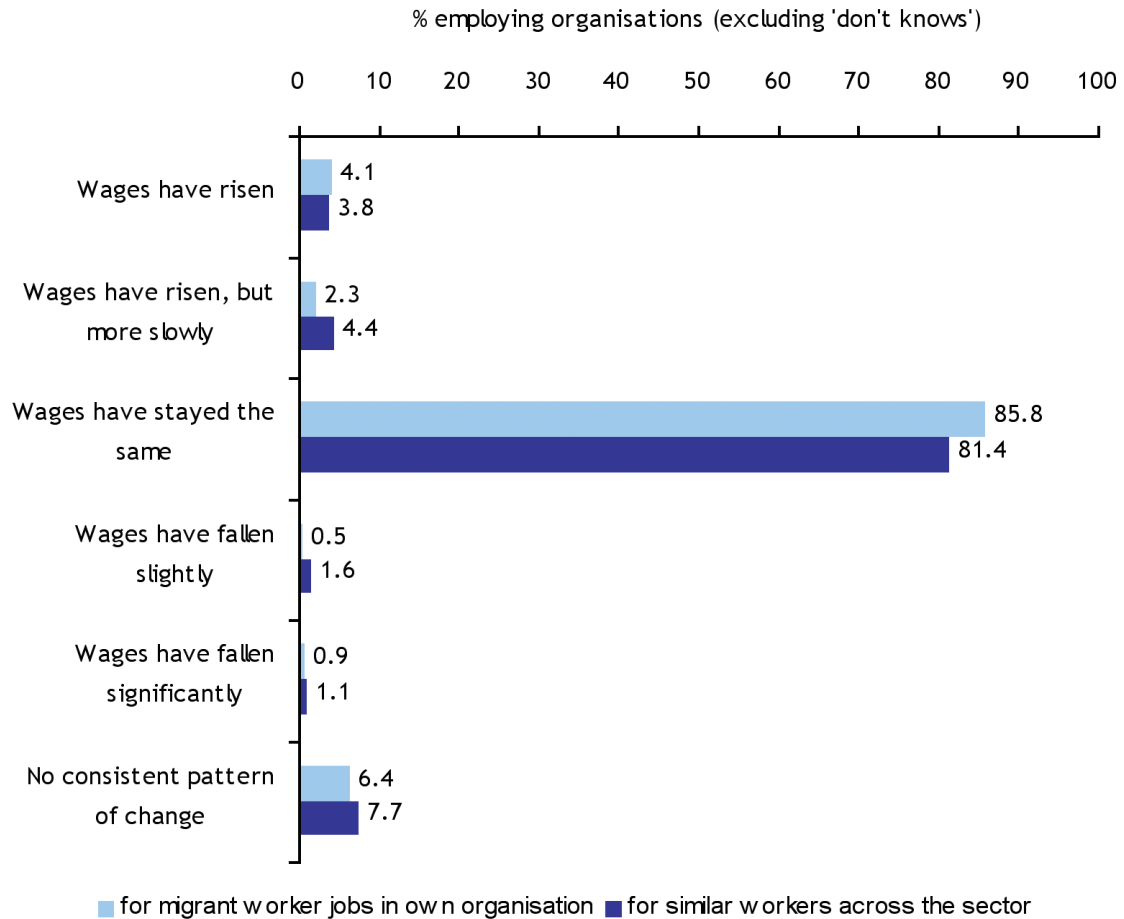
### 8.7.3 Employers' perspectives

According to the employers in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey, the employment of migrant workers has had little impact on wage rates - either on wage rates for the jobs that migrant workers did in the respondent's own organisation or for similar workers across the sector; over 80% reporting that wage rates had stayed the same. Of the remainder, more employing organisations reported a rise than a fall in wage rates (see Figure 8.14).

However, a Slovakian woman in a focus group was aware that some employers might regard migrant workers as cheap labour. She reported:

"Actually my boss a while ago, well probably over a year ago said that oh he doesn't want to be like disrespectful or whatever, but since like, you know, these countries joined the European Union it means that they get a lot of cheap labour now. And that was, I was thinking, you know, well it is cheap labour if you think about it, it is cheap labour."

Figure 8.14 Impact of migrant workers on wage rates



West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey

#### 8.7.4 Perspectives of third-party organisations

Most of the third-party organisations interviewed for this study had no knowledge of exploitation of migrant workers. However, some concerns were expressed by third-party interviewees about the impact of migrant workers on earnings levels. Concerns were of two main types:

- that migrant workers undercut wage levels for skilled and unskilled indigenous workers
- that migrant workers were being exploited through low wages and/or were not getting paid for the long hours that they worked.

Interviewees from trade unions and the Citizens Advice Bureaux noted that specific examples of pay rates below the National Minimum Wage and exploitation had been reported to them. Although other respondents also raised concerns about pay, often they could point to no hard evidence.

#### 8.7.5 Earnings reported by migrant workers

The West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey collected data on hours worked and pay rates. There is a single variable for weekly hours worked, and analysis suggests the quality of answers provided is good. An estimate of annual hours worked was calculated by multiplying weekly wages by 48 (i.e. assuming that migrant workers worked 48 weeks per year).

For earnings, the questionnaire allowed respondents to provide hourly, weekly, monthly or annual wages, but they were also asked to state on which basis they had provided figures. For comparability across all workers, the aim was to standardise all wage rates to an hourly wage. Estimates were derived using the following procedure.

- where hourly wages had been provided by the respondent, nothing further was done
- where a weekly wage was provided, this was multiplied by 48 and divided by annual hours worked
- where a monthly wage was provided, this was multiplied by 12 and divided by annual hours worked
- where an annual wage was provided, this was divided by annual hours worked.

Clearly, wage rates could only be calculated where it was possible to identify hours worked, wages and the period to which these refer. For each respondent for whom such information was available, a derived variable was calculated in order to identify whether the wage rate was above the National Minimum Wage - i.e. £4.45 per hour for those aged under 22 years and £5.35 per hour for those aged 22 and over (at the time of the Survey).

The median hourly wage across the sample of respondents for whom information was available was £5.60. Key features of variation in median wage rates include:

- By nationality:
  - workers from A2 countries and the Rest of the World had lowest median wage-rate estimates (£5.30 per hour)
  - national groups with the highest median wage rates were Yemeni, Sri Lankan, Filipino (all small sample sizes) and Indian (£7.00 per hour).
- By age:
  - 16-24 year olds had the lowest median wage rates (£5.30 per hour)
  - 30-39 year olds had the highest median wage rates (£6.50 per hour).
- By occupation:
  - workers in Professional Occupations and Associate Professional and Technical Occupations had the highest median earnings
  - workers in Sales and Customer Service Occupations (£5.30 per hour) and Elementary Occupations (£5.50 per hour) had the lowest median earnings.
- By industry:
  - Agriculture and Hotels and Restaurants displayed the lowest median earnings (£5.30 per hour).

According to the estimates derived above 22% respondents had wages below the National Minimum Wage level. Those in the following sub-groups were most likely (and more likely than average) to have earnings below the level of the National Minimum Wage, according to the estimates made:

- By occupation:
  - those in Personal Service occupations (33%), Sales and Customer Service occupations (31%); Elementary Occupations (26%).



- By industry:
  - those in Hotels and Restaurants (37%); Agriculture (27%); Wholesale and Retail Trade (26%); Manufacturing (25%).

All of the information above should be regarded as indicative. It is based on self-reporting and the subsequent application of estimation techniques. However, the variations between sub-groups outlined above seem plausible based on other information on variations in earnings by occupation and industry.

The median wage of £5.60 is comparable with data on earnings from the WRS; (although it should be noted that the latter data source covers A8 migrants only). During the period between January 2007 and March 2007, 70% of registered workers earned between £5.35 and £5.99 per hour and 23% earned between £6.00 and £7.00 per hour. Aggregating across the entire period from May 2004 to March 2007 (during which wages have risen) 55% of registered workers earned between £4.50 and £5.34 per hour, 23% earned between £5.35 and £5.99 per hour and 18% earned between £6.00 and £7.99 per hour.

Overall, the picture is one of relatively low wages for migrant workers, but there is no robust evidence to indicate that employment of migrant workers is associated with lower growth in earnings.

## 8.8 Impact on business performance

### 8.8.1 Introduction

The employment of migrant workers can impact on business performance by addressing labour shortages and skills deficiencies and so boosting productivity and output. This section presents information (mainly drawn from the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey) on the overall impact of migrant workers on the West Midlands economy and on impacts on productivity.

### 8.8.2 Overall impact

An employers' representative interviewed in the survey of third-party organisations was clear that the overall impact of labour migration on the regional economy was positive:

*"The evidence points to links between economic migration and economic performance and growth."*

Respondents to the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey were asked to assess the overall impact of employing migrant workers on their business:

- 47% of employers surveyed reported a positive impact - with:
  - 36% indicating the impact as 'very positive, with few problems', and
  - 11% reporting that the overall experience was 'generally positive, but with some problems'
- 48% of employers reported 'overall little change' in business performance
- No employers cited a negative impact
- The remainder didn't know or refused to answer.

The main reasons cited for a positive impact on business performance by employing migrant workers were:

- Harder working workforce/doing longer hours (37%); (information from other secondary data sources suggests that migrant workers tend to work long hours - for instance, 75% of workers registered under the WRS work 35-40 hours and 14% work 40 hours or more per week)
- Work standard/quality/performance has increased (31%).

Other reasons are shown alongside these in Figure 8.15.

**Figure 8.15 Ways in which migrant workers have a positive impact on the performance of the business**



**West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey**

When asked to identify the main positive effects on the existing workforce as a result of employing migrant workers, 58% responded that there was no positive change discernible. Where specific positive changes were identified:

- 13% reported an increase in work being done
- 7% indicated that existing staff had become more culturally aware
- 6% said that team working had improved
- 5% felt that there was an improved relationship amongst all staff
- 5% said that existing staff had improved the standard of their work to match foreign workers.

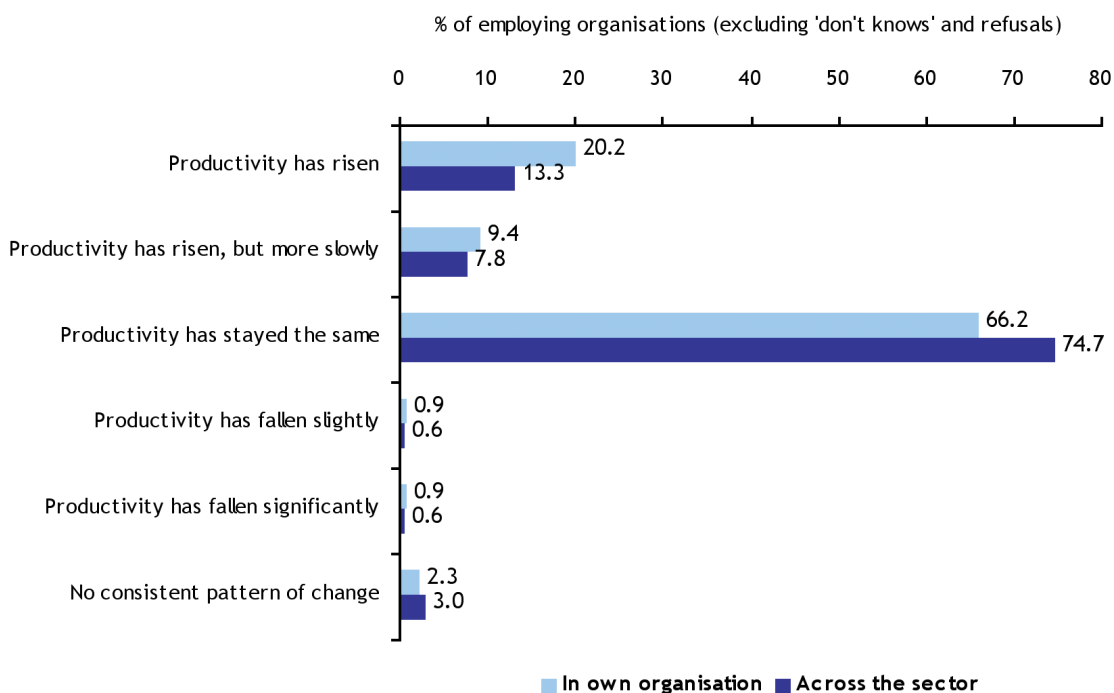
85% of employers in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey reported no negative effects on the existing workforce as a result of employing migrant workers. Where specific negative changes were identified:

- 8% reported a language barrier/communications problems
- 1% reported foreign staff mixing only with people who spoke the language
- 1% reported that existing staff were jealous/hostile towards foreign workers
- 3% cited other problems.

### 8.8.3 Impacts on productivity

The West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey included a question about ways in which productivity had been affected as a result of employing migrant workers. The overall picture emerging is one of maintenance of existing and increasing levels of productivity, both in their own organisation and across their sector as a whole, as a result of employing migrant workers (see Figure 8.16).

Figure 8.16 Effect on productivity as a result of employing migrant workers



West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey

## 8.9 Contribution of migrant workers to the West Midlands economy

Many of the employers surveyed and interviewees from third-party organisations recognised that migrant workers made an important contribution to the regional and local economy. Some pondered that they filled such an integral role in certain businesses, industries and occupations in some local areas that it would not be possible to manage without them - for example:

"The economy would not possibly be as buoyant in this area without migrant workers. ... There is no way on this earth you can sustain the economy without them."

They also made an important ongoing economic contribution to the economy:

“They spend money, they work, they earn money and they spend money.”

In order to assess the contribution of migrant workers to the West Midlands economy measures of employment and earnings of migrant workers in the region from secondary data sources were combined with data on Gross Value-Added (GVA) for the West Midlands in order to estimate the contribution of migrant workers to the regional economy (see the desk-based study [Green et al., 2007b] for further details.

Three separate measures of migrant contribution to GVA were calculated, building upon each other from the most basic to the more sophisticated:

- Base (measure)
- Wage-adjusted (measure); (to take into account the occupational structure of migrants vis-à-vis UK national workers) within industry)
- LFS-reflated (measure); (designed to take account of the under-counting of migrant workers in the LFS).

There is a tendency towards migrant employment being most concentrated in the least productive sectors of the economy (in monetary terms), partly reflected in lower wages in these sectors. These cross-industry differences are important with respect to migrant contribution to the overall value of output, lowering their contribution relative to employment.

The different measures yield different estimates, suggesting that migrant workers account for between 4% and 5% of regional output. As such, migrants make an important contribution to the West Midlands economy.

## 8.10 Overview and conclusions

The evidence from the West Midlands suggests that migrant workers make a positive contribution to the regional labour market and economy. These headline findings are congruent with evidence on the economic impact of migration at national level (Home Office, 2007). Analyses of LFS data for the West Midlands suggest that displacement of UK nationals from industries and occupations where migrant workers are concentrated is voluntary, rather than involuntary. There is not evidence, in aggregate, to indicate that migrant workers have contributed to an increase in unemployment, to a lowering in the level of earnings growth or to a reduction in vacancies. However, at an individual level, and particularly in some local areas, some individuals - particularly those with poor skills - may have suffered involuntary displacement and find that they face greater competition for jobs.

Employers surveyed indicated that migrant workers had a positive, rather than a detrimental, impact on their business. It is estimated that migrant workers make a positive contribution to regional output and are a crucial component in some local economies.

## 9. Policy implications for skills, training provision and regional economic development

### Key points:

Many migrant workers are interested in improving their English and in learning and skills development more generally.

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English language skills are important for employment progression, engagement and social integration. The West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey had a particular focus on English language skills.

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More migrant workers in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey self-assessed their English language skills as good/very good than as poor/very poor. Understanding and speaking skills are generally better than writing skills. Younger people tend to rate their English language skills more highly than older people.

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Over half of migrant workers in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey had neither been offered nor received any help with improving their English language skills. 20% of respondents said that they did not need any help.

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Respondents who had been offered or received help with English language skills were most likely to cite friends as a source of help, followed by colleges and then employers.

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The majority of employers in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey cited English language skills as important when employing migrant workers. Over three-quarters of employers in the sample indicated that migrants' English language skills were adequate or better than needed to do the job that they were employed for.

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The majority of employers did not provide ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) training or provide other help with English language skills for those workers whose English language skills needed further development.

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The most frequently cited types of training provided by employers were induction training (including basic health and safety), and on-the-job training provided by another member of the workforce. In part, this reflects the concentration of migrant workers in less skilled jobs.

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On the basis of evidence from the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey and the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey, it appears that many employers want classic 'economic migrants' (i.e. workers who are attracted by higher pay in the UK than in their origin country, but are content to stay in low-skilled roles), while many migrant workers 'aspire' to improve their skills.

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There is a danger that use of migrant workers in filling labour shortages in less skilled occupations and in sectors which are unattractive to UK nationals may delay capital investment and/or restructuring of labour processes and so reinforce a 'low-skill equilibrium'.

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There is scope for employers to make better use of the skills of 'aspiring' migrant workers - for the benefit of both businesses and individuals.

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Better utilisation of migrant workers' skills is likely to require one or more of the following: qualification recognition, skills recognition, development of language skills and policies to facilitate progression in employment.

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There is an economic risk that the numbers of migrant workers coming to the West Midlands will decrease in the future and/or that the profile of migrant workers may change. It is important to ensure that alternative sources of labour (including the long-term unemployed and people currently outside the labour force) are not overlooked and that they have the requisite attitudes and skills for employers to consider them.

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## 9.1 Understanding attitudes to skill development

Whether migration is temporary or permanent is likely to shape migrants' attitudes towards skill development and integration, to influence attitudes of employers to training (other than to that which is absolutely essential) and skills development, and to have implications for skills and learning provision. A short-term migrant is likely to have less interest in learning and skills development than a migrant who intends to stay for a longer period or settle in the UK in the medium or long term.

Previous studies have highlighted many migrant workers' interest in learning and skills development. The literature on migrants' skills and surveys of migrant workers tends to focus primarily on English language skills, and this is the case with the West Midlands research (see 9.2 for further discussion). For example, in a study of migrants in South Lincolnshire (Zaronaite and Tirzite, 2006) 39% of migrants surveyed wished to take ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) courses, while 32% of respondents wanted to attend IT courses. Beyond this, many migrants wanted to gain equivalent UK qualifications in their profession. There is evidence from other studies that migrants are frustrated by their lack of knowledge and a lack of information on how to transfer their skills to the UK context. However, as noted above, whether, and how important it is for their aspirations to be achieved, depends in part on migrants' future plans.

Similar key themes emerged from research findings in the West Midlands. Section 6.3 has highlighted the finding that migrants in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey often expressed interest in improving their English. From the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey and from focus groups it is evident that some migrant workers were combining working and learning. For others, it is likely that long (and sometimes uncertain) working hours had implications for opportunities to take advantage of learning and training opportunities that might have been available. Likewise, several migrant workers mentioned that they would like to use more of their skills in the UK (see 6.4), rather than remain in less skilled jobs. This demonstrates that there is a desire and potential amongst migrant workers to make better use of their skills. As noted in Chapter 6, there is an important role here for labour market intermediaries to provide information, advice, guidance and support for migrants working below their qualification and skills levels to utilise their skills in the UK context (see 9.5 for further discussion).

## 9.2 The importance of English language skills

### 9.2.1 Introduction

The literature on migration highlights the importance of English language skills for employment, engagement and integration. The ability to speak English is not essential for all jobs, but it is important for individuals and for self-sufficiency. It is a cornerstone of wider integration and cohesion; hence the particular focus on English language skills in this chapter. For many migrants, better English is a pre-requisite for improving their employment position (Audit Commission, 2007), as noted by one of the third-party organisation interviewees:

"Language is the main first step. Once they [migrant workers] speak really good English then doors start opening for them."

Likewise, many migrant workers themselves appreciated the importance of English language skills, with several of the focus group participants highlighting language as: "a barrier to progress." One Polish woman in her mid 20s expressed the sentiments of many when she said: "without English we can't find good job." Hence, many migrants sought out jobs - for example, in restaurants, pubs or in sales occupations - where they could practice their English:

"Before I am working in the kitchen, chef, I am every day have to start work at 3 o'clock, very tired. I'm now working [as a cashier] ... it's very good for me, it is nice, I mostly speak English, but in the kitchen they speak Polish and no learn. Now it's very good." (Polish woman, 20s)

It was also evident to many of the more ambitious migrants and to some of the interviewees from third-party organisations that by gaining work experience abroad, earning money and improving their English they would open up opportunities for onward migration to the USA or elsewhere, as highlighted in Chapter 6. In the UK such migrant workers appear willing to move between jobs quite frequently (as highlighted in Chapter 5) in order to enhance their language (and other) skills and to broaden their range of experience.

## 9.2.2 Migrants' perspectives

### 9.2.2.1 Self-assessment of English language skills

Respondents to the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey were asked to self-assess their skills in speaking, writing and understanding English. It is possible that some respondents would underestimate their English language skills while others would overestimate them vis-à-vis an objective benchmark. Nevertheless, migrants' responses provide some useful insights into English language skills.

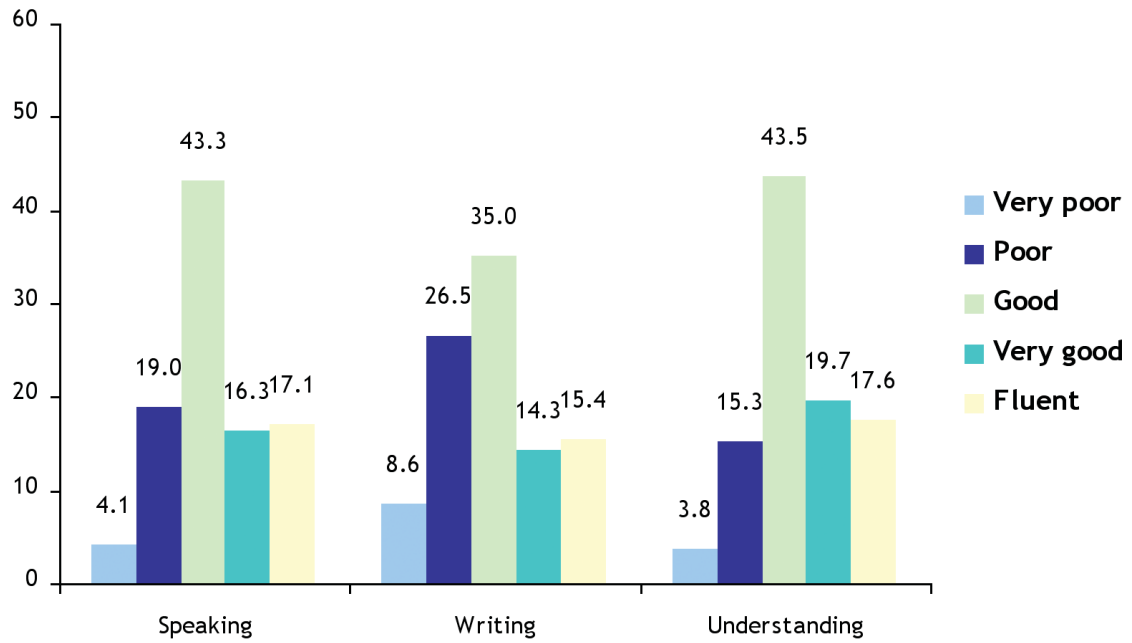
Table 9.1 and Figure 9.1 show the overall picture. Across the sample as a whole more respondents describe their skills as good/very good as opposed to poor/very poor. The migrants assess their skills in understanding and speaking English as being better than those in writing English. These poorer writing skills may limit the options of those who wish to study for UK qualifications.

**Table 9.1 Self-assessment of English language skills in reading, writing and understanding English**

Aspect of the English language	Poor/ Very poor	Good/ Very good	Fluent
Speaking	23.0%	59.6%	17.1%
Writing	35.1%	49.3%	15.4%
Understanding	19.1%	63.2%	17.6%

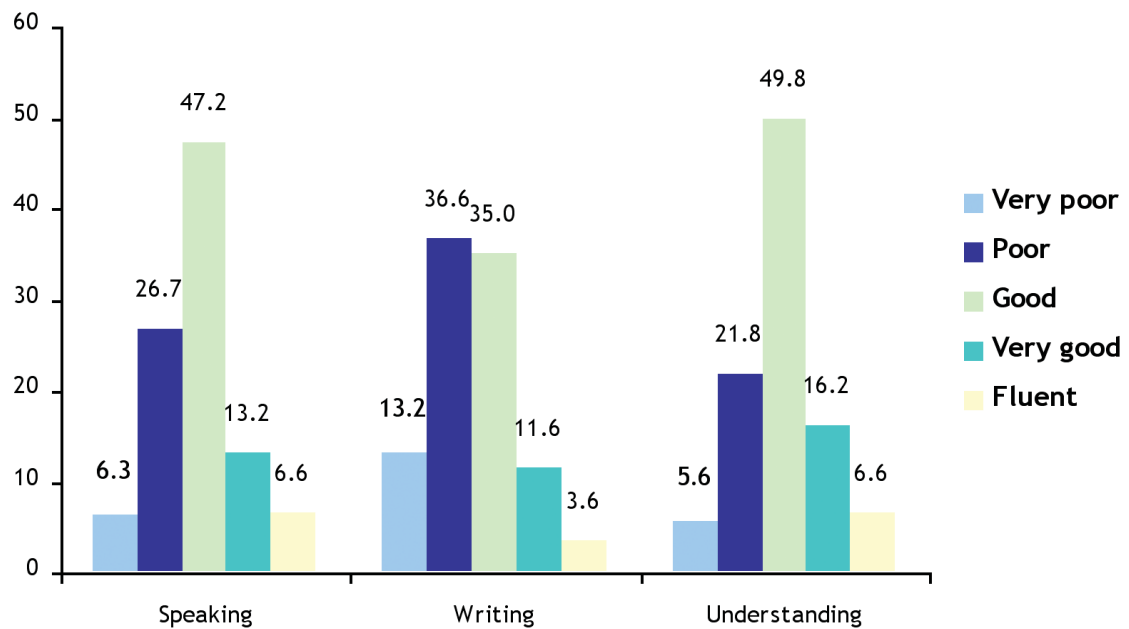
West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey

Figure 9.1 Self-assessment of English language skills - all respondents



West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey; (small number of 'not provided' are excluded)

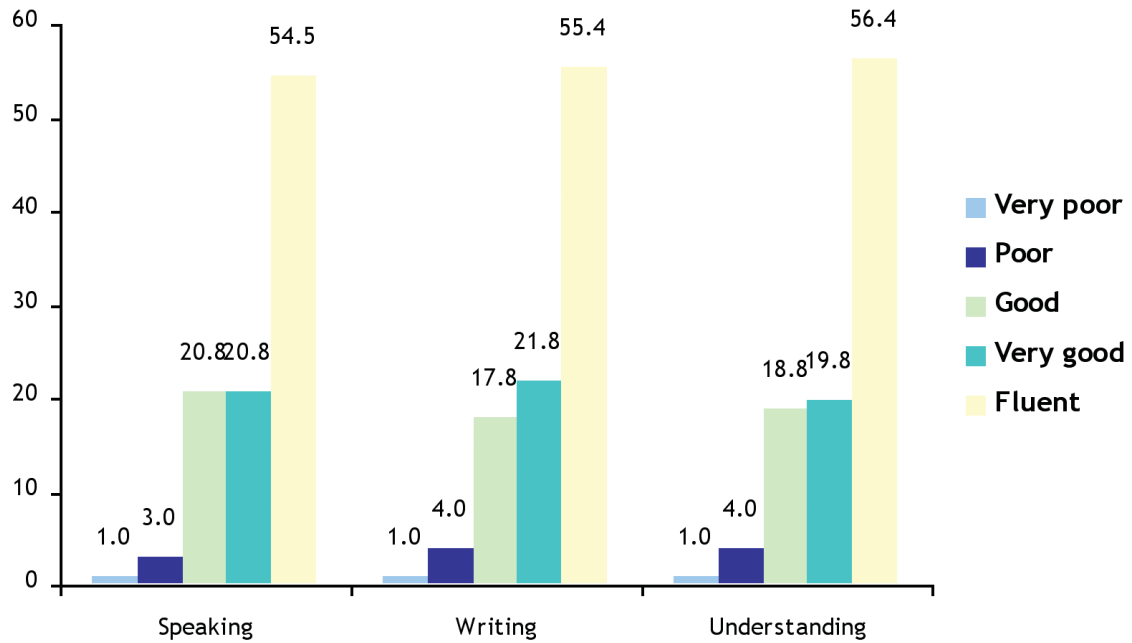
Figure 9.2 Self-assessment of English language skills - Poles



West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey; (small number of 'not provided' are excluded)

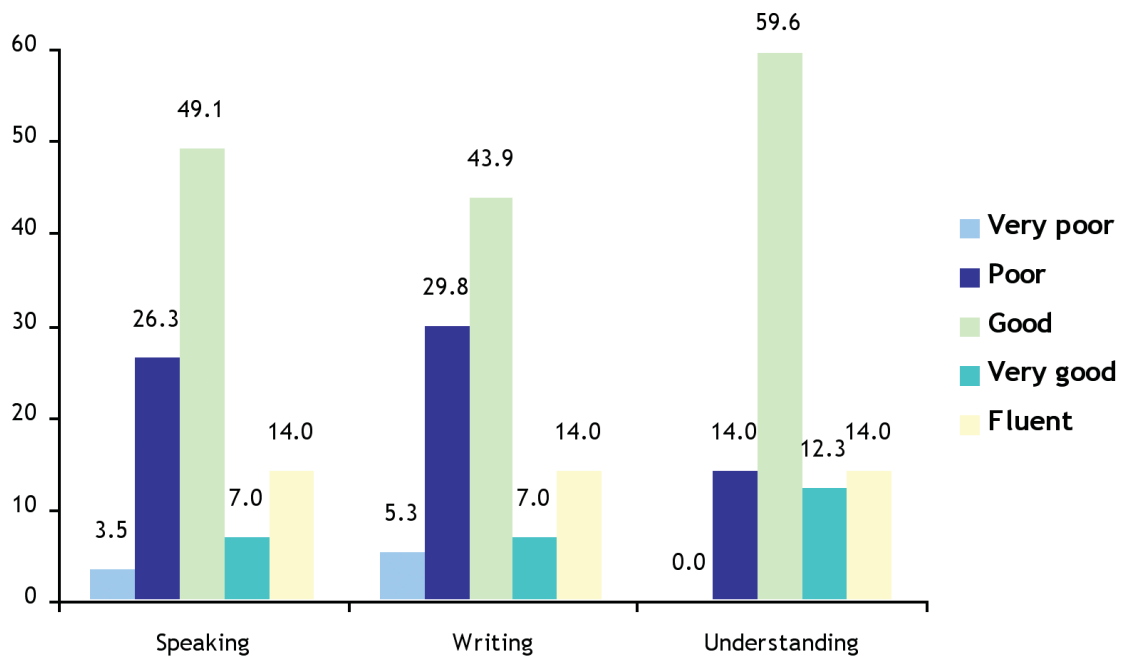


Figure 9.3 Self-assessment of English language skills - Indians



West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey; (small number of 'not provided' are excluded)

Figure 9.4 Self-assessment of English language skills - Pakistanis



West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey; (small number of 'not provided' are excluded)

Key features of variation by sub-group include:

- By nationality:
  - there are variations in English language skills by nationality - see Figures 9.2, 9.3 and 9.4 showing self-assessed proficiency levels for the three largest national groups
  - migrants from the Old Commonwealth and of Indian origin are most likely to say that they are fluent in English
  - migrants from the A8 and A2 countries are least likely to say that they are fluent in English.
- By age:
  - there is a clear negative association between English language ability and age, with people becoming increasingly likely to rate their English language abilities as poor/very poor with increasing age.
- By occupation:
  - those in Personal Service Occupations are most likely to regard themselves as good/very good or fluent in spoken English
  - those in Elementary Occupations, Skilled Trades Occupations and Process Plant and Machine Operative Occupations are most likely to assess their skills in spoken, understanding and more particularly writing English as poor/very poor.

Interestingly, there is no clear association between self-assessed English language abilities and:

- length of stay in the UK (except for A8 migrants - where there is some evidence for a positive association between length of stay in the UK and better self-assessment of English language skills)
- gender
- overall satisfaction with the UK.

#### 9.2.2.2 Help with improving English language skills

West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey respondents were asked whether they had been offered or had received any help with their English language skills:

- 26.7% had received or been offered help in improving English
- 53.7% had not received or been offered help
- 19.5% felt that they did not need help; (this proportion is similar to the share of migrants assessing themselves to be fluent in English).

Groups of respondents who were more likely than average to report receiving help with improving English language skills included:

- those in Personal Service Occupations, Elementary Occupations and working as Process Plant and Machine Operatives

- Poles and those of Slovakian/Czech nationality.

Respondents who assessed their English language skills as poor/very poor were more likely than average to indicate that they had not received or been offered any help with English language skills.

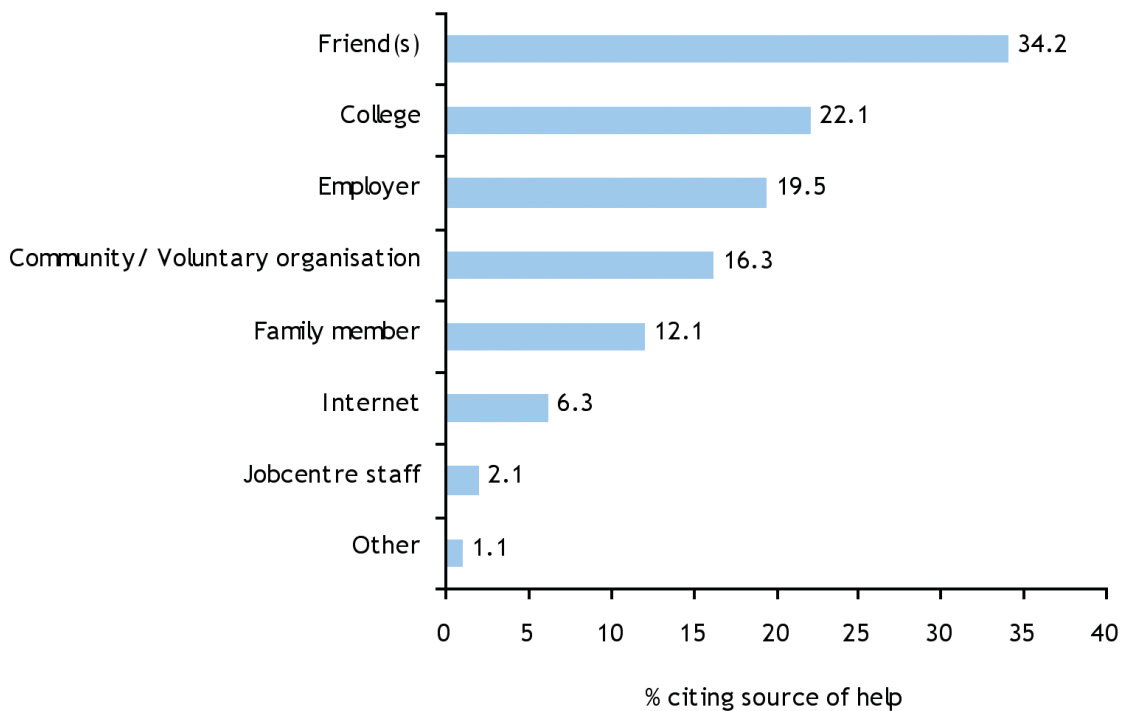
Figure 9.5 shows the frequency with which different sources of help were cited by those migrants who had been offered help in improving their English. The importance of friends and (to a lesser extent) family is apparent. After friends, the most frequently cited sources of help were colleges and employers (each mentioned by around a fifth of respondents).

Some differences are evident in sources of help used by different national groups. For example:

- Poles are more likely than average to cite an employer (25%) and colleges (28%), although friends (32%) were the most frequently cited source of help
- Pakistanis were more reliant than average on community/voluntary organisations (62%) and family members (39%) for help with English.

### Figure 9.5 Sources offering help with English language skills

West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey



## 9.2.3 Employers' perspectives

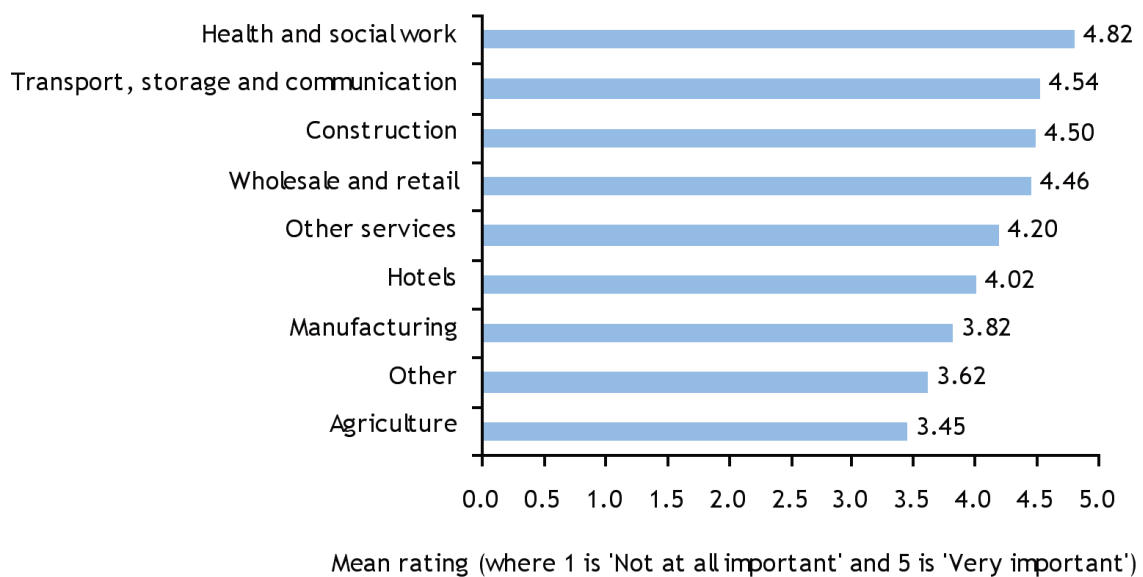
### 9.2.3.1 The importance of English language skills

The majority of employers included in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey reported that English language skills were important when employing migrant workers:

- 57% regarded English language skills as very important
- 16% ranked them as quite important
- 15% reported that it depended on the job in question
- 9% indicated that English language skills were not very important
- 4% regarded them as not at all important.

English language skills were ranked highly across all sectors represented in the sample of employing organisations, but were especially important in service industries (notably Health and Social Care) and least important in Agriculture and Manufacturing (see Figure 9.6).

Figure 9.6 Importance of English language skills when employing migrant workers by sector



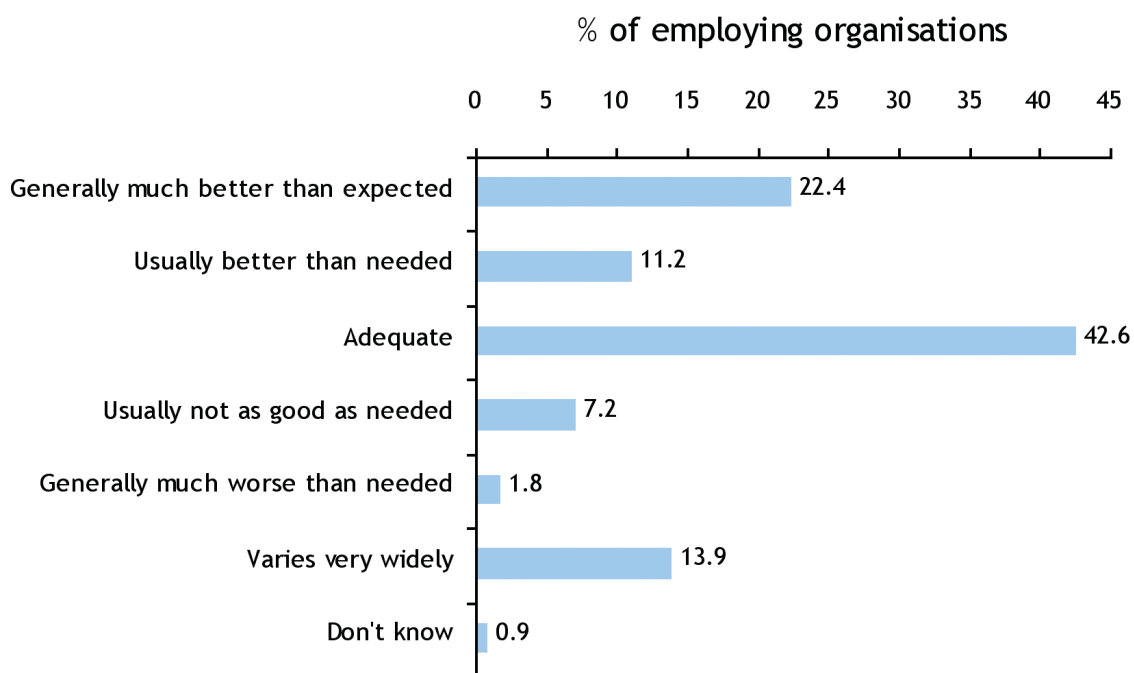
#### West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey

The main reason respondents gave for feeling it is important for migrant workers to have English language skills was that the job has a requirement to communicate/understand instructions (mentioned by 78% of employing organisations). The next most frequently cited reason was that 'business is conducted in English mainly', but this was mentioned by only 7% of employing organisations.

### 9.2.3.2 Satisfaction with standards of English amongst migrant workers

Amongst the sample of employers in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey, standards of English of migrant workers relative to the level required to do the job were generally adequate (43% of respondents) or better than expected (34% of respondents) - see Figure 9.7 for more details. It should be noted that these are English standards for the jobs that migrants are employed in, which may not be the same as the jobs that they aspire to or that are equivalent to their qualifications/skills levels.

Figure 9.7 Employers' perceptions of migrants' English language skills compared to the level of English needed to do the job they were employed for



West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey

### 9.2.3.3 ESOL training

Of those employers surveyed who were able to confirm whether or not their organisation provides ESOL training for migrant workers who do not have good English language skills, 10% indicated that they provided ESOL training and 90% did not. At face value, these proportions tie in closely with reported levels of adequacy (or otherwise) of English language skills.

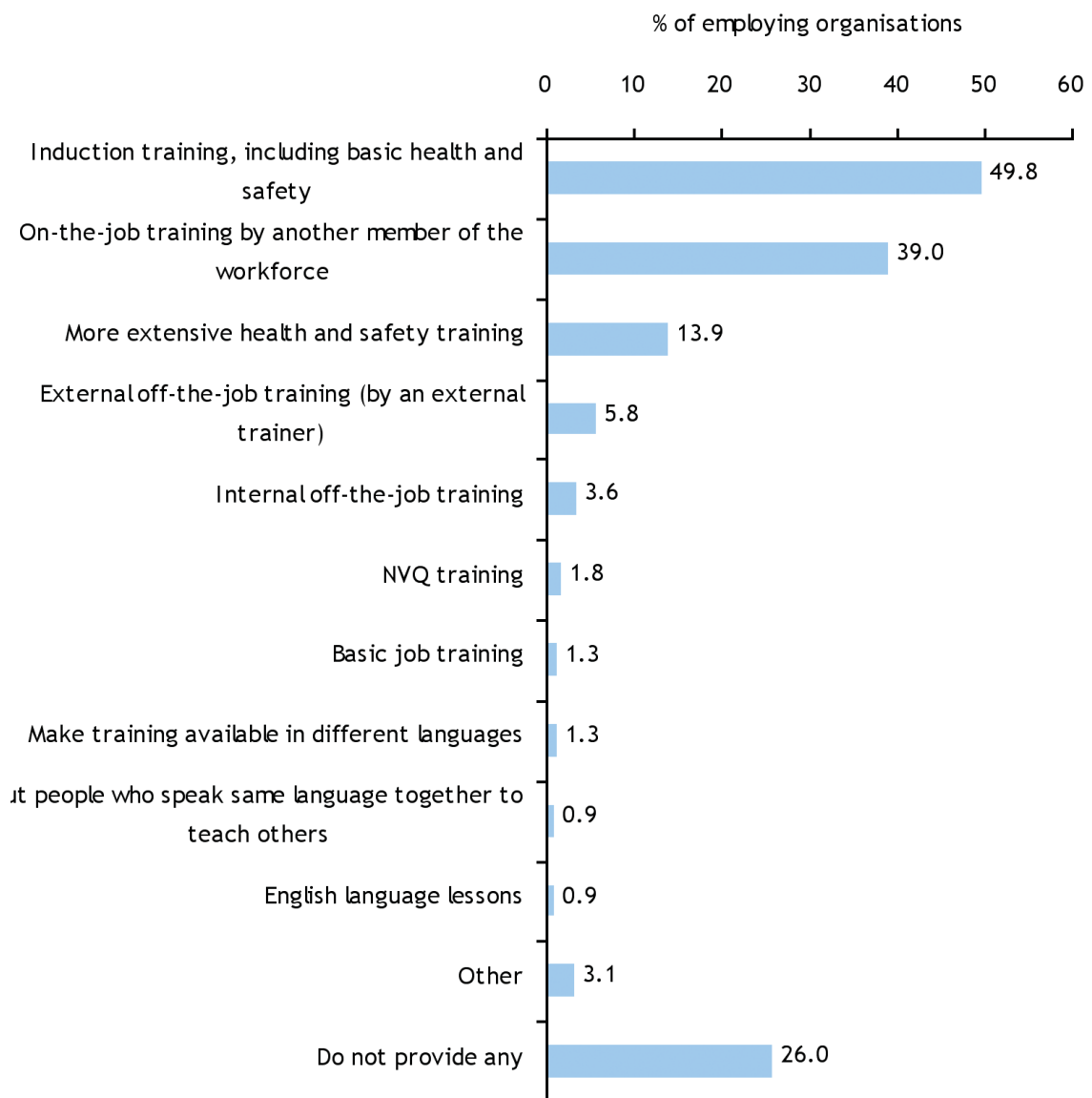
Those employers who did not provide ESOL training were asked what, if anything, their organisation did to help workers whose English language skills needed further development:

- 59% reported that they did nothing
- 11% paid for or arranged English language training at a local educational establishment
- 7% provided workers with details of local education establishments
- 7% provided informal English language tuition.

### 9.2.3.4 Other English language training

Other forms of help mentioned by employers (each by 8 [i.e. 4% of respondents to the question] or fewer respondents) included providing a training course at work and placing workers with English-speaking workers to help them acquire skills. Basic forms of training predominated, with 50% reporting that they provided induction training (including basic health and safety), while 39% provided on-the-job training and 26% provided no training (see Figure 9.8). The smallest and largest organisations were most likely to provide no training.

Figure 9.8 Types of training employing organisation provides to migrant workers



West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey

Hence, the picture is one of limited training provision, other than at the most basic level. In part this is a function the kinds of jobs that migrant workers are employed in, but it also reflects the fact that most employers surveyed are not inclined to invest in migrant workers more than they have to.

## 9.3 Other training

Apart from any help with English, respondents to the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey were asked whether they had received any training from an employer or from somewhere else since coming to live in the UK (see the questionnaire in the Technical Report [Owen, 2007] for details of the question asked). 123 respondents (17.3% of the sample) indicated that they had received such training. Amongst Poles and Slovaks/Czechs (i.e. the two largest A8 migrant groups) the proportions reporting that they received other training was lower than the sample average.

Those who had received other training were asked what other training they had received. A wide variety of types of training provided were mentioned, from MBAs (2 respondents), Management (3 respondents), Business (3 respondents), Electrical Engineering (3 respondents) to more basic training needed to undertake a routine job safely and in compliance with regulations. The former, more specific, types of training suggests that a minority of migrant workers have been identified by employers, or have put themselves forward for higher level training to enhance their skills or help convert their existing skills for application in the UK context. However, the types of training cited most frequently were:

- Fork lift driving (14.6%)
- ESOL (7.3%) and English language (2.4%) - (N.B. this is help with English so participants should not have included it here)
- Food and hygiene (6.5%)
- IT (6.5%)
- First Aid (5.7%)
- Health and Safety (4.1%)
- Machinery training (4.1%).

This chimes with the picture emerging from the West Midlands Migrant Worker Employer Survey of training generally being limited to the most basic skill levels.

To gain greater insights into the impacts of training (other than in English language skills) it would be necessary to conduct more detailed research - for example:

- Tracking the experience of a cohort of migrant workers in the region
- Taking a sectoral focus to examine how migrant workers' existing knowledge and skills may be better utilised and enhanced (see section 9.5 for further discussion on this topic).

## 9.4 Motivations for training and learning

### 9.4.1 Background

Some of the variations in motivations for training and learning (from both migrant and employer perspectives) are encapsulated in a 3-fold typology of migrant workers developed in a previous study (LSC, 2006) from research with employers:

- 'economic migrants' - who are often low-skilled workers aiming to stay in low-skilled roles, attracted by the relatively higher pay found in the UK compared with their origin country. Generally, they are

perceived as having short-term plans or opportunistic ideas regarding employment and want to make money easily and quickly. They are unlikely to integrate strongly into the UK workforce, especially if working in migrant-dense sectors and occupations in remote rural areas. From an employer perspective, training for such migrants may well be seen as a cost to be avoided;

- 'aspiring migrants' - typically, this group comprises students and skilled workers taking unskilled work in the UK while improving their English language abilities and/or gaining other relevant qualifications so that they can pursue their true career path - either in the UK, their country of origin or elsewhere. For this group of migrants employers might place the onus of improving English language skills on the workers themselves, since they would be the prime beneficiaries. Arguably, however, this group may be able to use their skills to contribute more broadly to business success and economic development in the UK
- 'global migrants' who take skilled positions in the UK so addressing skills deficiencies. Members of this group are typically concentrated in professional and associate professional positions.

It is difficult to categorise all migrant workers from the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey directly into these three categories. While the nurses from the Philippines are an example of 'global migrants', in other instances categorisation is less straightforward. Indeed, some individuals may arrive as 'economic migrants', but after some time in the UK become 'aspiring migrants'; (likewise some migrant workers may make a transition in the opposite direction). However, it is likely that many of the young migrant workers in agriculture (who are in the UK on a seasonal basis) and some of the short-stay migrants working in elementary and operative positions are classic 'economic migrants'. However, given the comments of several migrant workers in focus groups about their under-employment and their eagerness to move between jobs to secure better pay and conditions or to improve their chances of practising their English language skills (as discussed in 5.9), it is evident that many are 'aspiring migrants'.

Some employers recognise this. An interviewee from a FE College reported the case of a factory getting in touch with the College about training:

" ... they love their Polish workers, they think they're a great addition to the workforce, they work really, really hard and they're keen and want to train and get their NVQs and so on, but first of all they need to work on the English ..."

However, as outlined below, there is also some indicative evidence from this study of a mismatch with some employers preferring 'economic migrants' to fill low-skilled positions, but with a larger proportion of the migrant workers being 'aspiring migrants'; (so representing an untapped resource). In due course, it might be expected that this would lead to greater dissatisfaction on the part of 'aspiring migrants', perhaps prompting them to move on - either to other jobs in the region, to other parts of the UK, or to competing destinations elsewhere. There is some limited qualitative evidence from focus group discussions of some migrant workers gaining a foothold in an Elementary or Operative occupation and then advancing to more skilled occupations. However, others remained frustrated at the under-utilisation of their skills and their lack of knowledge as to where to turn to for guidance to remedy the situation (see the discussion in section 5.9).

#### 9.4.2 Results from the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey

The results of the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey suggest that many migrant workers are interested in undertaking further training and learning if it would advance their labour market prospects by leading to a higher paid or more secure job (50% of respondents) or would improve chances of finding employment (40%). On a similar theme, 36% of respondents indicated that they could be encouraged to do more training and learning if it was relevant to them. This may be indicative of the gap in advice and guidance noted above about what types of training are most appropriate. Here it is worth noting that educational, qualifications and



training systems operate in different ways in different countries, such that migrant workers may lack basic knowledge of how the UK labour market operates and of the role of different labour market intermediaries. Some of the South Asian migrant workers had particularly strident views on the matter:

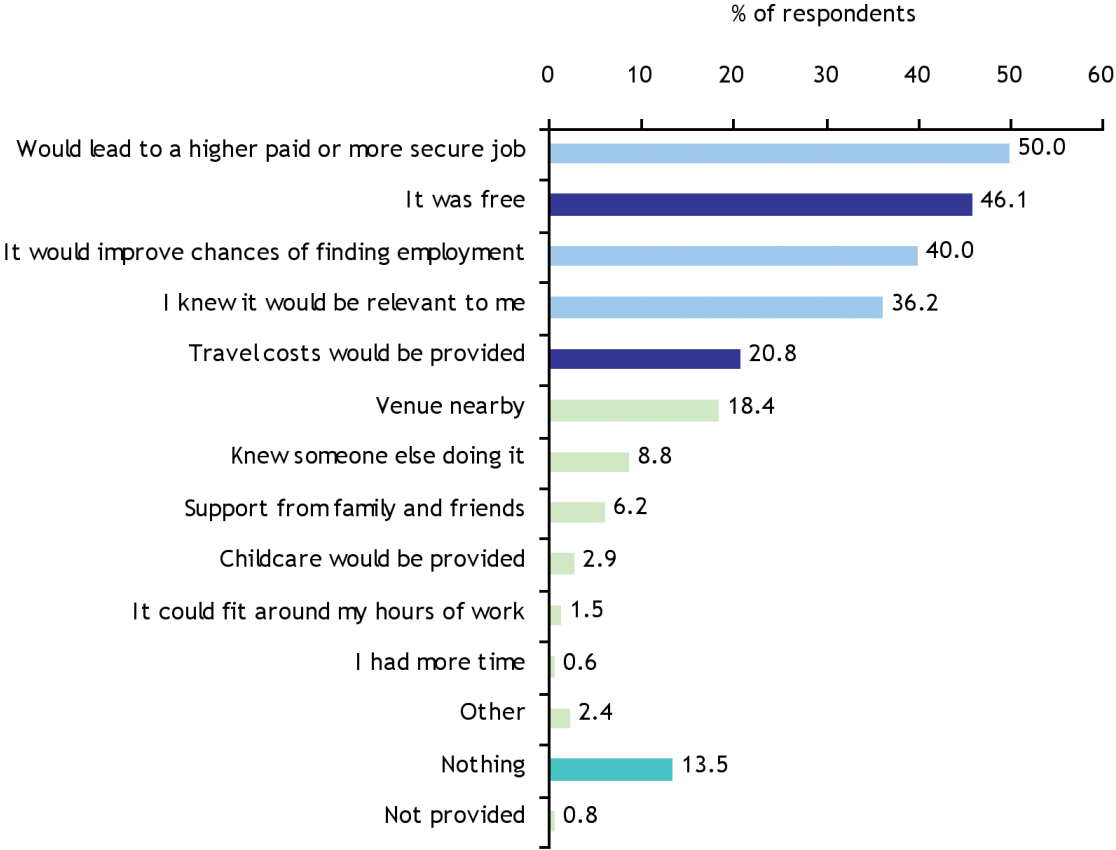
“What I think personally is that I desperately need professional advice over here because we are just, we are not familiar about the system over here. Where to go, what to get, what to do, so as for our professional development or here is concerned, we strictly need professional advice” (Indian man with higher degree qualifications and professional experience).

Issues relating to the cost of training are also important, with 46% of respondents indicating that they could be encouraged to do more training and learning if it was free and 21% if their travel costs would be provided. This suggests that a move towards migrants paying more towards the costs of training and learning may have a detrimental effect on take up.

By contrast issues of peer and family support and childcare provision were relatively less important (see Figure 9.9). Likewise, time constraints do not emerge as a major issue from a migrant perspective, despite the fact that some interviewees from third-party organisations identified this as an issue for migrant workers who may work long hours already.

14% of respondents indicated that nothing could encourage them to do more training and learning; (this sub-group may be thought of as classic ‘economic migrants’ whose foremost objectives are monetary).

Figure 9.9 Ways in which labour migrants could be encouraged to do more training and learning



## 9.5 Implications for skills and regional economic development policy

### 9.5.1 Overview

From an economic development perspective, there is a fundamental tension between the potential to use migrant workers' skills in higher value-added activities and their role in reinforcing a 'low-skill equilibrium'. The evidence presented in previous chapters has highlighted the importance of migrants in filling labour shortages - especially, but not exclusively, in low-skilled occupations. There is a danger that employers may adopt a short-term perspective in addressing labour shortages and skill deficiencies. Employing migrant labour (whether skilled or unskilled) may seem to be an easier and cheaper option than adopting a strategy of attracting non-employed local people from core jobless groups. Likewise, it might seem an easier option than training their own existing staff, capital investment in plant and machinery and/or reforming labour processes. Lack of such investment in labour and capital may undermine the long-term viability of their businesses. As noted by an interviewee from a third-party organisation:

"It's easier and cheaper for an employer to take on someone from eastern Europe than to spend money on retraining someone who's actually worked 30 years at [large local manufacturer] and got made redundant 2 years ago and has not been able to find work."

In so doing, the long-term and endemic underperformance of certain sectors which indigenous workers have been reluctant to enter, and which are characterised by recruitment and retention problems, as well as tight profit margins, is likely to be perpetuated. Gilmore and Danson (2007) have suggested that migrant workers in less skilled occupations in such sectors fulfil the role of a 'reserve army', which has stopped certain organisations and sectors from restructuring labour processes and moving up the value-added chain.

One interviewee from a third-party organisation questioned whether there is a conflict between an economic migration policy and the government's policy to reduce worklessness, noting that (as highlighted in 7.3) attributes of migrant workers (especially 'soft skills' encompassed in attitude, work ethic and reliability) were often preferred by employers to those of the core jobless groups. The interviewee also stated:

"From an LSC point of view [the difficulty is that] the very people that Government policy is trying to up-skill, when they do re-skill they can't get employment because it's being filled with migrant labour."

Highly-skilled migrants can displace UK nationals at the same or lower skills levels. So it is appropriate and necessary to enable vulnerable groups to compete more effectively in the labour market. It remains important to engage with employers and to improve the broad employability skills of workless groups. Potentially, there is an important role here for Employment and Skills Boards and for services (such as Train to Gain) concerned with improving skills levels of those who are in work currently, but who may be at risk of displacement.

What the comment above highlights also is the need for policy makers to take account of employers' attitudes and behaviour and to work with them to make best use of migrant workers' skills and to consider how those who are currently in worklessness might be utilised.

Some interviewees from third-party organisations questioned whether migration was a short-term stop gap or a long-term solution to the region's skills needs. As noted in 9.4.1, it is questionable how long 'aspiring migrants' will be content to be 'trapped' in less-skilled jobs in the secondary labour market. There is an 'economic risk' to business that the numbers of migrant workers who have come to the West Midlands over the last few years may decrease, given changes in the relative attractiveness of competing destinations and increased calls for some migrants to return to their home countries in order to mitigate unfavourable economic, social and demographic impacts of out-migration.

As noted in 6.4.2, opinions amongst third-party organisations were mixed regarding the propensity of current migrant workers to stay in the UK and whether current levels of migration could or should be sustained. From a policy perspective the possibility of a downturn in the volume, and a change in the profile of migrant workers, needs to be considered. In this context, there are concerns that migrant labour is not necessarily a sustainable and long-term answer to regional (and national) economic and skills problems. Hence, it makes sense to look to ensure that UK nationals who are currently outside the labour market have the requisite attitudes and skills to enable them to take up employment. Likewise it is important to invest in the skills of young people and adults as they enter and maintain employment. Hence, although downward trends cannot be linked directly with an increase in employment of migrant workers, it is a matter of concern that in the West Midlands there has been a reduction in Apprenticeship starts over the period from 2004/5 to 2006/7.

It also makes sense from a regional economic development perspective to make better use of the skills of migrant workers for the benefit of the regional economy. This means recognising that migrant workers are heterogeneous and prioritising accordingly. For classic 'economic migrants' who are in the UK for a short period solely for the money, basic health and safety and language training may be all that is required (and all that makes economic sense - at least in the short-term). However, there is an economic case for helping 'aspiring migrants' who wish to stay for longer periods to make better use of their skills. Of course, there is a possibility that 'aspiring migrants' will move on, but without the opportunity to better utilise their skills, that move may come earlier rather than later. After all, from a migrant perspective, there is a danger that their skills (particularly those of a specialist nature) may be depleted through under-utilisation.

As noted above, evidence from the literature and from the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey do suggest that the skills of many migrants are under-utilised. There is some evidence from interviews with third-party organisations that as they become more established in the UK some are asking how to get a job more suited to their qualifications. The key implication for policy is that the skills of migrant workers could be better utilised in the local economy to improve business performance, innovation and enterprise and lead on to productivity improvements.

### 9.5.2 Skills utilisation

The discussion above indicates that there would be advantages for migrant workers themselves and for the regional economy from better utilisation of migrants' skills. From the information gathered in this research it is clear that many migrants have qualifications and skills that they are not using in their current employment. In some instances these qualifications and skills are in sectors and occupations where there are skills shortages.

There are four aspects to enhancing skills utilisation (see Otter, 2007) and the following subsections consider each aspect in turn:

- Qualification recognition
- Skills recognition
- Language skills
- Employment and progression.

A comprehensive framework for skills utilisation would incorporate all of these aspects, since many individuals would benefit from actions under one or more headings.

### 9.5.2.1 Qualification recognition

In focus groups, a number of migrants who wished to make use of their qualifications (and only some migrants may wish to do so - as discussed below) highlighted difficulties in getting overseas qualifications recognised. There are national structures available for recognition of academic and vocational qualifications, but few migrants made reference to these; (it is unclear whether this is because of a lack of knowledge about the existence of such qualification recognition services or because migrant workers intended to stay in the UK for a short time and considered qualification recognition inappropriate in such circumstances).

One focus group participant had had his Indian qualifications compared with British ones, but his degree from India did not translate to degree level in the UK. He reported that he was now doing GCSEs on-line. Another individual reported that he was taking UK qualifications in an unrelated field, rather than pursuing employment in his specialist field, despite skills shortages in his field. This is suggestive of a possible information gap - both on the part of employers (insufficient numbers of whom may be aware of the qualifications of migrant workers) and on the part of migrant workers (who may lack knowledge as to how best to find appropriate routes to utilising their qualifications).

### 9.5.2.2 Skills recognition

Skills recognition is more complex (Otter, 2007). Key issues (for migrant workers and for refugees) may include little or no work experience in the UK, the lack of a reference from a UK employer, problems understanding how the UK labour market operates, poor English language skills, employers' attitudes to migrants and shortcomings in the infrastructure for skills recognition (Phillimore et al., 2007). Here it is salient to note that APL (Accreditation of Prior Learning) is less well developed in the UK than in countries such as the Netherlands, France and Germany (Phillimore et al., 2006). In some instances migrant workers may have skills in sectors and occupations where there are skills shortages, but the difficulties highlighted above may mean that a 'match' is not achieved.

In focus group discussions in the West Midlands migrant workers wanting to pursue employment in fields where they had specialist skills and experience elsewhere indicated that they had difficulty in gaining recognition. This was a source of disappointment and frustration for them (as outlined in 5.9, 6.4.2 and 6.5.2). On the basis of focus group discussions it appears that recognition of skills is a larger problem than some migrant workers expect when they come to the UK. Then having become frustrated about lack of success in securing employment at a level they consider commensurate with their skills there appears to be an information gap regarding how and where to go to seek information, advice and guidance on how to proceed. As outlined above, this reflects the lack of clear mechanisms for skills recognition across the UK. However, some sectors (such as construction) have addressed skills recognition issues and there is scope for further Sector Skills Council (SSC) activity to address current barriers to skills utilisation (Otter, 2007).

### 9.5.2.3 Language skills

Language skills have been highlighted in 9.2 as fundamental. ESOL courses are the best known route for gaining English language skills and demand for ESOL has grown considerably. Several of the third-party interviewees highlighted that it was difficult to plan and deliver ESOL to a relatively mobile population. As an interviewee from a college explained:

"It's an administrative nightmare; they [the migrant workers] don't actually say we are only here for a few months. They are here for a few months and then they disappear and then our success rates and retention and achievements are up the spout."

Concern was also expressed about the impact of changes to ESOL funding in 2007. However, traditional ESOL courses may not be appropriate for many migrant workers, many of whom have a good grounding in English and who wish to improve their English in a relatively short period. It has been noted that alternative routes (e.g. via learndirect) may be appropriate for at least some migrant workers. The issue of inappropriateness of traditional ESOL courses for some migrant workers (and their employers) has been recognised with the launch of new 'ESOL for Work' qualifications in October 2007. The new qualifications are shorter and more work-focused than traditional ESOL qualifications. As such, it is hoped that the new qualifications will help employers benefit from improved communication skills and productivity, and that this will encourage employers to contribute to the cost of training.

For most migrant workers interviewed who wished to improve their English it was the development of English language skills, rather than certification/recognition of those skills that was of primary concern.

#### 9.5.2.4 Employment and progression

The process of qualification and skills recognition and development of English language skills takes time (Otter, 2007) and in the interim many migrant workers (and refugees [see OECD, 2006]) find less skilled jobs in order to earn a wage. Of necessity, employment (of any kind) is likely to be prioritised over progression at the outset of a migrant's stay.

Other than English language skills (which most interviewees appeared keen to improve), not all migrant workers are interested in developing skills related to employment which would help them to progress in their current job or another job. This is especially so for some of the younger migrants who come to the UK for a limited period - perhaps for a few months to pay for their studies, or as a kind of 'gap year'. For these individuals the experiences of living away from home in a new country and earning more money than would be possible at home are what is most important. Nevertheless, evidence from focus group interviews indicates that migrant workers in this category are willing to move between employers for better employment conditions.

Those migrant workers intending from the outset to stay in the UK for longer periods, or who change their initial plans and decide to stay for longer, are more likely to be interested in, and offer a better prospect for employers and for the region, for progression in employment.

From the focus groups and some comments from the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey, it is clear that some migrants feel that there are better prospects for progression in the UK if they work hard and take opportunities that are open to them than in their home country. Hence it is likely to be more appropriate to focus attention and resources in training and skills development on 'aspiring migrants' who are planning to stay in the UK beyond the immediate short-term.

#### 9.5.3 Knowledge transfer

While the foremost emphasis in the chapter has been on skills, it has been argued that there is value in adopting a broader knowledge perspective on migration (Williams, 2007), on the basis that migrants are potentially significant actors in knowledge transfer. However, migrant workers with the capacity to act as knowledge brokers may face barriers in utilising and applying their knowledge in the workplace. The implication for policy at the level of the firm is that there is scope for greater recognition that migrant workers may represent an untapped source of creativity, innovation and enhanced productivity, if appropriate mechanisms can be set in place to enable learning and knowledge transfer.

### 9.5.4 Concluding comments

It is clear that competence in English is fundamental to progressing in the UK labour market and to integrating into society. Even for migrants workers coming to the UK for a short period only, basic communication skills are likely to be helpful in nearly all jobs and for everyday life in the UK.

It is evident from Chapter 7 and from the information presented in this Chapter that most employers are pleased with their experience of employing migrant workers. In particular, they value their soft skills (including their reliability and work ethic). Although English language skills are important for all jobs, many employers appeared satisfied with the level of English language skills that migrant workers had. Migrant workers reported relatively little investment by employers in language and other training - although experiences vary and there are examples of good practice.

The skills of many migrant workers are underutilised currently. For the youngest migrant workers, who may be in the UK for the short-term to earn money and experience living away from home, prior to returning to their origin country to continue an educational course, this is understandable. In other instances, however, this under-utilisation of skills represents a loss to the regional economy - and to individual migrant workers also. Even though the plans of a substantial proportion of migrant workers are uncertain, and employers may be reluctant to invest in them because of the risk that they will move (and so the employer will not reap the benefit), it is possible that without such investment 'aspiring migrants' will move on in any case.

Although the English language remains a strong pull factor in attracting migrant workers to the UK, it cannot be assumed that the migrant workers who are perceived as most attractive currently will come to the West Midlands in the same numbers in the future. Hence, there is an ongoing need to invest in enhancing the employability of skills of other existing (and potential) workers in the West Midlands.

# 10. Implications for other policy areas

## Key points:

An influx of migrant workers has led to greater pressure on private rented accommodation. Over time, more migrant workers may seek accommodation in the owner-occupied and social rented sectors.

Most migrants are in employment and do not claim benefits.

Currently the age structure and household composition of the migrant population is such that it does not place substantial demands on the health service in aggregate, (although there may be pressures in some local areas).

The presence of children will increase demand for school places in areas of migrant concentration.

The speed of change in population in some areas and uncertainty about migrant numbers poses ongoing challenges for service providers.

Tensions/differences have been noted between: (a) migrant workers and the indigenous population;(b) migrant workers and refugees/asylum seekers; (c) migrant workers and ethnic minorities; (d) groups of migrant workers; (e) 'old' and 'new' members of the same national group; (f) permanent and agency staff.

Some national groups of migrant workers appear to be preferred by employers. Qualitative evidence suggests that Poles are viewed as particularly desirable.

There is a growing literature on 'good practice' in dealing with the local impacts of migration and Web-based information sources have been launched to provide information and guidance to migrant workers, employers and other agencies.

## 10.1 Introduction

The secondary data analysis and primary research undertaken for this study was concentrated primarily on economic and labour market issues. Selected information was collected on broader family, household and housing circumstances. Coupled with intentions to stay, these issues have important implications for service provision. This is the subject of section 10.2.

The nature of concerns about tensions and differences within and between migrant and non-migrant groups is the focus of section 10.3.

Section 10.4 introduces some of the growing literature on 'good practice' in dealing with local impacts of migration and some of the information sources being developed for migrant workers, employers and others concerned with issues relating to economic migration.

## 10.2 Family and household structure, intentions to stay and service provision

Analyses of secondary data sources and information from the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey agree in painting a picture of a migrant worker population which is overwhelmingly composed of younger adults and in which males outnumber females. However, about two-fifths of the migrants included in the West Midlands

Migrant Worker Survey lived with other family members. Some of these family members may be siblings, but others will be wives/husbands, children and parents, etc. While for some migrant workers the move to the UK is temporary, other will seek to establish themselves and start new lives in the UK (as outlined in Chapter 6), so seeking more permanent housing and probably making greater demands on public services.

The West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey revealed that for a substantial proportion of migrant workers initial plans about length of stay in the UK had changed. On balance, the tendency was for migrant workers in the sample to decide to stay longer than first anticipated. It is likely that such migrant workers will seek to improve their housing circumstances over time. South Asian communities exhibit a high rate of home ownership and it is likely that new migrants from these countries will also seek to enter owner-occupation, sometimes with the help of relatives already living in the UK. However, the Survey of English Housing reveals that owner-occupation rates have been declining for all ethnic groups in recent years for two main reasons:

- continued house price inflation has made house purchase unaffordable for people on lower incomes; and
- the growth of the 'buy-to-let' market has increased the supply of rented housing, while further fuelling house price inflation.

The increased number of migrant workers may lead to greater competition for rented accommodation and either increase rents or lead to an increase in the sharing of accommodation and an increased incidence of overcrowding. As noted in 5.11, migrants who have been in the UK for some time may seek accommodation in the social rented sector and so increase the pressure of demand on such housing in areas where it is already insufficient to meet demand (as in some rural areas).

Information from secondary data sources on the economic position of recent migrants and information from the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey highlights that employment levels are high. The low incidence of unemployment is confirmed by DWP figures which show that a very small number of overseas NINo registrations are made in order to claim benefit. A8 migrants are not entitled to claim benefits until they have been working in the UK for 12 months, so short-term migrants are unlikely to claim such benefits. However, all workers are entitled to tax credits and to claim child benefit.

Given the age structure of the migrant population, it is unlikely to place substantial demands on health services, unless migrants bring children to the UK or have children in the UK (although there may be pressures in some local areas). The presence of children will also increase the demand for school places. As is already the case, this will be concentrated in areas of migrant settlement. There will be increased pressure on schools to cater for children whose first language is not English: in January 2007 15.8% of primary school children in the West Midlands and 38.7% of primary school children in Birmingham had a first language other than English (DCSF, 2007), but this reflects the existence of established minority communities as well as new migrants.

Clearly the speed of change in local populations as a result of immigration of migrant workers (and their families in some instances) has placed pressure on some local services and communities - particularly in those local areas where there was no established infrastructure to deal with new populations. These are the subject of ongoing consideration by the Migration Impacts Forum (see 2.2). The uncertainty about numbers of migrants currently, and also about future trends, poses ongoing challenges for service providers.

## 10.3 Community cohesion

### 10.3.1 Tensions and differences

There is some evidence from qualitative interviews with third-party organisations and from focus groups of tensions between and within different population groups.



### 10.3.1.1 Between migrant workers and the indigenous population

As noted in Chapter 8, it is possible that the employment of migrant workers can have negative impacts on the employment experience and prospects of some UK nationals - especially those with poor skills. Some interviewees from third-party organisations suggested that the "white working class" feel threatened by migrant workers - sentiments expressed included:

- "Poles get jobs easily and get promoted"
- "They (i.e. migrants) are better qualified than locals."

An employer representative noted that it was important that local people are not overlooked in recruitment and training programmes (as outlined in Chapter 9):

"We need to ensure that we don't disenfranchise the indigenous population. This [i.e. migrant labour] must not be a substitute. There is still a need within the economy for us to train our own people."

Moreover, new populations can cause strains on service delivery, especially when the speed of influx of migrant workers is rapid and resources are stretched already. In these circumstances myths and perceptions may be more influential in shaping behaviour than objective evidence. Several interviewees from third-party organisations expressed concerns about the British National Party (BNP) "stirring up" tensions and it was noted that racism could be fuelled by the local and national press - even where there was no evidence for migration having negative impacts.

### 10.3.1.2 Between migrant workers and refugees/asylum seekers

Some third-party interviewees expressed concern that there was a tendency for employers to favour migrant workers (who may be in the UK for the short-term only) over refugees/asylum seekers (who are more likely to settle in the UK long-term). One interviewee noted that EU migrants represent a "quick-win" compared to refugees, while an agency representative pointed to the practical reasons why the former group might be preferred:

"Employers like east Europeans: there are no complications with work permits or immigration."

Likewise, an observer of the situation in Stoke noted that, in practical terms, recruitment of A8 migrants may be less complex than engagement of refugees, but suggested other reasons also why A8 migrants might be preferred:

"There is a clear substitution process going on with A8 workers taking over jobs which had been held by asylum seekers with the right to work or refugees. [There are] two main reasons for that: the legitimate argument that these people's paperwork are such a mess that we are not sure and it's much easier to recruit people we know are legal. The second is the idea that certain groups of the asylum seeking/refugee community have been here a long time and are militant."

### 10.3.1.3 Between migrant workers and ethnic minorities

In a similar vein other third-party interviewees suggested that in some instances recent economic migrants were preferred to the established ethnic minority population. One reported that instead of Asian labour being picked up in Smethwick to work in the Vale of Evesham, it was now the case that Polish and Lithuanian workers were collected. As a result it was contended that unemployment amongst Asian groups had risen. Another indicated:

"Economic migrants appear to be more successful at getting jobs than the local indigenous population - particularly Asian young men."

It was noted that this might lead to particular tensions between some individuals from ethnic minority groups and migrant workers. One interviewee remarked:

"You'd have more problems between other ethnic minorities in Britain and migrant workers than you would with [white] British people".

Several interviewees from third-party organisations indicated that, in general, migrant workers tend to be less tolerant of people from ethnic minorities than the White British population. In some focus groups with interviewees from A8 countries surprise, and sometimes concern, was expressed about the larger than expected number of non-White (especially Asian) faces in the major urban areas of the West Midlands. Such concerns prompted one third-party interviewee to describe some east Europeans as "quite racist ... not tolerant to Muslims". This was mainly attributed to 'ignorance', stemming from a lack of experience and knowledge of other cultures. Indeed, a Slovakian focus group participant recognised this herself:

"I think we are in eastern Europe and middle Europe we are racist I think because we are not used to living with these people, you know, if you grow up with these people, but it's normal for you, like you meet somebody on the street like a woman with a veil, full veil, it's sort of normal for you because, you know, you live there. But in Slovakia if this kind of woman walked on the street everybody would look at it, believe me, if she is walking in the capital everybody is going to be looking."

Some migrant workers were positive about their experience of multiculturalism in a city such as Birmingham. A Polish man in his late 20s explained:

"For me it's a very good thing, it's a very healthy experience because when I arrived here and I saw lots of people from Africa, different colour skin, different culture, different religion, so it's very different in Poland".

This particular individual had experience of working in Ireland also, and reported that, in general, he found UK-nationals more tolerant of people from a range of different national groups than had been his experience in Ireland.

#### 10.3.1.4 Between groups of migrant workers

Some interviewees from third-party organisations highlighted tensions between migrant groups. In part, this might stem from perceptions of employer preferences for some national groups over others (see 10.3.2), while in other instances it was attributed to historical and political differences. Tensions were reported on some farms where migrant workers were employed between different national groups of migrant workers. The employer response was to segregate them and to allocate work on different parts of the farm - if at all possible.

#### 10.3.1.5 Between 'old' and 'new' members of the same national group

It might be presumed that recently arrived migrant workers would forge links with more established members of the same national group. However, this was not always the case. One interviewee from a third-party organisation remarked:

"There is a marked difference between the character of the original Poles and the current ones. The original ones came here as political immigrants ... they were forced to leave."

Likewise, while some migrants from South Asian groups highlighted links with established Asian communities, others did not seek such links and deliberately sought employment outside Asian-owned businesses.

### 10.3.1.6 Between permanent and agency staff

Reference has been made in 5.10 to the use of agencies as a recruitment channel for migrant workers, but for a preference amongst some migrant workers to move on to non-agency employment. One issue here, albeit reported more interviewees from third-party organisations rather than by migrant workers themselves, was the use of different rates of pay for workers doing the same jobs - with agency workers earning less than non-agency ones. Some interviewees noted that this issue could be a source of tension within the workplace.

### 10.3.2 Differences in desirability of different sub-groups

Reference has been made in section 7.5 to preferences amongst some employers for migrant workers from some national groups over others. From the qualitative elements of the research it is possible to rank different sub-groups of migrant workers in terms of their desirability to employers.

The evidence suggests that Polish workers are especially 'desirable' - one third- party interviewee contended:

"[We] never get any complaints about Poles."

This preference for Poles is recognised by migrants themselves, with one third- party representative reporting instances of Czechs and Romanians pretending to be Polish to conceal their poorer qualifications and of some refugees/asylum seekers pretending to be east European migrant workers (on the basis that it can be difficult for employers to distinguish between economic migrants and asylum seekers/refugees). After Poles, other eastern European workers may be preferred. This is implicit in the comment of an interviewee who expressed concern that in the longer-term it would be necessary to look "further east for migrant workers as the economies [of the A8 countries] pick up").

Conversely, the qualitative information collected in this project suggests that the 'less desirable' groups include gypsies and Somalis. UK-nationals in the core jobless groups would appear to be ranked some way below east European migrants, but above the 'less desirable' migrant worker groups.

## 10.4 Good practice

There is a growing literature on reviewing 'good practice' in dealing with local impacts of migration, designed to help local authorities and Local Strategic Partnerships to respond positively and proactively to migration - for example, see Audit Commission (2007), IDeA (2007); Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007); Institute of Community Cohesion (2007). Often the main emphasis is on migration from eastern Europe, focusing on support for migrants and support for the settled community in coming to terms with change, but much of the content is relevant more widely. 'Migration Excellence' is a programme managed by IDeA on behalf of DCLG, to support learning in the local government sector by providing support to certain councils to help manage the impacts of migration from central and eastern Europe.

Another example of good practice is the Migrant Gateway portal - <http://www.migrantgateway.eu/> - developed by the East of England Development Agency and partners. This site is designed to provide information and guidance for migrant workers (those already in the UK and those thinking of coming to the UK), employers, trade unions and other agencies who work with them. The aim has been to bring together information (from official and other sites) about legal information, migrants' rights as employees/workers, rights to housing, immigration status, healthcare, etc. There are also two phone helplines: one providing advice to migrants in Czech, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian and English, and an Employer Advice Line giving advice about the practicalities of employing Migrant Workers. The portal provides information of relevance to migrant workers and employers in all regions. Rather than establish very similar services elsewhere, it makes sense to develop and build upon such good practice examples.

# 11. Conclusions

## Key points:

This chapter highlights some of the key themes emerging from the research and highlights the main findings from the study.

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The findings presented relate to a particular point in time. It cannot be assumed that current trends will continue in the future.

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This study, like other studies focusing on migrant workers, is beset by deficiencies in the information base - most notably the absence of comprehensive data on emigration and return migration. There is an urgent need to address shortcomings in official data on international migration and to improve the information base more generally in order to inform economic and social policy and planning.

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Migration is a dynamic phenomenon and is characterised by uncertainty - about numbers of migrants and migrants' intentions. This dynamism and uncertainty are not new phenomena, but have become increasingly important over time.

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The number of migrant workers in the West Midlands has increased markedly in recent years. Although A8 migrants have been the most important component of increase, it is important to remember that there are substantial numbers of migrant workers from other countries - notably the New Commonwealth.

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Recent migrants are overwhelmingly young and are in employment. They make an important contribution to the West Midlands economy.

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It is difficult to measure the impact of migration with any certainty, but secondary data analyses reveal no statistically significant evidence at the regional level for a dampening of wages or an increase in unemployment as a consequence of labour migration. Those UK nationals who are in the weakest positions vis-à-vis the labour market are most likely to feel any negative impact.

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Migrant workers are disproportionately clustered in low wage sectors and occupations. The segregation of migrant workers in particular labour market segments has implications for progression and for the openness of parts of the labour market to other groups.

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Agencies play an important role in the migration process and in shaping labour market norms. Some interviewees from third party organisations expressed concern about the role of some agencies.

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It is questionable whether the attraction of migrant workers - particularly from the same groups and in the same numbers - is sustainable in future. Therefore it is important that other groups of (potential) workers are not overlooked.

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There is scope for better utilisation of migrant workers' skills and experience for the benefit of the West Midlands economy.

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The findings presented in this report are specific to a particular point in time, shortly after the UK, Ireland and Sweden were the first EU15 countries to open their borders to migrants from the A8 countries of central and eastern Europe. Without the benefit of hindsight we are unable to say in a longer-term

historical perspective how distinctive the last few years have been in the migration history of the UK and the West Midlands. It cannot be assumed that current trends will necessarily continue - particularly in their current form. Nor should we generalise too much from the findings presented here to all migrant workers in the West Midlands: the results outlined in previous chapters relate to the particular samples of migrant workers, employers and third-party organisations interviewed. Moreover, none of the secondary data sources provide a comprehensive picture. There is an urgent need to address shortcomings in official statistics on international migration and improve the information base more generally in order to inform policy at local, regional and national levels.

Hence, one key theme emerging from the report is that there is considerable uncertainty - both about the numbers of migrants, the intentions of migrant workers and about how migration flows will change in the future as a result of changes in the region/the UK, origin countries and competing destinations. Changes in migration policy - notably the rolling out of a Points Based System - will also have important implications.

A second key theme is dynamism. Migration is by its very nature dynamic. There have been changes in migration flows over a relatively short period and there will be changes in future. However, the speed of change is faster than has been the case with many former migration flows to the UK. This in itself is a function of globalisation, the greater mobility of capital and labour, and the ease of international travel with the advent of cheap flights, etc.

Thirdly, and closely related to the themes of dynamism and uncertainty outlined above, is the sense that current migration flows are 'new' and 'different' in character to those which have gone previously. This is to be expected for EU citizens who can come and go easily; (whereas many individuals from the New Commonwealth may feel that they cannot do this). As an interviewee from a third-party organisation stated in respect of A8 migrants:

*"What seems to be different this time around is more flexibility of movement ... so people do come over here and spend short stints of time and then go back."*

Many of the shorter-term migrants tend to be young, often single, people. Longer-term and permanent migrants are more likely to bring their families with them, increasing demand for housing, education and health services in areas of settlement. However, the uncertainty about migrant intentions outlined above, means that some individuals who came for short periods may stay for longer than they initially expected.

What is clear is that the West Midlands labour market has been opened to a greater extent than previously to migrants from eastern Europe, from other parts of the world, than was the case previously. The most recent influx of labour migrants has presented a 'shock' to the labour market, against an ongoing trend of increasing flows of labour migrants more generally. Due to shortcomings in available data, most notably the lack of information on emigration (i.e. numbers of migrants leaving) and return migration - it is difficult to measure the impact of migrant workers on the regional economy and labour market with any certainty. In this research use has been made of a variety of official and administrative data sources to provide a picture. Some of these (such as the LFS) are likely to underestimate numbers of migrants, while some administrative sources (such as the WRS) may provide an overestimate at a particular point in time because leavers are not recorded. This secondary data analysis has been supplemented by information collected from surveys of migrant workers, employers of migrant workers and interviews with third-party organisations undertaken specifically for this research.

The analyses have revealed that:

- The number of migrant workers in the West Midlands has increased markedly since 2002 and especially since May 2004 when labour migrants from the A8 countries were granted access to the UK labour market
- The increase in migrant workers to the West Midlands occurred at a similar rate to the UK average. The West Midlands has slightly more migrant workers from A8 countries and New Commonwealth countries than the UK average, and fewer migrants from EU15 countries and the Old Commonwealth
- At sub-regional level there have been contrasts in the scale and speed of change at local level
- Migrant workers are predominantly young and a substantial proportion have higher level qualifications
- Migrant workers play an important role in some sectors of the regional economy, such as manufacturing, health & social care, hotels & restaurants, agriculture, etc
- Migrant workers are clustered by occupation and increasingly account for a growing share of employment in operative and elementary occupations
- The lower skilled and lower paid areas of employment where migrant workers are concentrated are associated with higher-than-average rates of employment turnover - typically these are jobs associated with relatively unattractive working conditions where employers face labour shortages
- Although UK nationals have left some 'migrant-dense' sectors and occupations while numbers of migrant workers employed in such areas have increased, secondary data analysis suggests that, in aggregate, the displacement of UK nationals is voluntary, rather than involuntary
- However, it is also clear that those UK nationals with poor skills who are most vulnerable to labour market restructuring generally are also the most likely to be impacted negatively by an influx of migrant workers
- There is no statistically significant evidence that migrant workers have contributed to a rise in unemployment at the local area level
- Likewise, there is no evidence from secondary data sources that growth in migrant worker employment is associated with lower rates of earnings growth
- There is anecdotal evidence from particular labour market and local areas that migration can have negative effects
- Migrant workers make an important contribution to regional GVA
- The overwhelming majority of employers are satisfied with the experience of employing migrant workers and the majority of migrant workers in the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey indicate that their overall experience of the UK has been positive.

The clustering of migrant workers in certain sectors and occupations outlined above is indicative of segregation which is a recurring theme emerging from the research findings. Segregation has implications for integration and for progression of migrants and for 'openness' of certain labour market niches to other workers. Hiring through networks (i.e. through existing migrant workers) can become exclusionary, leading to some employers gaining a reputation as a 'migrant-only' employer. Predominance of languages in the workplace other than English, coupled with on-the-job training, may lead to greater segmentation (McGovern, 2007). This may cause resentment on the part of UK nationals and is not desirable for 'aspiring migrants' who are keen to improve their English. Indeed, several migrant workers participating in focus

groups expressed disappointment about limited opportunities to interact with UK nationals.

A further key theme emerging from the research, and one that is in part related to the process of segregation outlined above, is the role of agencies in shaping labour market norms. Agencies have a key role in initial recruitment of migrants and appear to be regarded as the new 'baddies' by some third-party organisation interviewees and by some migrants - who make clear that they prefer non-agency jobs. Some third-party interviewees noted that employers are increasingly contracting out to agencies, especially with tightening up of legislation around the activities of gangmasters. The general sentiment was: "it's agencies that are the problem." However, interviewees were careful to say that there are both 'good' and 'bad' agencies, making it clear that "some of the agencies do a perfectly good job" and that "some of them have got integrity". Nevertheless, the exploitation that existed was often associated by interviewees with agencies - particularly in labour-intensive industries. Given their important role in the employment of migrant workers, some interviewees felt that organising English language training should be the responsibility of agencies, rather than employers (who used agencies) or the migrants themselves.

One interviewee from a third-party organisation highlighted how agencies and migrant labour had come to play a more important role in the regional economy and labour market more generally:

" ... as a core workforce has shrunk, an indigenous core workforce has shrunk, the employer hasn't whole scale recruited migrant labour, what it's done is it greatly increased the amount of agencies, so you're starting to see this balance where the agency was something you used to fill gaps, it's actually become part of the employer's working arrangements in terms of their own company, and widespread across all sectors really."

This illustrates how agencies can play an important role in shaping labour market norms, particularly in secondary labour market segments. It highlights the need for policy makers to understand the role played by agencies in the labour market.

Looking ahead, the legislative and policy context plays an important role in shaping the volume and characteristics of migrant workers to the UK. The UK government has a policy of 'managed migration', which seeks to link flows of migrant workers to the needs of the national economy. From the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey and other local/regional migrant worker surveys elsewhere in the UK, it is clear that economic factors are paramount in migrant motivations. If conditions in home countries improve, or competing destinations become more attractive relative to the UK, migrant workers may look to locations other than the UK. This raises the question whether the attraction of migrants to the West Midlands is sustainable.

However, it is also clear that the English language as a world language is a strong pull factor in attracting migrant workers to the UK. Investment in improving English language was cited by a substantial proportion of migrants as a 'pull' factor, in part because better English language skills are likely to be useful for any future migration to the USA (or elsewhere) and/or in advancing careers in their home country. It is also evident that social and cultural factors play a role in migrants' decisions about whether and how long to stay in the UK.

Nevertheless, the economic risk that the number of migrant workers coming to the West Midlands may decrease in the future poses important challenges for policy. It suggests a need to ensure that alternative sources of labour are equipped with the necessary attitudes and skills to fill the jobs that are available. In particular, it is important that employers are encouraged to consider those who are currently workless (including large numbers of Incapacity Benefit claimants) as possible candidates for jobs. It is also important to continue to pursue current initiatives to upgrade the skills of those with no/poor qualifications.

From a regional economic development perspective there is a risk that undue reliance on migrant workers may delay business decisions to invest in capital or restructure labour processes in order to compete more effectively in the market place. Use of migrant workers to maintain operations in established ways may represent a 'quick fix' in the short-term, but may not be conducive to investment decisions and reforms necessary to achieve longer-term business success.

It is also clear from the West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey that many migrant workers skills are not fully utilised. In some instances there is a problem of qualification recognition and/or an information gap in migrant workers knowing where/how to go about getting their qualifications and skills recognised. In the case of some classic 'economic migrants' in the UK for a short period only, individual migrant workers are content to work beneath their skills level and reap the monetary rewards of employment in the UK. However, it is also clear that some of the more 'aspiring' migrant workers are frustrated by their under-employment and are keen to utilise and improve their skills and qualifications in the UK. In some instances, it is English language skills that hold them back, but this is not always the case. Currently, migrant workers represent an underutilised resource in the West Midlands regional economy. This suggests there is scope for 'targeting' of those migrant workers who might be more likely to stay in the West Midlands in the longer-term to improve language and other technical skills, as appropriate, in order that their contribution to the West Midlands regional economy can be enhanced.

Given the uncertainty and dynamism surrounding migration flows, it is important that the numbers, profile and impacts of migrant workers at regional and local levels are monitored in order to inform policy and planning. This might be best achieved through the forthcoming Continuous Household Survey (or a boost to it). The urgent need to improve the information base at national level to support economic and social policy has been recognised and work is underway to improve estimates. It is important that policy makers in the region keep abreast of changes in the information and evidence base on migrant worker numbers and impacts.

Much of the evidence presented here relates to a particular point in time. There is also scope for longitudinal research - at individual and employer level - to trace decision-making (of migrant workers and employers) and to gain greater insights into labour market and broader social impacts of migration, and how and what policy interventions may be appropriate to manage change.





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# Annex - Steering Group Members

Sue Reekie, Learning and Skills Council (Chair)

David Swales, Learning and Skills Council

James Davison, Learning and Skills Council

Liz Cox, Advantage West Midlands

Trevor Cornfoot, Advantage West Midlands

Amanda Turner, Staffordshire County Council, representing the Regional Assembly

Alison Bowyer, Staffordshire County Council

Chris Harvey, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce

Andy Bywater, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

Rose Poulter, West Midlands Local Government Association

Trudi Elliot, Government Office for the West Midlands

Shane Bryans, Government Office for the West Midlands

Chris Eade, Government Office for the West Midlands

Chris Brooks, Wychavon District Council

Gill Swaites, Herefordshire County Council

Stewart Meikle, West Midlands Regional Observatory

Naomi Rees, Birmingham Strategic Partnership

Peter Blythin, West Midlands NHS

Farhana Darwich, West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership

Hamish Wilson, Birmingham City Council

Jackie Muir, Government Office for the West Midlands

Kate Domone, Solihull Borough Council

Rachel Egan, Solihull Borough Council

Richard Browne, Birmingham City Council

Tony Bunker, Birmingham City Council

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Creator	Anne E. Green, David Owen and Paul Jones Institute for Employment Research University of Warwick, Coventry. CV4 7AL  Telephone: 024 7652 4113 Email: Anne.Green@warwick.ac.uk Web: www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/
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Contributor	Chris Owen and Jayne Francis BMG Research Holt Court, Heneage Street West, Aston Science Park, Birmingham. B7 4AX  T: +44 (0)121 333 6006 E: info@bmgresearch.co.uk
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