

MIGRANT WORKERS IN THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS

RESEARCH REPORT

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IONAD NÀISEANTA NA H-IMRICH
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Research instruments used in the study can be requested from the authors.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION

This study was commissioned by Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) to provide information and understanding of the role migrant workers play in the labour market in the Highlands and Islands, and to suggest how the support needs of employers and migrant workers might be addressed.

2. METHODS

The study adopted a mixed methods strategy, which included qualitative as well as quantitative methods. The inclusion of a range of stakeholders – employers, migrant workers, service providers and national organisations– in the research has ensured a multi-dimensional perspective on the issue of migrant labour. The main methods employed in the study were:

- A Literature Review
- Analysis of secondary data
- Interviews conducted with:
 - 53 employers
 - 25 migrant workers
 - Nine service providers (including two recruitment agents)
 - Four representatives of national bodies
- Focus group discussions with:
 - Employers (One group with six participants)
 - Migrant workers (Two groups with five and six participants respectively)
 - Representatives from public and voluntary sectors (One group with 11 representatives)

3. OVERALL FINDINGS

- The number of National Insurance Number (NINo) registrations of overseas nationals for the HIE area has more than doubled over the tax years 2003/04 and 2004/05, from 1,235 to 2,555 respectively. In Scotland as a whole, these registrations went up by nearly 50% over the same period.
- There has been an eleven-fold increase in the registration of EU accession states nationals in the HIE area over the tax years 2003/04 and 2004/05.
- In the tax year 2004/05, 1,320 (52%) overseas nationals registered in the HIE area on the National Insurance Recording System (NIRS) were from the EU accession states.
- Half of the overseas nationals who were registered on the NIRS stayed in the Eastern parts of the HIE area, in Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey as well as in Moray.
- The proportions of overseas nationals registered on the NIRS from different age groups have remained fairly stable over the years. Around 80% are 34 years of age or younger and approximately 40% are younger, than 25 years.
- Migrant workers who participated in the study were mainly employed in semi- skilled and unskilled work, and often in jobs that were significantly below their qualification levels and experience.

- Most study participants were of the view that migrant workers are undertaking work local people did not want, or for which no local people are available. Many employers accounted for the lack of locally available labour with relatively poor pay and irregular / long hours of work associated with particular jobs (hospitality, fish processing).
- All employers praised highly the commitment of migrant workers, their flexibility and quality of work - sometimes contrasting this with the performance of local workers.
- The majority of migrant workers reported that they were recruited by agencies often based in their countries of origin. Other routes included responding to job adverts and word of mouth.
- While about a third of employers reported that they had recruited migrant workers through private agencies, several also mentioned that the employment of one migrant worker resulted in further word of mouth recommendations, and subsequent recruitment of more migrants. Some employers were disappointed at the lack of adequate vetting of employees by recruitment agents, especially with regard to English language skills.
- Although, most migrant workers were pleased to be in work, their employment conditions were characterised by short term contracts, low pay, irregular patterns of working / long hours and lack of training opportunities.
- The main drivers for migration were earning an income, creating a better life for themselves and their families, as well as high unemployment and low wages in their own countries.
- The main challenges experienced by migrant workers were poor English language and communications skills, lack of interpretation and translation facilities, lack of appropriate accommodation, difficulties in banking and lack of information and advice. Migrants reported limited opportunities for social interaction outside work, especially for young people.
- With regard to migrant workers' long-term intention to remain in the Highlands and Islands, the picture was mixed. For most it was a very uncertain future, much depending on how the situation in their home countries developed in the short to medium term. Perhaps more importantly, the emphasis was on having positive experiences as well as access to good quality accommodation and services whilst in the Highlands and Islands.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Principles and Approaches

- It is important to recognise that *integration* is an interactive process, involving migrants as well as the host society.
- A *coordinated* approach is required which draws on the public and private sectors, as well as civil society to explore how they might jointly address fundamental infrastructural issues.
- There is a need to *clarify and agree* responsibilities and obligations of all stakeholders – i.e. employers, public sector bodies at local, regional and national levels, local communities and the voluntary sector.
- There is a need to create opportunities for sharing, and implementing '*good practice*' across sectors, organisations, stakeholders and geographical areas.

The following are the main recommendations arising out of the study:

4.2 Labour market issues

- More in-depth evidence is required to develop a better understanding of the roles migrant workers play in local labour markets, taking into account existing pools of labour (for example, older workers; workers with a disability; ethnic minorities and asylum/refugees). Furthermore, current and evolving policy initiatives (such as Fresh Talent) need to be based on such evidence.
- In collaboration with employers and other key stakeholders, there should be better forward planning related to population movement and demographic developments, with a view to ascertaining the infrastructural (housing, education and so on) requirements that need to be in place, to address the needs of changing and diverse populations.
- Employers should be encouraged to use only well regulated recruitment agencies with transparent fee structures, which involve migrant workers' associations, adhere to health and safety conditions and to the payment of at least the National Minimum Wage. Information about and contact details of such recruitment agencies should be made easily available, for example, through an information pack (see below).
- Mechanisms need to be in place to ensure that migrant workers do not suffer from exploitative wages and other poor working conditions. This is linked to the provision of clear information and advice (see below).
- There is some indicative evidence that migrant workers rarely receive an induction / orientation programme nor do they benefit from formal training offers. This area merits further investigation in terms of the extent to which migrant workers may disproportionately be deprived of such benefits, and the reasons for this.

4.3 Information and advice

- There is a need to develop a comprehensive information pack for migrant workers (and, indeed all newcomers) and employers. This should be undertaken collaboratively across agencies, including the involvement of migrants, employers, local authorities and trade unions at a regional level (Highlands and Islands).
- There should be an option to insert relevant local information and an opportunity to update information as required. The packs for workers should be available in English, as well as in the predominant languages spoken by migrants. The possibility of publishing information in a variety of formats (e.g. video, audio, and internet) should also be investigated.
- There is a need for an independent source of advice and information that migrant workers can access, whether in person, by telephone, or electronically. Such an arrangement would require the support of interpreters competent in a range of languages.

4.4 Promoting good relations

- Initiatives which will help to provide a bridge between migrants, other employees and local citizens to promote social inclusion and understanding should be actively promoted and supported. These initiatives should focus on the 'assets' (for example, qualifications, skills and experiences) that migrant workers bring to communities. A variety of mechanisms, such as mentoring / buddying and the use of the arts – should be explored in this context.

4.5 Promoting Inclusion

- A coherent multi-agency approach is required, which also includes the involvement of employers in relation to English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision. This should address issues related to:
 - The needs of migrants in terms of level of provision, progression and context (time and place) for learning.
 - Mapping of providers and their ability to deliver good quality provision at appropriate levels.
 - Other infrastructural issues required for effective language learning – e.g. training of ESOL tutors, including migrant workers and learning resources (for example, learning materials in libraries and local bookshops)
 - Delivery mechanisms given the geography of the Highlands and Islands.
 - The role of employers in the financing and actual provision of ESOL, and the removal of indirect barriers (for example, due to conflicts between work commitments and the availability of language tuition).
 - Promoting social and cultural understanding: for migrants an understanding of Scottish society, and for settled communities an understanding of migrants' cultures.
- Consideration should also be given to funding provision which combines language with 'social orientation' classes, which all migrants should be encouraged to access as an initial introduction. Employers should also be made aware of the importance of such classes, and encouraged to enable their workers to attend.

4.6 Services

- There are three main issues that require to be addressed with regard to all services (e.g. education, careers advice, health, police employment and housing):
 - Enhanced information and awareness about services available which should be addressed through the various mechanisms discussed above.
 - A multi-agency approach to interpretation and translation services which explores and uses a variety of media (e.g. telephone, face to face and video-conferencing), to provide a consistent level of service.
 - An emphasis on delivering 'culturally competent' services tailored to a wide range of cultures.
- There is a need to explore the best way to support individuals on the issue of accrediting qualifications and experiences obtained overseas.
- Difficulties encountered with opening bank accounts and accessing debit cards requires intervention at regional and national (Scottish and UK) levels.
- There is a need to clarify the rights of migrant workers to housing and to provide them with information on accessing affordable and good quality housing.
- In the medium and long term, the mainstreaming of migrant workers' requirements is desirable.

4.7 Monitoring and evaluation

- Mechanisms and strategies designed to attract and retain migrant populations need to be monitored and evaluated.
- Indicators that have been used to measure inclusion of new arrivals in an urban context should be examined in order to explore their potential transferability to a rural context. This will assist the monitoring and evaluation of initiatives in support of migrants in the Highlands and Islands on a medium to long-term basis.
- Monitoring and evaluation activities should take place at the highest level possible to ensure a co-ordinated and comprehensive approach, at least where the aim is to meet well established needs across the HIE area, such as English language tuition. It will be useful to monitor and evaluate innovative practices introduced at local level (for example, types of mentoring) to consider their value for the HIE area as a whole.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Demographic developments, such as an ageing population, decreasing fertility and out-migration of young people have led to wide ranging debates on the consequences of these trends for the economy, welfare policies and the sustainability of rural communities. On the question of addressing these trends a wide spectrum of proposals have emerged. They include endeavours to create incentives for young people to stay or return to their (rural) communities, as well as encouragement for in-migrants and international migrant workers to fill labour market shortages, especially in the context of an enlarged Europe and increasing globalisation.

The concept of 'managed' migration / immigration is high on the UK and Scottish political agendas. At the UK level, the Home Office is undertaking a review of current migration procedures (Home Office 2005a). In Scotland, this has led to the Scottish Executive's launch of the 'Fresh Talent Initiative' in 2004, and a focus on strategies to encourage in-migration. These include collaboration with Work Permits UK (WPUK), to promote Scotland amongst people applying for work permits in the UK, and encouraging students at Scottish universities to stay in Scotland for two years after they have graduated (Scottish Executive, 2004).

More recently, the Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) Strategy 'A Smart, Successful, Highlands and Islands' also emphasises the importance of attracting and retaining people in the Highlands and Islands. It identifies five factors as being crucial to success: '[...] *population, place, productivity, pay and prospects*' (HIE 2005, p 9). HIE aspires to have a population of half a million by 2025 in the region, noting that '[...] *more people living, working and studying in the Highlands and Islands are essential to sustaining our long-term progress*'. (HIE 2005 p 9). Whilst recognising that attracting new people from within and outwith the UK is important, it also emphasises other strategies for population retention and growth. These include encouraging returnees, increasing training and educational opportunities, as well as various policy initiatives designed to 'grow the workforce' based on the people that already live in the region.

This report presents the results of a study of migrant workers in the Highlands and Islands commissioned by HIE. The research, using quantitative and qualitative methods, has sought to provide an insight into the demand for, and situation of, migrant workers from a range of perspectives, that of employers, migrant workers themselves, service providers and national bodies.

The definition of migrant workers adopted in the study is "*Overseas nationals to whom a National Insurance number has been allocated, who are in work and who are being employed for any length of time*".

1.2 AIMS OF STUDY

The study had the following aims:

- To consider the role migrant workers play in the labour market in the Highlands and Islands.
- To identify employers' needs with regard to the employment of overseas nationals and mechanisms of meeting these.
- To identify migrant workers' needs regarding employment and life in the Highlands and Islands and mechanisms of meeting these.

1.3 METHODS

A mixed methods strategy was employed involving qualitative as well as quantitative methods. In addition, the inclusion of a range of stakeholders – employers, migrant workers, service providers, national organisations and recruitment agencies – in the research has helped to ensure a multi-dimensional perspective, as well as providing a useful mechanism for triangulation of findings.

The main methods employed (discussed in more detail below) were:

- A Literature Review.
- Analysis of secondary data.
- Primary data collection consisting of:
 - Telephone and face to face interviews with employers, migrant workers, service providers and representatives from national organisations.
 - Focus group discussions with employers, service providers, and migrant workers.

1.3.1 Literature Review

The main aim of the literature review was to inform the foci of the project, and to provide a wider context. The review focused on policy issues, experiences of migrants, service providers and employers, and examples of initiatives promoting the social and economic inclusion of migrant workers.

1.3.2 Analysis of secondary data

The following data sources were analysed to examine the extent and the nature of migrant workers' employment in the Highlands and Islands:

- Mid Year Population Estimates.
- Census Data.
- National Insurance Number Applications.
- Registrations of overseas nationals on the National Insurance Recording System (NIRS).

1.3.3 Employers' Perspectives

Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with 53 employers across the Highlands and Islands Enterprise area in different sectors, generating both quantitative and qualitative data. Businesses were identified from a range of sources, including HIE representatives, Local Enterprise Companies (LECs) and other organisations. The aims of the interviews were to identify the number and nationalities of migrant workers employed by the businesses in the sample, the nature of their employment, employers' anticipated need for such workers in the future, and their views of and experiences with migrant workers, including perceptions of need for support. One focus group with six employers was conducted in Inverness to allow for some of the emergent themes from the interviews to be pursued in more detail.

1.3.4 Migrant Workers' Perspectives

Two focus groups and 17 interviews involving a combination of one to one, pair and group-of-three interviews were conducted with 36 migrant workers. The source of contacts with migrant workers included Adult Basic Education (ABE) providers, libraries, employers, voluntary organisations and a local authority link worker. The choice of geographical locations and selection of individuals to participate was designed to provide illuminative information to be analysed alongside other data (for example information from service providers). A topic guide with prompts was used for the focus group and interviews. Issues explored included reasons for coming to the Highlands and Islands, experiences of accessing employment and of being in

work, access to services, views and perceptions of life outside work, intentions of staying or leaving the Highlands and Islands and suggestions for addressing their concerns.

1.3.5 Support Services and National Bodies

The main sources of information on the views and experiences of service providers on migrant workers were:

- One focus group of representatives from the public and voluntary sectors.
- Nine interviews with a range of service providers, including two recruitment agencies.
- Attendance at a meeting convened by the Trade Unions to discuss the situation of migrant workers in the Highlands and Islands.

The focus group discussions and interviews explored the experiences of service providers in relation to migrant workers, views of their needs and how these needs could be or are being addressed. In addition, a meeting took place with two representatives of the Scottish Executive Fresh Talent team, and two telephone interviews were undertaken with representatives from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) to gain insight into the Scottish policy context.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review draws from a range of sources, including research commissioned by public bodies, academic research in Scottish, UK and international contexts, as well as policy documents. A key challenge that most researchers face with regard to the issue of migrant workers is obtaining an accurate view of numbers. This issue is addressed in more detail in chapter 3 of this report. The literature review provides an overview of:

- The role of migrant workers in the labour market
- The economic impact of migrant workers
- Factors driving migration
- Employers' experiences
- Requirements of migrant workers
- Initiatives to address the situation of migrant workers

2.1 MIGRANT WORKERS' PLACE IN THE LABOUR MARKET

Migrant Workers have been identified in a wide variety of employment sectors including health, hospitality, agriculture, and food processing. Within Scotland, 69% of EU accession state nationals are known to be employed in hospitality, agriculture, and food processing; the UK average is 47% for these three sectors (Home Office 2005b). It has been found that EU accession state nationals comprise around one percent of the total workforce in hospitality and manufacturing, and five percent of the workforce in the agriculture and fishing sectors (Portes and French 2005). Within this wide range of employment sectors evidence demonstrates polarisation of both skill levels and incomes (Somerville 2003). Coupled with the various categories of migrant worker this results in a heterogeneous group whose experiences differ 'at least as much from one another as they do from the general population' (Glover et. al. 2001). There is evidence that the income levels of migrant workers are approximately 15% higher than the UK average (Sriskandarajah et. al. 2005). However, at the same time there are a large number of migrant workers at the lowest end of the income scale: amongst accession state nationals, more than 80% earn less than £6 per hour (Home Office 2005b). These discrepancies in figures might be explained by the prevalence of some very high earning migrant workers in professional employment.

2.2 THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF MIGRANT WORKERS

The impact of migrant workers on the national economy has been found to be positive by some studies. For example, a net contribution of £2.5bn has been attributed to migrant workers in a single year (Gott and Johnston 2002). Over a five-year period it has been found that migrant workers consistently contributed more towards the economy than the UK average. This may be because migrant workers tend to be of working age, less likely to have dependents, and a higher proportion than average have a very high income level (Sriskandarajah et. al. 2005). However, these findings have been criticised on a number of grounds. It has been suggested that it may have been more accurate to have compared the contribution of migrant workers with the same age profile within the UK population. Furthermore, the studies failed to take into account the costs incurred because of the increase in population due to immigration. This latter issue is not, however, a significant problem in Scotland due to the absence of 'congestion' (Migration-Watch 2005).

On both a local and national level, '*...economic theory would predict that we would expect... lower wages for natives, higher overall employment, lower native employment, higher native unemployment, higher overall output*' (Portes and French 2005, p24). The impact of migrant workers on local labour markets has been studied most extensively in the US and in Europe, with varying results. The evidence on this issue is ambiguous and contradictory, and varies depending on the models used to assess impact. On the one hand, evidence suggests that migrants have very slight negative effects on wage levels and employment rates, and that this is more than offset by the increased productivity resulting from the availability of migrant workers in the labour market. It is also argued that migrant workers have allowed the revitalisation of industries such as agriculture or fishing (e.g. Dustmann et. al. 2003; Zimmerman 2005; Zincone, 1999). On the other hand, some have estimated that, in a UK context, for every three in-migrants in the local labour market, two local workers will be displaced (Hatton et. al. 2003). It has also been suggested that a ten percent rise in in-migrants can cause a four percent reduction in wage levels, and that these effects can be disproportionate, especially where in-migrants are in competition with low paid workers with few qualifications (Borjas 2003). Given the conflicting evidence base, it is problematic to determine accurately the impact of migrant workers on local economies and communities at the present time.

2.3 FACTORS DRIVING MIGRATION

The motivation to migrate varies widely. Broadly four key factors have been identified:

- The mobility of the population in the source country
- The demography of the source country
- The momentum created by previous migration
- The wage differential between the source and destination countries

Although family reunification accounted for 46% of migrants over the period 1999-2003, employment was also a strong motivator and accounted for 15% of migration to the UK during the same period (Home Office Statistical Bulletin 12/04). For many migrants economic factors predominate, such as higher wages abroad or a lack of work at home; for example, it is suggested that the national minimum wage may attract migrants to the UK (Chess 2004). Furthermore, migration from a country may rise to a peak as the country develops economically, reducing as the wage differential is diminished (Hatton and Williamson 2003). It has also been noted that a strong local economy may be the most important factor driving migration, more so than the generosity of the welfare benefits available (Fix et. al. 2001).

Students also comprise a significant number of migrants, who may enter the workforce on a part-time basis for the duration of their studies (UK Visas). Recent measures under the Fresh Talent Initiative allow students to remain in Scotland for employment for two years following graduation (Scottish Executive News Release, 22nd June 2005). In addition there are other factors that might come into play, for example:

- The high proportion of migrant workers in certain industries may be the result of active recruitment methods by employers (e.g. Hardill and MacDonald 2000; Bell et. al. 2004).
- With regard to refugees and asylum seekers, clearly the overriding motivation is that of seeking security and escaping from persecution (Somerville 2003).
- Employment in another country is often seen as a necessary step in career progression, for example amongst nurses of Commonwealth countries (Hardill and MacDonald 2000).

- Younger migrant workers, for example those in the hospitality industry, the opportunity to experience life in another country may be the most important factor (Meiklem 2004). In this instance, an English-speaking destination may be more attractive, with half of those sampled in one survey citing this as their main reason for choosing the UK (Chess 2004).

The literature also identifies factors which may be influential in retention of migrant workers, for example:

- The services available in an area, e.g. a better standard of schooling (Bell et. al. 2004)
- Lower cost of living and a perceived better quality of life may be of importance, in particular, with regard to encouraging migrant workers to settle outside the South-East of England (Bell et. al. 2004, Chess 2004).

2.4 EMPLOYERS' EXPERIENCES

2.4.1 Benefits of Employing Migrant Workers

Migrant Workers are important in filling labour shortages and skills gaps in the UK labour market. 27% of employers reported that they intended to recruit from overseas in 2005, with 59% of these citing a lack of experienced candidates, and 56% a lack of skilled applicants (CIPD 2005). In some studies 75% of employers have reported skills shortages (Wheeler 2004).

In certain industries, migrant workers constitute a very significant proportion of the work force; by some estimates there are 250,000 overseas nationals employed in the NHS (Somerville 2003), and figures for 2003 show that 29.4% of doctors were foreign born, whilst 43.5% of nurses have been recruited from outside UK since 1999 (Kelly et. al. 2005). In food processing, migrant workers may account for 30% of total employees in some businesses (Equality Commission 2004). Some writers refer to the emergence of a global labour market; in particular high-skilled workers have become an increasingly sought-after resource for which countries may be in competition (Salt 2005). This may be, at least partially, the result of globalisation and the growth of industries such as ICT (Bauer and Kunze 2004). However, it can also be said that unlike other markets, there has been a move over the past century towards stricter control and away from free trade in global labour (Chiswick and Hatton 2002).

Competition may also exist within the UK on a regional scale. Traditionally London and the South East of England have attracted the majority of migrant workers: the Labour Force Survey (2000) identified 68% of migrants residing in these areas. This might be attributed to a greater number of employment opportunities and the attraction of established migrant or ethnic minority communities (Robinson 2002). However, this situation may be changing. There is some evidence to suggest that the majority of migrant workers from the EU accession states are finding employment in rural areas rather than the traditional migration centres (TUC 2004). Employers have often found that employing migrant workers is a very positive experience. 18% of employers cited a better work ethic than locals, and owners of businesses have reported that their businesses have been saved by migrants who will work for the minimum wage (CIPD, 2005; Bell et. al. 2004).

2.4.2 Issues Associated With Employing Migrant Workers

Language is, perhaps, the most frequently cited problem, affecting not only employers, but also migrant workers and their co-workers. This issue is highlighted as a priority by some studies (e.g. Aitken 2005). However, in other instances it would appear that employers do not perceive comprehensive English language skills as very important. In one survey 71% of employers said that 'basic' English skills were sufficient (bSolutions 2005). Difficulties also arise in relation to accommodation. A lack of affordable housing can contribute to difficulties in recruitment (Aitken

2005; Chess 2004). A lack of understanding of their legal duties, and the rights and status of different categories of migrant workers, are also cited as problematic by employers. Employers report that a greater understanding of the assistance available from the government would be appreciated (Chess 2004). Some writers anticipate that, in the future, the needs of employers will shift towards greater specialisation of skills. This may in part be to counter the loss of indigenous high-skilled workers (Beverlander 2000; Hatton 2002).

2.5 REQUIREMENTS OF MIGRANT WORKERS.

The literature identifies a number of recurring difficulties migrant workers face, including language, employment and social issues, which are discussed in more detail.

2.5.1 Language

Issues relating to language difficulties are a recurring theme in the literature. Service providers in sectors such as education and health, as well as the police have reported that language barriers can affect access to services (Aitken 2005). Even for migrant workers whose first language is English, technical jargon may differ and cause comprehension difficulties (Hardill and MacDonald 2000). In Scotland, regional accents have been identified as a potential further complication (bSolutions 2005).

2.5.2 Employment Issues

Discrimination and harassment in the workplace have been reported by some studies. These can be manifested in a number of ways, affecting pay, holidays, and working conditions. Instances include dismissal following the request for information about employment rights, taking leave, and pregnancy. Other problems include being underpaid, and wrongful deductions made from pay (Bell et. al. 2004).

Recognition of qualifications is frequently cited as a barrier to employment, including industries in which there has been harmonisation of qualifications (e.g. Aitken 2005; Wheeler 2004; Bell et. al. 2004; Hardill and MacDonald 2000). In addition, lack of awareness of employment rights is also a cause for concern, and poor language skills may play a part in this. In some instances trade unions have acted to remedy this problem, by organising English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) classes (TUC 2004; Labour Research 2004). Recruitment agencies appear to play an important role in arranging employment, as well as in some cases in other matters, such as providing accommodation. Concerns have been raised about possible exploitation, as well as issues such as high fees and poor communication between employer, agency, and worker (CAB 2003; Bell et. al. 2004).

2.5.3 Social Issues

Accommodation is widely reported as a problem for migrant workers. In many cases this is provided by the employer or agency and is therefore tied to the employment contract. Difficulties also arise due to sheer lack of housing in some areas. This in turn may result in multiple occupancy and overcrowding. Furthermore, the available accommodation may be too far from the place of work or in poor condition (see, e.g., bSolutions 2005; Boswell 2003). There have also been instances of migrant workers being housed in deprived areas, which may lead to conflicts with the local population (Bell et. al. 2004).

For a number of reasons including language, changes in procedures, and lack of understanding of how the system works, migrant workers may also face difficulties when opening a bank account, applying for a national insurance number, or registering with a GP. In particular, it can be very inconvenient for migrant workers to be deprived of their passports whilst their National

Insurance number applications are being processed (TUC 2004).

For migrant families, difficulties may arise in accessing the education system. Differences between the UK system and that of the migrants' source country, as well as language barriers, may be key factors (Bell et. al. 2004). Evidence suggests that children from migrant families may perform poorly at school (Crul 2004, Zincone 1999, Fix et. al. 2001). It is also suggested that the age at which migration occurs is important, as pre-school age children may find integration easier than teenagers (Crul 2004). However, migrant families with young children may face additional difficulties in obtaining childcare (Aitken 2005). Health is another area in which there has been widespread concern. As with other services there can be confusion and poor provision for interpretation (Aitken 2005). However, it may also be useful to examine this issue in the context of poverty rather than migration (Fix et. al. 2001).

2.6 INITIATIVES TO ADDRESS THE SITUATION OF MIGRANT WORKERS

One purpose of this literature review has been to identify examples of 'good practice'. In order to achieve this, it is important to have an understanding of the objectives and criteria for success. It is also important that such initiatives make a positive difference, as well as being innovative, sustainable, and suitable for replication (Spencer and de Mattia 2004; Bendixsen and de Guchteneire 2003). Thus, there is a very strong practical element to the idea of 'good practice'. In keeping with this, any practice must be accepted by sufficient stakeholders to become useful; this requires the identification of the interests of the parties involved. This is no easy task as these parties might be seen to include migrant workers, their families, their home countries, their employers, agencies, co-workers, members of the host society, and other businesses and employers in the host country. The interests of these parties have potential for conflict.

For the purpose of this literature review, 'good practice' is taken broadly to mean those practices that successfully facilitate the inclusion of migrant workers into the society and community, and provide mutual benefits for those involved. A practice may be implemented by the adoption of a new initiative, or by the adaptation of existing schemes to incorporate a new objective (Fix et. al. 2001). Growing evidence suggests that initiatives targeted at migrant workers are more likely to succeed if they have multi-agency involvement, including employers, as well as being focused on meeting the needs of all migrants (Spencer and de Mattia 2004). Examples of initiatives identified are briefly highlighted below.

2.6.1 State/public sector initiatives

- Welcome packs, e.g. '*Working and Living in Banff*', a booklet available in English or Polish, containing contact numbers including ESOL providers, health, internet access, and advisors for housing, employment rights, and careers (Aberdeenshire Council 2005).
- Provision of translation and / or interpretation facilities.
- Exchange programmes: the 'Leonardo' programme provides a structured introduction for Finnish nurses working in the UK and assures suitable accommodation, acculturation, and language training (Hardill and MacDonald 2000).
- Community initiatives: the 'New Glaswegians Employment Initiative' was established with the aim of helping refugees enter the labour market (Scottish Executive 2004).
- Work Permit controls: The Sectors Based Scheme lays down certain requirements which employers must meet, including provision of suitable accommodation. This level of control is beneficial in tackling the otherwise difficult problem of accommodation (Working in the UK, 2005).

2.6.2 Trade Unions

- TUC has indicated a commitment to migrant workers rights: “*the trade union movement should be taking the lead in championing migrant workers’ rights at home and abroad*”. (motion 79, Migrant workers, in TUC 2004)
- Employment rights advice (Labour Research, 2004)
- English language training (Labour Research, 2004)

2.6.3 Employers and agencies

- Some have provided welcome packs
- Many provide accommodation
- Language training may be offered
- Skills training may be given

2.6.4 Integration outside the workplace

The successful inclusion of migrants who are not in employment may be problematic, and it often falls to voluntary groups and the state to address any problems they might encounter. In addition, it is widely recognised that inclusion strategies which focus mainly on language acquisition are inadequate. There is a strong emphasis instead on holistic approaches which focus on language learning in a social and work context, as well as ‘social orientation’ classes that enable new migrants to understand how the host society works, including the norms and values that underpin the interactions in the communities in which they live. Relevant initiatives include mentoring or community relations projects (Spencer and de Mattia 2004).

CHAPTER 3 STATISTICAL EVIDENCE ON THE MIGRANT POPULATION

“Migration is the most difficult component of population change to estimate.” (GROS, 2005)

Determining an accurate figure for the number of migrant workers is a challenging task. A recent Home Office (2005a) document noted that there were approximately 50 different ways of entering the UK to study or work, which makes the issue of obtaining accurate statistics problematic. For example, workers may enter the UK labour market as:

- Work Permit holders
- European Union Nationals
- Students
- Dependents of Work Permit holders
- Swiss or British Overseas Territories nationals
- Commonwealth Working Holiday makers
- Refugees

In addition, undocumented workers may be present. This category may include clandestine entrants, asylum seekers who have had their claims rejected, or those who are breaking the terms of their permit to be in the UK (McKay and Erel 2004). Moreover, data may rely on samples, or is gathered for specific categories of migrants: for example, the International Passenger Survey records only a sample of all international travellers; Workers Registration Scheme exclusively applies to nationals of the EU ‘accession eight’ countries. There are other sources of data, for example the national census, NHS registrations, and National Insurance Number applications and registrations (see, e.g., Robinson 2002). Although the government is currently investigating the establishment of an ‘e-borders’ scheme which would track movements in and out of the country, the current data collection mechanisms do not record the departure of migrant workers from the country (Home Office Press Release 2004).

With the lack of a comprehensive system which registers migration in the UK, estimates of the size of the migrant population in the Highlands and Islands Enterprise area are presented from the following sources:

- Mid year population estimates
- 2001 Census data
- National Insurance Number applications

3.1 MID YEAR POPULATION ESTIMATES

Mid Year Population Estimates are derived from three key sources, two of which are particularly relevant for the purposes of estimating the number and characteristics of international migrants: firstly, the National Health Service Central Register (NHSCR); and secondly, the International Passenger Survey (IPS).

NHSCR comprises an electronic database of all people born in Scotland and those individuals who are registered with the National Health Service (NHS). It is considered the most reliable data source at health board level. The information held on the database includes a number provided to individuals who were born outside Scotland and who have registered with a doctor in Scotland. However, this source relies on migrants registering with a doctor, and also informing their doctor when they leave the country, or move between health boards. Given that migrants tend to fall into the younger age category, they may constitute a group particularly unlikely to register. A recent report based on questionnaires completed by 50 overseas migrants

in the North East of Scotland shows that only 56% had registered with a doctor (Solutions, 2005).

The second source, the IPS, consists of a continuous sample survey conducted at the principal air, sea and Channel Tunnel routes between the UK and countries outside the British Isles. It has significant limitations. Its sample size is very small, particularly for Scottish migrants: approximately 120 survey contacts during 2002 (GROS 2005). On the basis of figures released by GROS in April 2005, overseas migration to and from Highland Region has been estimated to be quite balanced for the 2003/04 tax year, with about 1,000 people moving in and out of Highland. However, an increase in the number of people moving to the area from overseas compared to 2002/03 has also been noted (The Highland Council, 2005).

3.2 2001 CENSUS DATA

The census can provide information on those who lived abroad a year before the time of the census, and data is available at local authority level. However, census data only provides a snapshot, and in the particular case of the 2001 Census, the data does not take account of 2004 EU enlargement and its impact on migration patterns.

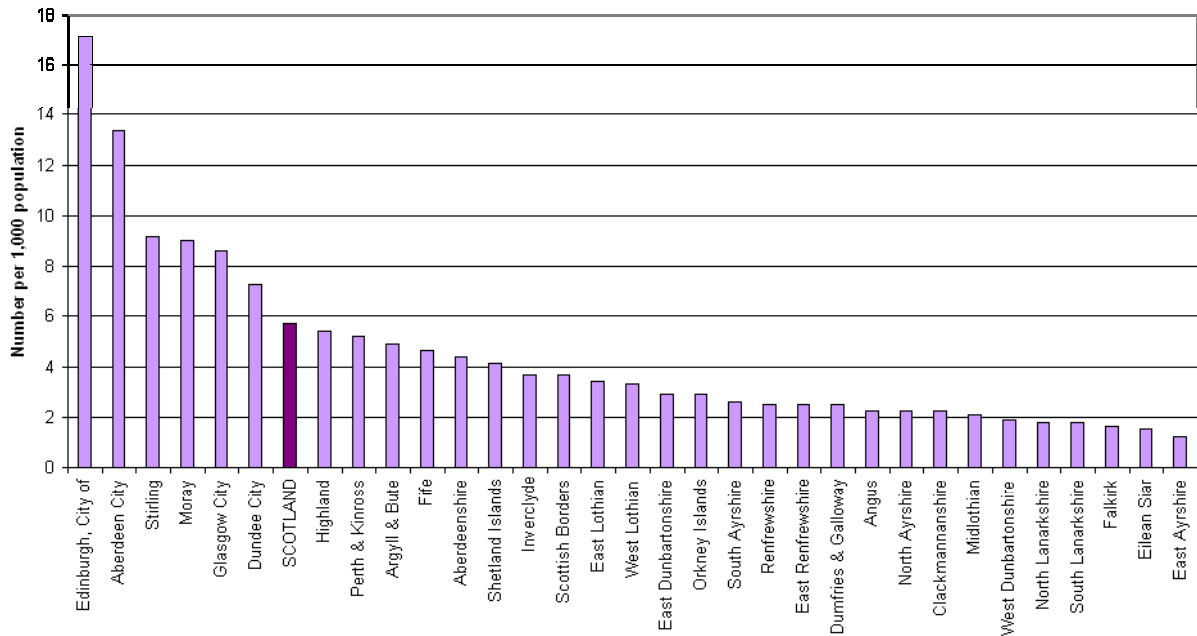
Table 1: The countries where the highest number of migrants came from

Country of origin	4 city authorities	H & I	Rest of Scotland	Scotland
USA	1,508	83	1,284	2,875
Germany	982	467	1,238	2,687
Australia	1,320	118	928	2,366
France	1,178	49	443	1,670
South Africa	459	42	675	1,176
Spain	767	21	316	1,104
Ireland	612	41	377	1,030
Canada	570	50	383	1,003

Source: *Macintyre and Fleming, 2005*

While most people with a foreign address the year before the census came from Germany, in the Highlands and Islands, this can partly be attributed to armed forces moves. In all geographical areas covered in this table, most migrants came from Western Europe, from developed countries overseas and South Africa.

Figure 1: Number Per 1,000 Population Of In-Migrants To Scottish Local Authority Areas From Outwith The UK



Source: Fleming 2005

Figure 1 shows that the cities, Stirling and Moray had the highest number of migrants from abroad relative to the population, followed by Highland. Eilean Siar (Western Isles Council area) and East Ayrshire had the lowest.

3.3 NATIONAL INSURANCE NUMBER APPLICATIONS

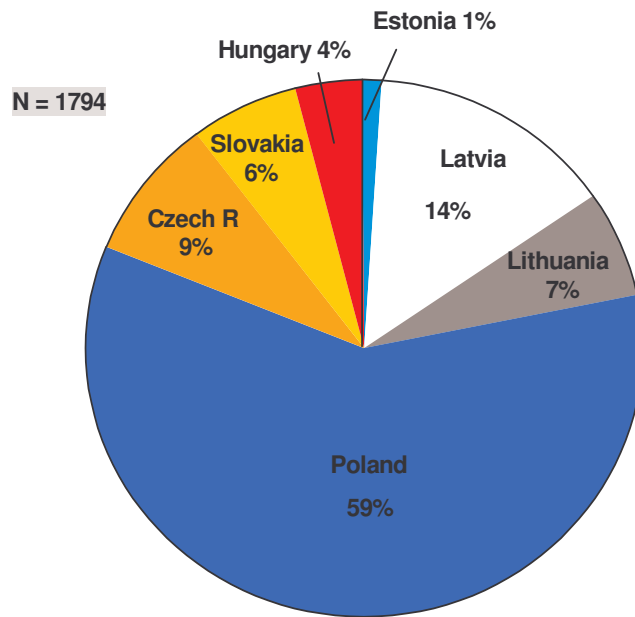
The enlargement of the European Union (EU) on 1 May 2004 means that citizens of 25 EU member states have freedom of movement within the member countries. However, workers from the 2004 EU accession countries (excluding Cyprus and Malta) require to be registered as workers in the UK with the Home Office. The accession countries of Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia bring into the EU around 75 million more citizens.

3.3.1 Nationals of EU Accession States

Jobcentre Plus offices have been recording National Insurance Number (NINo) applications from nationals from EU accession states over the period of a year (May 2004 to April 2005), and the data was made available to this study by the Central Control Unit (CCU) in Glasgow. As with other data sources, NINo applications only provide information about the number of those who have come to Scotland and applied for a NINo, and cannot indicate those who have subsequently left the country.

The pie chart shows that during May 2004 and April 2005, people of Polish origin made up well over half of the population from the EU accession states who applied for a NINo, 59% (n=1058). While Latvians with 14% (n=251) were still a significant group, all other nationalities contributed less than 10% to the accession states population that has come to the HIE area.

Figure 2: NINo applications from EU Accession States nationals in HIE area (May 04 - Apr 05)

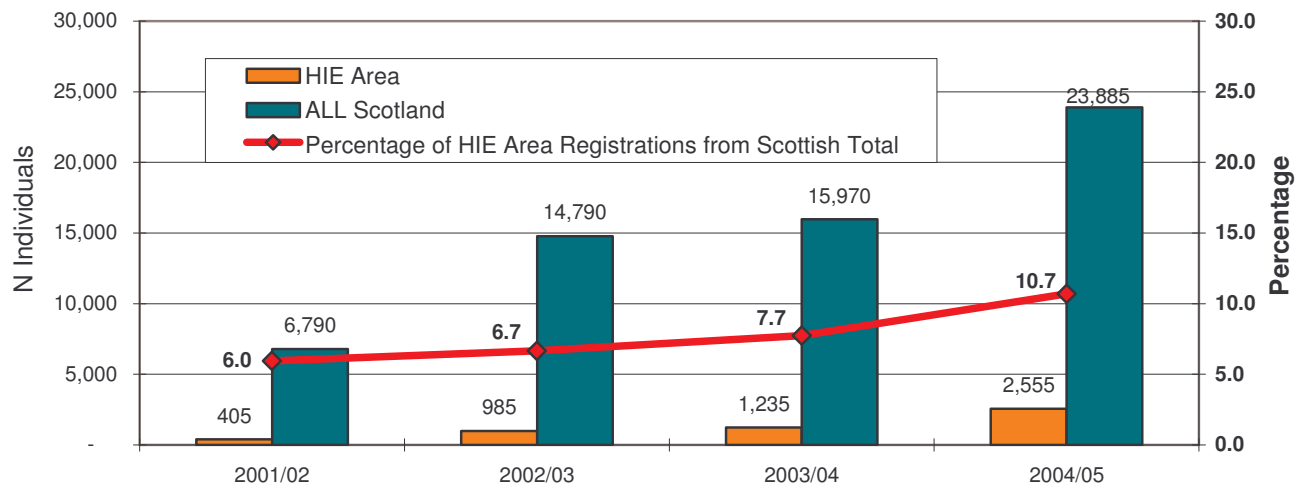


3.4 All overseas nationals: NINo registrations and applications

The Department of Work and Pensions has made available data on registrations of *all* overseas nationals on the national insurance recording system from the tax years 2001/02 to 2004/05. In addition, for the purpose of this study, Jobcentre Plus offices in the HIE area continued to record NINo applications for the duration of the project (20 May – 5 August 2005), but also included NINo applicants from outwith the EU accession states. The data is available by Jobcentre Plus office.

Figure 3 shows that the number of NINo registrations of overseas nationals for the HIE area has doubled over the tax years 2003/04 and 2004/05 from 1,235 to 2,555. In Scotland as a whole, the registrations went up by nearly 50%. In addition, an increase in overseas nationals who have migrated to the HIE area as a percentage of the Scottish total, can be noted.

Figure 3: Registrations of overseas nationals on the National Insurance Recording System in Scotland/HIE area, by tax year



Source: 100% of cases with a National Insurance Number (NINo) and overseas nationality code on the National Insurance Recording System (NIRS2).

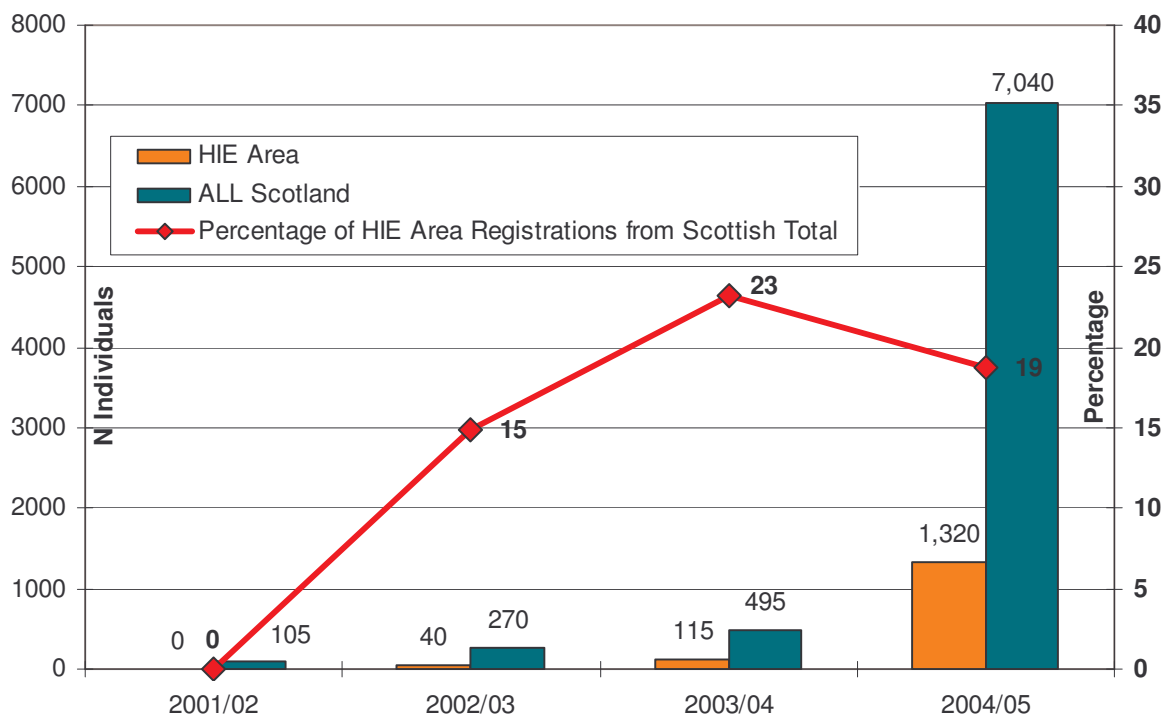
Notes:

More stringent NINo allocation procedures within DWP from April 2001 initially caused backlogs in the system, with fewer NINos registered during 2001/02. These backlogs were then cleared in 2002/03 and hence the number of registrations in 2002/03 was roughly twice that of 2001/02, even though the number of arrivals into the UK only increased slightly over the period. Many of those completing NINo registration in 2002/03 arrived into the UK in 2001/02, in many cases working whilst awaiting NINo allocation.

Focusing on the registration of EU accession states nationals in the HIE area, an eleven- fold increase can be observed in Figure 4 over the tax years 2003/04 and 2004/05. The growth of EU accession states nationals was even more pronounced in Scotland as a whole over this period of time, where numbers increased by 14 times. The proportion of migrants from EU accession states to the HIE area as compared to the Scottish total showed a slight decrease, following a strong gain in the preceding years.

In 2004 /05 1,320 (52%) overseas nationals registered on the NIRS were from the EU accession states. (see also Figure 6)

Figure 4: Registrations of EU accession states nationals on the National Insurance Recording System in Scotland/HIE area, by tax year



Source and Notes as for Figure 3 above.

Table 2 and Figure 5 demonstrate that half of the overseas nationals who were registered stayed in the Eastern parts of the HIE area, in Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey as well as in Moray. It is worth noting that all areas except Orkney have experienced a year-on-year gain in numbers of NINo registrations of overseas nationals. This number has remained the same in Orkney in the three tax years 2001/02, 2002/03 and 2003/04 (n=25 each year).

With regard to NI applications for the two and a half month period, from 20 May to 5 August 2005, it is apparent that almost half of all overseas nationals applied to the Inverness office. The figures also indicate a proportional increase in applications to the Portree and Fort William offices.

Table 2: NINo registrations/applications of overseas nationals in HIE Area: Destinations

HIE AREA	2001/02 to 2004/05 Numbers of NINo Registrations to HIE Areas						20 May to 5 Aug 2005 ³	
	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	total	%	N Applics	Office
Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey	115	360	385	945	1,805	34.3	517 ⁴	Inverness
Argyll & the Islands ²	65	175	250	425	915	17.4	157	Oban, C'town and Dunoon
Moray	55	90	160	325	630	12.0	124	Elgin
Ross & Cromarty	30	85	145	280	540	10.3	4	
Lochaber	55	105	125	230	515	9.8	131	Fort William
Caithness & Sutherland	35	50	55	80	220	4.2	18	Wick
Shetland Islands	20	50	45	100	215	4.1	22	Lerwick
Skye & Lochalsh	20	25	40	95	180	3.4	60	Portree
Western Isles	10	25	30	85	150	2.9	36	Stornoway
Orkney Islands	10	25	25	25	85	1.6	12	Kirkwall
Total	415	990	1,260	2,590	5,255 ⁵		1,077	
%	7.9	18.8	24.0	49.3		100.0		

Sources: Registrations: 100% of cases with a National Insurance Number (NINo) and overseas nationality code on the National Insurance Recording System (NIRS2). Applications: local Jobcentre Plus offices

Notes:

¹ A backlog in NINo allocation process in 2001/02 was subsequently cleared in 2002/03 (see Notes Figure 3 for further details).

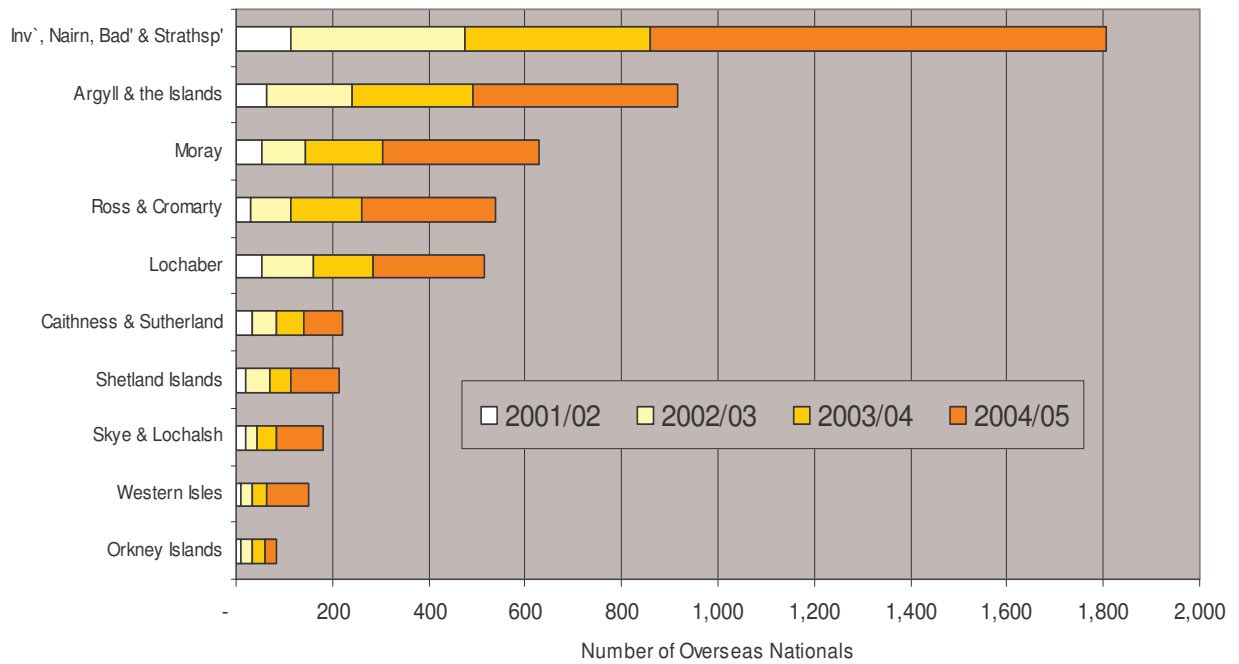
² 2001/02 to 2004/05 Figures based on data for Argyll and Bute Local Authority Area, and does not include Arran & Cumbrae Islands.

³ 2005 Figures represents number of NINo Applications to each area office between 20 May and 5 August.

⁴ 2005 Figures for Ross & Cromarty included with Inverness Office Total.

⁵ Due to rounding of source data of each local authority, the HIE area total here differs from that provided in Figure 3.

Figure 5: NINo Registrations of Overseas Nationals in HIE Area: Destinations

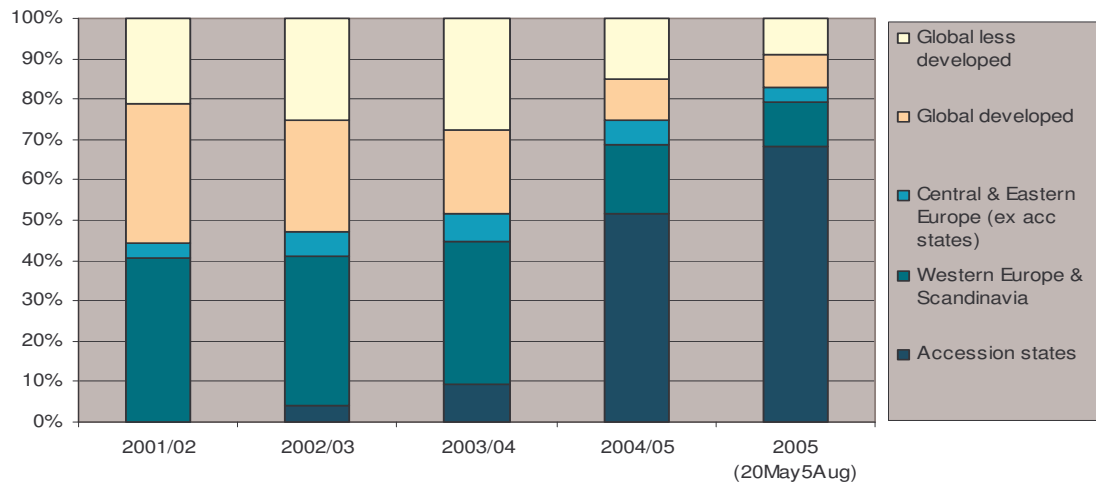


Source: 100% of cases with a National Insurance Number (NINo) and overseas nationality code on the National Insurance Recording System (NIRS2).

Notes: A backlog in NINo allocation process in 2001/02 was subsequently cleared in 2002/03 (see Notes Figure 3 for further details).

Examining the origins of those who have been registered, a clear shift in favour of the EU accession states can be observed. As mentioned before, by 2004/05, nationals from the accession states made up over half of all those registered for a NINo. Before the tax year 2003/04, their percentage had remained below 10 (Figure 6).

Figure 6: NINo Registrations / Applications of Overseas Nationals in HIE Area: Origins

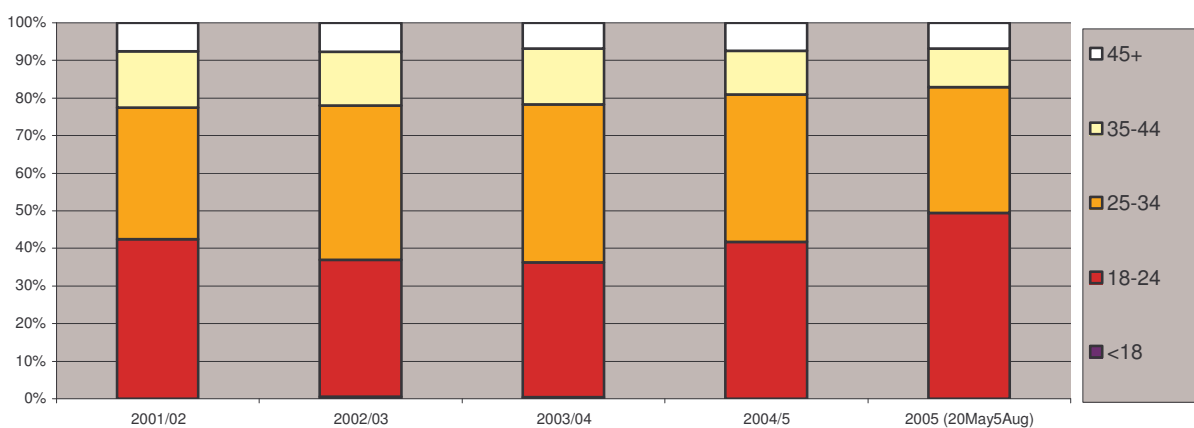


Source: 100% of cases with a National Insurance Number (NINo) and overseas nationality code on the National Insurance Recording System (NIRS2).

Notes: A backlog in NINo allocation process in 2001/02 was subsequently cleared in 2002/03 (see Notes Figure 3 for further details).

The proportions of overseas nationals from different age groups have remained fairly stable over the years. Around 80% are 34 years of age or younger, and approximately 40% are younger than 25 years (Figure 7).

Figure 7: NINo registrations / applications of overseas nationals in HIE area: age groups



Source: 100% of cases with a National Insurance Number (NINo) and overseas nationality code on the National Insurance Recording System (NIRS2).

Notes: A backlog in NINo allocation process in 2001/02 was subsequently cleared in 2002/03 (see Notes Figure 3 for further details).

The gender balance has been fairly even, with some slight variations. Over the tax years 2001/02 and 2003/04 NINo registration records in the HIE area indicated a small majority of female registrations (on average 54%). This changed in the tax year 2004/05, which had a slightly higher proportion of male registrations (53 %) - a trend which continued in the May to August 2005 period, with registrations from males making up a slight majority (54 per cent).

CHAPTER 4 THE VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES OF EMPLOYERS

A questionnaire with open and closed questions was administered by telephone. It involved 53 business representatives located in the following sectors: fish farming and processing (16), manufacture of food (6), hotels and restaurants (12), health (7), construction (3), agriculture (3) and other (retail, shipbuilding, haulage, manufacture) (7). The companies were spread across the HIE area, as the following table demonstrates.

Table 3: Employers survey: distribution of the companies across the HIE area

Argyll and the Islands	6
Caithness and Sutherland	6
Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey	6
Lochaber	4
Moray	8
Orkney	5
Ross and Cromarty	7
Shetland	3
Skye and Lochalsh	3
Western Isles	5
TOTAL	53

From this sample, six employers were recruited for a focus group discussion (see Table below), which was held in Inverness.

Table 4: Employers focus group participants

JOB TITLE	SECTOR	AREA
1. Human resource manager	Fish farming and processing	Western Isles
2. Owner	Hotels and restaurants	Ross and Cromarty
3. Deputy manager	Health	Inverness
4. Manager	Health	Inverness
5. Assistant manager	Agriculture	Moray
6. Office manager	Agriculture	Moray

The group discussed employers' experiences with the recruitment of migrant workers, reasons for recruitment, their experiences with migrant workers and their insights into the integration of migrant workers. This chapter covers the findings of the survey and the focus group discussion, reporting on:

- Profile of the businesses in the sample
- Causes for the growth of the proportion of migrant workers
- Migrant Workers: Regions of origin and sectors of employment
- Recruitment of migrant workers
- Experiences with migrant workers
- Perceived need for support provision for migrant workers
- Support services provided at the workplace
- Help required with the provision of support for migrant workers

4.1 PROFILE OF THE BUSINESSES IN THE SAMPLE

Based on estimates obtained from 53 employers about their workforce, the following profile of the businesses emerged:

Table 5: Numbers and percentages of employees / migrant workers

Total number of employees	8260
Number (percentage) of migrant workers	1033 (13% of all employees)
Percentages of male / female migrant workers	61% / 39%

Table 6 demonstrates that over the past five years, the vast majority of businesses have experienced a growth in the proportion of migrant workers they employ. It is particularly interesting that this also applies to employers whose total workforce had remained the same over the past five years, and to six of the nine employers whose total workforce had actually decreased.

Table 6: Development of workforce over past five years for 53 businesses

Total workforce			Proportion of migrant workers		
Increased	Stayed same	Decreased	Increased	Stayed same	Decreased
18 ¹	26	9 ²	43	10	0

Notes: ¹ The gains ranged from four to 600 workers

² The decreases ranged from three to 80 workers

Table 7 shows that about half of the businesses taking part in this study anticipated an increase in the proportion of migrant workers. It is noteworthy that in 10 of the 33 cases in which employers expected their total workforce to stay the same, there was still an expectation for the proportion of migrant workers to increase.

Table 7: Anticipated development of workforce over next five years for 53 organisations

Total workforce			Proportion of migrant workers		
Increase	Stay same	Decrease	Increase	Stay same	Decrease
18	33	0	26	25	0

Notes: One employer spoke about the future closure of the site, and one did not respond to the question.

4.2 CAUSES FOR THE GROWTH OF THE PROPORTION OF MIGRANT WORKERS

With regard to the reasons given for the development of the workforce, explanations fell into three main categories:

- Skills and labour shortage (especially in sectors with difficult working conditions and relatively low pay)
- Poor work ethic by local workforce and dissatisfaction with wages
- Good work performance by migrant workers

4.2.1 Skills and labour shortage

Twenty nine interviewees referred to skills and labour shortages in their sector. This included several statements by employers in hospitality and fish farming and processing to the effect that the sectors depended on migrant workers and “cannot survive without [them]” (Hotels and restaurants, Ross and Cromarty). This development seems to have occurred over the past few years, and involved in particular Central and East Europeans, as described by these interviewees.

“For the past six to seven years, [the employment of migrant workers] has become usual in the industry” (Fish farming and processing, Ross and Cromarty).

“Employees were needed by many local businesses, and suddenly, the East Europeans were available.” (Fish farming and processing, Argyll and Islands)

A lack of skilled labour was also emphasised in the construction sector.

“All construction companies are looking for the same skills and numbers of UK workers are limited. Migrant workers seem to be the answer.” (Construction, Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey)

One factor mentioned by four interviewees as problematic in relation to recruitment was out-migration of highly motivated local people - which seemed to be particularly relevant for rural and remote areas.

“If young people go to university and want to get on, they leave the area.” (Health, Lochaber)

“The island attracts retired people, but the young ones leave.” (Hotels and restaurants, Argyll and the Islands)

In eleven cases, employers qualified the lack of locally available labour by explaining that while there could be a pool of local workers, they were unwilling to work. Unattractive wages were recognised as a barrier to the employment of locals in particular in hospitality, fish processing and agriculture, as expressed by these interviewees.

“There are not enough local people willing to do heavy, manual or repetitive work. You can only pay the rate for your industry, and agriculture is at the low end of pay rates.” (Agriculture, Moray)

“After speaking to others, I was surprised to find that the best Country House Hotels employ migrant workers. There are unemployed Brits but they will not work for the minimum wage. ... Everyone is in the same boat. I would like to employ locals but they will not do low paid work” (Hotels and restaurants, Skye and Lochalsh)

In one case in the health sector, pay was also seen as a key factor for a lack of labour supply:

“Inverness has grown hugely and the pay is better in the big stores.” (Health, Inverness)

Furthermore, working conditions, such as the working environment and working hours were considered to play a role in the lack of local workers.

“We cannot get UK workers to work long hours in what can be a smelly environment.” (Fish farming and processing, Moray)

While some employers thus focused on the nature of jobs as barriers to the employment of local people, others paid attention to perceived deficiencies in the pool of labour.

4.2.2 Local Work Ethic

The local work ethic was seen as discouraging the employment of local people. Comments made to this effect suggested that locals available for employment do not want to work, or are poorly motivated. While employers in the focus group also noted that some of the local candidates had not been suitable for vacant jobs. The explanation given was that a number of individuals had been forced to apply for work by the Jobcentre.

4.2.3 Migrant workers' job performance

Six employers explained the rise in employment of migrant workers also with the quality of their performance - a reason why they thought migrant workers were here to stay.

“Everyone we speak to says that migrant workers are good news.” (Fish farming and processing, Argyll and the Islands)

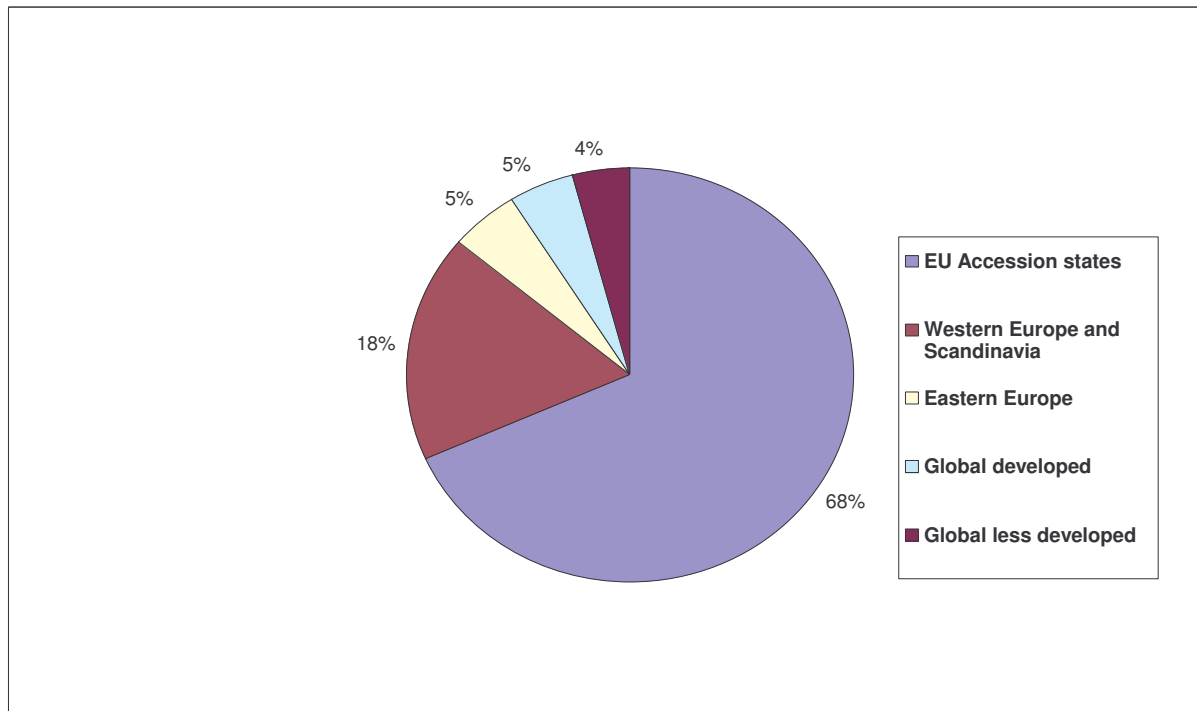
“They are excellent workers. They will work all the hours you want and at the times you want. They have a high level of commitment.” (Hotels and restaurants, Lochaber)

All focus group participants expressed strong agreement with such statements.

4.3 MIGRANT WORKERS: REGIONS OF ORIGIN AND SECTORS OF EMPLOYMENT

Figure 8 highlights the percentages of workers from different regions in the sample.

Figure 8: Sample of employers: Percentages of workers from different regions

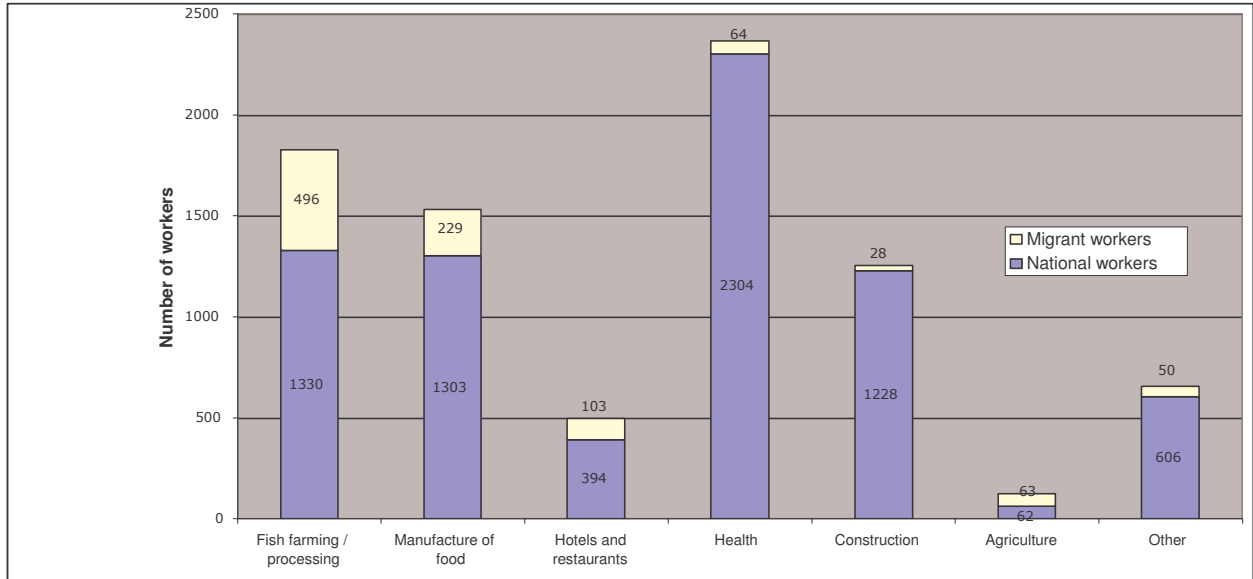


Notes: No numbers of nationalities could be provided by interviewees from two companies, one employing 250 migrant workers (fish farming and processing), and the other 24 (health). In addition, in 29 cases of individual migrant workers across the employers, no nationality could be provided by the interviewee.

The majority of migrant workers (n=499) were predominantly from the EU accession states. Within this group, 70% of the workers were from Poland (n=347). Hence, the sample composition reflected reasonably closely the composition of migrant workers in the HIE area established through NINo registrations (see Chapter 3).

With regard to the distribution of migrant workers across the sectors, the survey data yielded the following results.

Figure 9: Sample of employers: Number of migrant workers compared with non-migrant workers in different sectors



- The largest proportion of migrant workers employed in the businesses in the sample were in agriculture (50% of all workers) and fish farming and processing (37% of all workers, followed by hotels and restaurants (21%), the manufacture of food (15%), other (8%), health (3%), and construction (2%).
- Nearly all migrants worked in the semi-skilled trades and personal service occupations, as well as process, plant and machine operatives. An exception was the health sector, where several migrants were employed as medical professionals. As numbers sometimes remained unspecified by employers, it could not be ascertained whether they constituted the majority of all employed.

4.4 RECRUITMENT OF MIGRANT WORKERS

4.4.1 Mechanisms of recruitment

While 35 of the 53 employers said they had actively attempted to recruit migrant workers, 30 provided information about the diverse mechanisms of recruitment employed, as shown in this table.

Table 8: Mechanisms of recruitment used by employers

Mechanisms used to attract migrant workers	No of employers having used the mechanism	Details provided
Private agencies	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lantanza (Latvia) • Alban Recruitment (Inverness) • Merchant Navy Resources (Liverpool) • Hotel Jobs Scotland; • LAF Work placements • HOPS agency (run by a young farmer at Stoneleigh) • Eville Recruitment (specialising in nursing and caring) • Active Agency (well known in fishing industry) • Unnamed specialised agency for medical staff • Chefs in Scotland (Poland)
Jobcentre Plus	4	•
Websites	3	• Website used by backpackers, year-out students and recent graduates
Migrant workers' word of mouth	3	
Recruited by head office through its own contacts	2	
Adverts	1	

In cases where migrant workers had been employed without active recruitment by employers, workers had used various mechanisms to find employment, as Table 9 demonstrates.

Table 9: Mechanisms used by migrant workers to secure employment (as reported by employers)

Mechanisms migrant workers used to secure employment	No of employers reporting on mechanism	Details provided
Approached employer directly	4	<i>"[There is] no need for active recruitment as we have more than enough people approaching us for work." (Fish farming and processing, Shetland)</i>
Word of mouth	4	<i>"[The arrival of migrants] gave contacts with the migrant communities, and then it was easy as more came along." (Fish processing, Ross & Cromarty)</i>

The importance of 'word of mouth' in the recruitment of migrant workers was further highlighted by the focus group discussion with employers. Hiring migrant workers can develop a dynamic of its own, as these workers often bring their friends and family members to join the same business. The phenomenon of pro-active search for employment by migrants had been

experienced by all participants. One focus group participant explained that she did not actively have to seek migrant workers, because electronic applications for jobs came with a ratio of perhaps 100 migrant workers to one Scottish application. As migrant workers are actively seeking a job, rather than being forced to apply by the Jobcentre, this was judged to place them at an immediate advantage.

4.4.2 Reasons for recruitment

The following reasons for recruiting migrant workers were provided:

Table 10: Reasons for recruitment

Reason provided	No of employers citing reason
Difficulties in recruiting local labour	14
Positive attitudes of migrant workers	7
High levels of motivation	5
High levels of productivity	5
Skill shortages	5
Ability to employ workers for fixed period	1
Wage levels	1
Recommended by other employers in the area	1
Work ethic	1

The significant challenge created by the 'lack of local labour' was confirmed in focus group discussions. Employers referred to a "sheer lack of people" when discussing the reasons for employing migrant workers. The combination of seasonal jobs that tend to be difficult to fill anyway, with a nature of a job that might not be considered too attractive as well as being low paid, makes recruitment very difficult. The consensus amongst focus group participants was that the Jobcentre tended not to provide suitable candidates, and reported that applications for work often come with a note that the applicant had been "forced to apply". Several employers expressed their regret that they could not find suitable local people, despite feeling that they had an obligation towards employing local people if at all possible.

4.4.3 Experiences of recruitment

Seventeen employers reported that the recruitment process had incurred costs to their business. Those expenses were related to the items listed in Table 11 (some respondents listing more than one item).

Table 11: Recruitment expenses

Type of expense	No of employers citing expense
Agency fees	9
Work permit costs	3
Air fares	3
Recruitment fees	2
Home office registration fees	2
Translation costs	1
Introduction fee, cost of flight, further fee if workers stay	1
Travel to Latvia to recruit	1
Costs of the administration time	1

Agency fees were reported to amount from £300 per person to £500. The latter fee was associated with an agency that is linked to a hospitality college in Poland. According to one interviewee, work permit application processes cost £180, even if they are not successful.

Fifteen employers found the recruitment of migrant workers to be 'very easy', 12 found it 'easy', nine respondents assessed it to be 'neither easy nor difficult', and two found it 'difficult'. None of the interviewees responded with the category 'very difficult', and 15 did not answer the question mainly because they had not actively recruited migrants. The following reasons were given for their views. Some of those respondents who had found recruitment either 'very easy' or 'easy' praised the agencies they had worked with as efficient and useful:

"We needed four workers for an urgent project. The local job centre produced no candidates at all. I phoned [the agency] on Thursday morning and four Polish workers arrived on Saturday to start work on Sunday. They had all their paperwork completed and had NI numbers." (Fish farming and processing, Orkney)

Another employer also felt that the process had been straightforward, in particular once a relationship with the agency had been established. Four other employers similarly commented that the process had become easier through practice and having got accustomed to it - for example, completing the paper work. Of the four, one noted that reaching this level of proficiency had taken five years. Four interviewees thought that recruitment had been easy because many people were very happy (or even "*desperate*") to come and work in Scotland.

Where interviewees had described recruitment as 'neither easy nor difficult', or 'difficult', challenges were either associated with language barriers or the remoteness of an area.

"The interview is usually by phone. The migrants are unaware of the remoteness of Wester Ross. Difficult all round – but worth it." (Hotels and restaurants, Ross and Cromarty).

The focus group discussion elicited further challenges. For example, in the health sector, where jobs demand a substantial level of skills, obtaining references from previous employers can be a difficult task, especially if their English is not sufficient to understand the request. In some cases, completed references needed to be translated by an approved body. Another problem in the same sector is the need for workers to produce a birth certificate, which many migrant workers may not have brought with them. Moreover, trained nurses (for example, from India) have to apply for an adaptation programme through the Nursing and Midwifery Council, which also ensures the candidates' English is adequate. However, even after a nine month adaptation period, the migrant cannot work at any higher level than a care assistant.

Difficulties in recruitment for jobs requiring a relatively low level of skill include the seasonality of work, for example in agriculture and fish processing. One explanation provided by focus group participants as to why local people were not taking up seasonal jobs was a perceived fear of losing their rights to benefits in favour of a job that was only short-term. A participant commented that this was the reason why for the past five years, the company had been employing foreign agriculture students through the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme.

Being confident that workers are employed legally was also reported as an important issue. Consequently, contact with the Home Office for the registration of workers was actually appreciated as *“it makes us more confident that it is legal.”* (Fish farming and processing, Western Isles) By contrast, unusual passports and work visas have given cause for concern. Some confusion seemed to exist around the employment of East European workers from outwith the EU accession states. While one employer made use of a company that was dealing with the renewal of work visas for Bulgarians and Romanians, and was retaining their passports over a period of three months, an employer from another company reported that their workers had to leave the country for two months whilst the visa was being renewed –this is indeed a requirement of the Sector Based Scheme.

4.4.4 Types of contracts offered

Employers were asked in the survey for information on the number of all employees with permanent, fixed term and seasonal contracts, followed by a question on the type of contracts offered to migrant workers. The reliability of the answers is doubtful, as in many cases, the total number of contracts employers detailed fell below the total number of the workforce they had estimated at the very beginning of the interview. Nevertheless, Table 10 shows clearly that migrant workers are significantly less likely to obtain permanent contracts, and more likely to be on fixed term or seasonal contracts than locally established staff members.

Table 12: Types of contracts offered

	Permanent	Fixed term	Seasonal
UK workers	90%	39%	39%
Migrant workers	10%	61%	61%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%

4.4.5 Suggestions for support of the recruitment process

Employers were asked whether anything could be done to make the recruitment of migrant workers easier. Three interviewees argued for some more vetting of migrant workers before they arrive. Two of these interviewees pointed specifically to the need for minimum language requirements. In addition, more support for the recruitment process was requested. This included concerns about workers’ registration fees, which have to be paid every time a worker returns for a season, as well as the required paperwork, which was sometimes described as burdensome, and confusing

“[There should be] less paperwork. The rules are too inhibiting as [the migrant workers] can only stay for 12 months. A lot of time goes into those 12 months, training etc.” (Fish farming and processing)

“The Government paperwork should be simplified. Perhaps there should be some sort of central body to help with the employment legislation.” (Fish farming and processing, Western Isles)

“[There should be a] UK website to tell you if you are doing things correctly. I was a bit worried if we were doing everything legally and all was genuine.” (Manufacture of food, Orkney)

In two cases, the request for some type of co-ordination was made to fill skill gaps and to recruit migrant workers.

“HIE could play a role in identifying the skills needed and making the contacts with Poland and other places. (Construction, Moray)

“Argyll & Bute need a co-ordinated approach amongst the statutory bodies (and maybe the larger employers) to negotiate with agencies - or even foreign governments.” (Health, Argyll)

The suggestion for better links with foreign organisations was also made in another case:

“[It would be good to link] with more specialist sources of recruits such as the hospitality college in Poland.” (Hospitality, Ross and Cromarty)

4.5 EXPERIENCES WITH MIGRANT WORKERS

All 53 employers in the survey had very positive experiences with migrant workers. When asked to rate their experiences, the following result emerged:

Table 13: Employers’ experiences with migrant workers

	<i>Mainly positive</i>	<i>Mainly challenging</i>	<i>Comparable with other workers</i>
Level of motivation	51	0	2
Absenteeism	43	0	5
Level of productivity	41	1	10
Staff turnover	36	1	11
Atmosphere amongst workforce	30	7	8
Assessing suitability of skills	22	12	15
Atmosphere between workforce and local community	22	3	12
Verbal communication	15	29	3
Written communication	12	23	5

Note: Where the number of responses to an item remained below 53, this can be explained with missing replies.

Hence, according to the employers in the study, migrant workers distinguish themselves most in the area of motivation and productivity, as well as staff turnover and absenteeism. The survey findings also show that the challenges lie in the area of communication, as might be predicted. Difficulties have also been noted with the assessment of migrant workers’ skills. While some tensions have been identified at the workplace, in the community, employers seemed to be largely unaware of significant challenges.

The following views were reflected in the survey's qualitative data. Migrant workers were praised in particular for their hard work and strong commitment: often the problem appeared to be persuading them to take time off. In addition, they were highly commended for their reliability and skills - sometimes overqualified, but still happy to perform all types of work.

"[The migrant workers] are fully committed to the job. They have usually studied more than one language in school which is very useful in the restaurant. They do not consider the work to be beneath them. Some are hugely over-qualified for the work they are doing but they do a good job." (Hotels and restaurants, Isle of Skye)

"Their ethic of working – they are not put off by the job. They are willing to work and always turn up on time. They are reliable. They don't mess you about. If they want extended leave to go home, it is by arrangement at a low season and without pay." (Fish farming and processing, Lochaber)

In two cases, employers indicated that without migrant workers, their businesses would not have been able to continue, or could not have grown. Several times, the quality of migrant workers was contrasted with perceptions of poor performances of local labour, or migrant workers were described as providing an incentive for local workers to improve their performance.

"[Migrant workers] have excellent customer service skills. They show up the local people. They have the right attitude when they arrive. When employing UK students in the past, we have found they make it clear they will only work in hospitality when they are not doing 'proper stuff'. Migrants are usually better qualified but do not look down on the work." (Hotels and restaurants, Isle of Skye).

"[The migrant workers] have had a good influence over the less enthusiastic UK workers. UK workers see that unless they do a good job, they will easily be replaced." (Manufacture of food, Orkney)

The focus group participants also agreed on the high motivation and quality performance of migrant workers. Even in jobs which are considered low paid, workers can do reasonably well given the lower living costs in their own countries. The example of one Slovakian couple was provided who have worked in the hotels and restaurants sector and earned enough money to be "*like millionaires in their country*". This advantage seemed to function as a motivation for them to stay for another year, before returning to their country. Despite the high qualifications of some workers, who have doctoral degrees and professional qualifications, they were earning more in menial jobs in Scotland than they would as professionals in their own countries.

The most common challenge, on which 23 employers commented in response to open questions in the survey, was related to language. An inability to communicate could cause frustration amongst other workforce members. It could prove daunting on a training course, when it remained unclear how much migrant workers were able to comprehend. Although language issues were raised very frequently, it was also stated several times that problems had been confined to the beginning of a person's stay, and that such challenges were gradually being overcome.

In addition to language issues, cultural differences were mentioned as sometimes giving rise for concern. In the health sector, "*the way doctors and nurses work together*" was mentioned in this context; in construction, the fact that health and safety issues were just not considered important in some countries; in hospitality, the approach to alcohol by some Eastern European

migrants was described as a reason why they were no longer put on bar duty. Gender and nationality issues were also commented upon. One employer stated that *“Polish men do not like it when a female is in charge.”* The same interviewee also voiced the opinion that Poles and Lithuanians dislike each other – a view repeated by another participant who had observed that Poles, Latvian and Lithuanians were unfriendly towards each other.

Language and cultural issues may have been relevant in the care sector: an employer reported that older people find it sometimes difficult to be looked after by overseas nationals, but that they are gradually getting used to it. Two employers mentioned challenges with assessing or recognising qualifications:

“(The migrant workers) had no qualifications on paper. Each one said that the other was a plasterer but they had nothing to prove it.” (Construction, Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey)

In the health sector, it was commented that medical staff are often well experienced and qualified in their own countries, but their qualifications are not fully recognised in the UK. They were, therefore, not employed at their optimum level. (Health, Argyll and the Islands)

One employer hinted at problems with the wider community, saying that there were:

“Some conflict with local staff and community. Locals don’t understand that they are doing work which locals refuse to do.” (Lochaber, Fish farming and processing).

Focus group participants also discussed their observations of the extent to which migrant workers were integrated in the communities. They perceived a lack of knowledge of the English language as a barrier to integration and participation in social activities. But on the whole, employers reported that their migrant workers were well integrated. This was explained with examples of migrants making good use of the environment (for example, travelling, climbing), and also getting together with locals and with people from other businesses. It was emphasised that local workers have taken an interest in the migrant workers' origins and cultures, and have joined them, for instance in a Polish restaurant, and even visited them in their home country. One participant reported on formal attempts to ensure that migrant workers feel welcome: a mentoring system has been put in place, where local workers help migrants to learn about the community. Moreover, English classes had been set up, and had been attended by all migrant workers.

In the focus group, challenges encountered in relation to accommodation and access to bank accounts featured particularly high. While all employers in the group were struggling with securing accommodation for their migrant workers, they conceded that it also affected local people. Challenges included reluctance by the private sector to rent to migrant workers. Ordinary flats, as well as hotel rooms for long-term lets were very difficult to obtain due to prejudice, as well as the fact that they were in short supply, and often expensive.

All focus group participants had noted barriers to bank accounts for migrant workers, including the following

- One migrant worker with an ID card was able to pass immigration, but the document was still not sufficient for the bank. A passport was demanded – but such a document was not at hand.
- Migrant workers with less than a year's contract cannot get bank accounts, but it is very unusual for anyone to get a one year contract initially.
- A utility bill is required from a permanent UK address – but migrant workers may not have a permanent address, let alone utility bills.

These barriers could be interpreted as being discriminatory, as migrant workers are perceived to be treated differently from local workers. Resorting to paying migrants in cash was seen as the first step towards illegality, as it is easier for someone not to appear in the books. Moreover, as many migrants are sending money to their countries of origin, every transaction costs them substantial amounts of money. It was revealed that perceived poor services by banks was neither confined to manual workers, nor to nationals from the new EU or non-EU countries. An example was given of an EU-national professional employed by a multinational company, who had been informed by the bank that he could not be provided with a switch card.

Three focus group participants reported having had problems with NINo applications, in particular for seasonal workers. In the case of one location, workers were unable to get to the interview before returning to their countries of origin. In another, the waiting list was reported to have been so long (requiring about three months waiting time) that it had not been worthwhile for the migrants to wait for their turn, or the NINo had been provided at the last minute before the return. However, as a consequence of not having a NINo, migrant workers have great difficulties in claiming back taxes – a financial loss which is considerable given that without a NINo, employees are placed on an emergency tax code.

4.6 PERCEIVED NEED FOR SUPPORT PROVISION FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

Thirty two of the 53 employers felt it was necessary to provide support for migrant workers, in some cases arguing for comprehensive services.

“If migrant workers are the future staff, then we need to develop a whole package of support.” (Health, Argyll and the Islands)

Twelve interviewees suggested useful provision *within* work. Of these, five emphasised the importance of ensuring the company is aware of migrant workers' needs by having a designated person that links with migrant workers, for example a line manager, or a human resource representative:

“[There should be] awareness sessions for their line managers. If managers are better informed this can only be helpful to the migrant workers. Someone from outside would need to be brought in to do this and perhaps provide a few basic words of the language.” (Construction, Inverness)

Employers who felt that services should be provided *outwith* work referred to help with finding/paying for accommodation (5); (locally provided) language tuition (7), also specified as night classes in English (1). In addition, suggestions were made of how migrants' rights might be upheld (5), as in these examples:

"Perhaps a helpline they could phone for an explanation of UK employment conditions, PAYE and NI." (Manufacture of food, Ross and Cromarty)

"First, someone they can take problems to, i.e. employment rights. Second, someone to check on the employer before they arrive - to check that the employment is as described and that the accommodation is adequate." (Hotels and restaurants, Skye and Lochalsh).

"To help them understand employment in this country - their rights, tax, etc" (Fish farming and processing, Western Isles)

Furthermore, support when dealing with banks was requested as in this case:

"Citizens Advice Bureau works for UK nationals. Why not for migrant workers? They need support when dealing with banks." (Hotels and restaurants, Shetland).

Five other interviewees were concerned about poor attitudes by banks resulting in difficulties migrants experience when trying to open a bank account.

Two interviewees were concerned about alleviating the 'culture shock' migrant workers might experience. For example, one suggested that it might be possible to have *"a place in the local community where they could see a film in their own language."* (Fish farming and processing, Western Isles). The other emphasised the need for services in remote areas.

4.7 SUPPORT SERVICES PROVIDED AT THE WORKPLACE

Thirty three employers stated that they themselves were offering types of support for migrant workers.

4.7.1 Language

In 13 of those cases, the support was specified as language tuition. Explanations of how language tuition was organised included informal and unstructured approaches:

"We encourage and monitor progress" (Health, Caithness and Sutherland)

"No actual tuition but a lot of day to day help and encouragement" (Hotels and restaurants, Skye and Lochalsh)

"Time off to learn the menu" (Hotels and restaurants, Ross and Cromarty)

Support for language learning was also provided in a more organised framework. This included formal classes available at the workplace, and the offer of support for taking up publicly funded language tuition, for example, through help with transport to the venue of the class, or through time given off for studying:

"We have excellent links with the local school. One of the teachers has just come back from Poland, she will be paid by our company to give classes on English." (Shipyard, Moray)

“A qualified English teacher came to the Home for an hour a week for six weeks. Staff are given time off to go to The Spectrum Centre in Inverness for language help. (Health, Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey)

“We work along with Forres Academy to provide language tuition. A guidance teacher there is Polish.” (Construction, Moray)

Hence, employers perceive different levels of responsibility concerning their role in the provision of language tuition. While some employers have taken the task on themselves, others are clearly looking for other agencies to fill the gap in provision.

4.7.2 Induction/Orientation Programme

Nineteen employers explained that an induction programme had been provided, and that the programme was the same for migrant workers as for others. In six of those cases, it was made clear that the induction focused on health and safety issues. While three employers stated that the induction material had been translated into the native languages of the migrant workers (for example, Polish), in two other organisations, interpreters had been called for assistance in induction sessions, and in one, both translation and interpretation had occurred.

In the case of the health sector, it was pointed out that *“there is a national standard induction programme for medical staff from overseas.”* (Health, Western Isles) Moreover, in the same sector, the induction period had been split, with some of it having taken place in the migrant workers’ native countries. One interviewee explained that the induction comprised organising a dentist and a doctor for the new workers, as well as explaining UK law (such as alcohol and driving). In 24 cases (i.e. nearly half the sample), it seemed that no induction/orientation programmes had been made available.

4.7.3 Training

Seventeen employers reported that they provided training, the nature of which tended to be described as job specific, and as the same for all employees. In two cases, it was mentioned that even where migrant workers had taken up an occupation equivalent to the one they had held in their place of origin, extra training was required: for example, workers in fish processing had to adapt to UK standards, and bakers needed to become familiar with British bakery goods:

“Extra training is necessary because all the breads and cakes are so different from the ones they are used to at home.” (Manufacture of food, Western Isles)

Two interviewees mentioned difficulties with the provision of training due to language barriers. In one of those cases, this problem was resolved through the use of interpreters. The fact that in the majority of cases (36) no (formal) training was provided may reflect the relatively low level of skills required for the jobs migrant workers were carrying out, but perhaps also a lack of commitment to training of workers that are on fixed term or seasonal contracts.

4.7.4 Accommodation

The survey showed that employers’ involvement in securing accommodation for migrant workers ranged from helping to find accommodation, taking full responsibility for finding and securing accommodation, to the actual provision of accommodation. In 21 cases, interviewees explained that the company provided accommodation. In three cases, this was a short term arrangement, and confined to the first few months of the migrants’ arrival. The availability of staff blocks was mentioned twice. One interviewee specified that the accommodation provided consisted of the owner’s mobile home and another explained that there were caravans on-site.

In one instance, furnished, rented accommodation was referred to:

“The company provides furnished accommodation, pays their council tax, and electricity bills. We only charge £25 per week rent.” (Manufacturing, Caithness)

One company rented accommodation for the workers in the company’s name, while in another case where the employer was not keen to lease accommodation for their workers, the Catholic Church stepped in, and took on the lease. The company now pays the church.

In two cases in the health sector, it was not clear how accommodation was sourced, but the interviewee stated that the employer would pay accommodation for the first few months. In seven cases, employers had taken full responsibility to source accommodation for their workers, and in two cases, interviewees mentioned that they would help finding housing.

Different attempts had been made by focus group participants to address the situation of lack of accommodation. One participant reported that her organisation was paying workers’ private accommodation for the first three month of their stay to help them. Another commented that her company had rented a flat for their workers, thereby also helping them to get a bank account, as the company was able to confirm their workers’ home address to the bank. In another case, porter cabins had been provided for the migrant workers, but it was admitted that this could only be a temporary solution, and would obviously not be suitable for families.

4.7.5 Help with setting up bank accounts

Thirty eight interviewees indicated that they provided assistance with setting up bank accounts. However, no further details were provided as to the nature of this assistance. This relatively high number perhaps indicates the severity of the problem migrant workers are likely to face when attempting to set up a bank account. The topic featured highly in the focus group discussion as well. While one participant reported that the workers in her company were generally able to open a bank account after a year or so, as an interim measure the company resorted to paying their staff by cheque. However, this did not always resolve the issue, as the banks refused to cash cheques made out to migrant workers on some occasions. Consequently, this may result in business management representatives spending considerable time in the bank to help with the cashing of cheques.

4.7.6 Other support services

Twenty eight employers assisted migrant workers with obtaining National Insurance numbers. 18 interviewees indicated that they had helped migrant workers with immigration enquiries, and seven stated that they had supported migrants with translation and/or interpretation. In none of those cases was further information provided about the format of the help.

4.7.7 Liaison with other organisations

Ten employers reported that they liaised with other support agencies (some of them listing more than one agency), as demonstrated in this table.

Table 14: Liaison with other organisations

	No of employers citing organisation	Details provided
Learning centres, schools or colleges	6	Local college Learning link HIE (for advice on adult education English classes)
Information, Advice and Welfare Support Agencies	3	Polish Society Local migrant workers forum Citizens Advice Bureau
Interpretation and translation services	2	Outside translation for documents Unofficial help from spouse of worker who " <i>helps if a problem arises</i> "
Police	2	Helped put together a package on basic law
Housing services	1	
Health services	1	
Catholic church	1	Help with accommodation
Home Office	1	As required by law
Fire Brigade	1	For safety training
Hostels and landlords	1	

4.8 HELP REQUIRED WITH THE PROVISION OF SUPPORT FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

Twenty five interviewees indicated that they would like to have help with the provision of support for migrant workers. The areas in which help was desired are shown in Table 15.

Table 15: Help with provision of support

	No of employers requiring help	Details provided
Accommodation	8	Request ranged from help with finding accommodation, to funding of same (" <i>some sort of industry grant to help with the accommodation problem</i> ")
Language tuition	7	Help with practical courses where there was a long distance to the nearest college Language tuition complemented with cultural education
Banking	5	Easier access for migrants to bank accounts
Advice on how to recruit migrant workers	3	Help with paper work Query whether Scottish Executive provides support
Help with interpreting and translation	3	Help with costs Availability of health and safety documents in Polish
Vetting of recruitment agencies	2	
Vetting and checking of standard of English of migrant workers	1	
Tuning migrant workers' TV stations to their own countries	1	
Strengthening social networks, and integration into social life	1	
Access by EU migrant workers to <i>all</i> public services	1	
A contact person for migrant workers outside work	1	Query whether this could perhaps be arranged between hotels

4.8.1 Information document for employers

There was strong agreement amongst all focus group participants that the time was right for the production of a booklet for employers, which provides information on the issues raised in the discussion, including information on legislation and regulations. Such document should also have contact numbers of organisations where more information can be obtained. It was considered less desirable to produce booklets in an un-coordinated manner in different locations, and a single booklet, covering, for example, the Highland and Islands area, was favoured.

CHAPTER 5 THE VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES OF MIGRANT WORKERS

Whilst the experiences of migrant workers varied depending on individual background and circumstances, there were often more similarities than differences in their experiences. This section of the report provides the analysis of 17 interviews and two focus groups undertaken with migrant workers and is described under the following headings:

- Profile of migrant workers
- Motivation for coming to the Highlands and Islands
- Accessing employment
- Views and experiences at work
- Accessing services
- Access to advice and information
- Views and experiences of life outside work
- Staying or leaving
- Suggestions for improvement

5.1 PROFILE OF MIGRANT WORKERS

Between interviews and the focus groups, there were 36 migrant workers involved in this project. The sampling of migrant workers reflected a range of nationalities, industrial sectors, types of contracts, job remits and gender as far as was feasible. A relatively high number of Polish people in the sample reflects their predominance in the migrant labour force at the present time. With a few exceptions (6), the overwhelming majority of those who participated in the interviews and focus groups were single people and the majority were between the ages of 18-34. Two participants were accompanied by their partners and /or children, there were two single women with a child each and two women with relatives, such as a brother or a parent. and had studied at degree level or were in the midst of degree level study.

The majority of participants (29) were either students studying at degree level, or had degrees or vocational qualifications at diploma level. Of the 28, approximately three had postgraduate qualifications. The majority had obtained their qualifications overseas. A very small minority had extensive work experience (viz. in terms of length and range). This may be explained by two factors: (i) the predominance of younger people who had recently graduated or finished their training; and (ii) high unemployment rates in the countries they have come from. The participants were employed in a range of sectors : agriculture, food processing, fish farming, health, information technology, local authority, hotel and tourism. With the exception of a small minority who were employed in occupations related to their qualifications, the majority were employed in jobs beneath their qualifications level.

5.2 MOTIVATION FOR COMING TO THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS

5.2.1 Economic motivation

With the exception of a very small minority, the Highlands or the Islands was their first destination from their country of origin. Although, the reasons for being in the Highlands or Islands varied depending on individual circumstance, for the vast majority employment and earning money were the primary reasons. This was especially the case for those coming from the new EU accession state countries and for some non-EU workers coming under the Sector Based Scheme (SBS)¹.

¹ The aim of the Sector Based Scheme (SBS) is to recruit low skilled workers from outside the EU in sectors considered to have labour shortages (currently hospitality and food manufacturing). Under the scheme they can only be given permission to work for a maximum of 12 months. Following the completion of the contract individuals are expected to leave the UK for a minimum of two months before a further application can be made. (The Relocation Advisory Service, un-dated, p10)

The prevalence of high levels of unemployment and low wages in their countries were given as the main driving force for coming to the UK:

“The country suffers from lack of money, so everything is done because of lack of money. There is a lot of unemployment, there are lots of educated people ... they cannot find employment.” (Male, Non EU, Eastern Europe, SBS,² Hospitality)

Competition for jobs was described as being high:

“Oh yeah tried to get a job. Political Science in Poland is very popular ... Lots of young people study the subject. You have to have good connections to have a good job, know the right people.” (Male, EU accession state national³, Hospitality)

In addition, those with degrees reported that the pay for professional jobs was low compared to what they could earn in the UK doing unskilled work. The ability to earn to save and send money back to their home country was seen as the primary reason for being in the Highlands and Islands.

5.2.2 Other reasons

For a small number of participants coming to the UK was perceived in much broader terms, for example, as giving a better future for their children:

“I want a better life for my children. There are economic problems at home with prices which are similar to here [Highlands], but wages are four times lower. Latvia is like Scotland and Ireland because of the culture, people, and landscape; although these are not the same as in Latvia they are quite similar.” (Female, EU accession state national, Fish Processing)

For some, especially those from Latvia and Poland, the cultural gulf between the Scots and themselves was perceived as being quite small. They felt that there were more similarities than differences, which made it easier for them to be in Scotland.

There were a small minority of individuals from a variety of backgrounds who had proactively chosen to come to the Highlands and Islands for other reasons. These included, learning English, family reunification, having present or previous connections in the area, understanding the culture, gaining work experience, and having positive experiences. The latter emerged specifically with regard to summer jobs in the agriculture and tourism /outdoor sectors, where students were only too pleased to return each year, and encourage their friends and family to come across as well:

“This is a nice farm .We are allowed to have barbeques, parties, etc. I think it must be one of the best farms, so we keep coming back.” (Female, EU accession state national, Agriculture)

For a small minority the size of Inverness was an important factor:

“I came from a big city ... London is too big, smaller places are better ... I like it in Inverness, it is a smaller city and it is cheaper than for example, Edinburgh which is expensive.” (Male, South American, Retail)

² ‘Non EU, Eastern Europe, SBS’, refers to those from Eastern European countries who are on Sector Based Schemes.

³ ‘EU accession state national’ refers to individuals who originate from the EU accession eight countries.

Taking up further educational or employment opportunities which would broaden work experience irrespective of location, was also another reason for being in the Highlands or Islands:

“ I did not actively choose to come to (Inverness). I applied to study in the UK not Scotland per se. The key issue is where the opportunities are. I had no preference for a specific place in the UK. The offer of a trainee post happened to be at [...] this is the only place I was accepted. I am very happy they gave me an opportunity.” (Male, North African, Health)

It is important to recognise that most participants had not chosen to come to the Highlands or Islands specifically.

5.3 ACCESSING EMPLOYMENT

5.3.1 Recruitment agencies

For more than half of the participants, recruitment agencies- usually based in their home countries - were the most common route to accessing employment. However, few were able to recollect the name of the agency that they had used. For most of those involved in this study, accessing employment directly was seen as problematic in a context where their English language skills were poor to non-existent. Using agencies was seen as a convenient way of getting to the UK with employment guaranteed and a place to stay:

“We paid £300, this is not too much here [UK], but in our country it is equal to one good monthly salary. I had to pay upfront. I was thinking of coming to Britain without a job and coming to the city to look for a job, but I would have spent exactly the same money. Through the agency I came here and got a job and the next day I started work. It did not have to worry about anything. It is easier ...” (Male, EU accession state national, Hospitality)

The standard package usually involved finding an employer, organising visas or the appropriate documentation, and initial accommodation on arrival. In a small number of cases, the package also involved air travel. Fees varied from £30 to £1000, depending on what was provided, and was recurrent depending on the country from which the individual originates. For example, for those on Sector Based Schemes, yearly visas are the norm. The workers are required to return home for approximately two and a half months at the end of their contract before they can reapply for a new visa. This entails yet another fee paid to the recruitment agency, albeit at a reduced rate. A number expressed anxieties about the possible ending of the Sector Based Scheme especially in relation to the tourism industry.

Most found the cost of recruitment agency fees too high, but felt that they had no other choice if they wanted to access work abroad. The procedures for registering seemed similar across countries and agencies: individuals sent their curriculum vitae, this was often but not always followed by an interview and an English language test (which was described as very basic in most cases) and then being matched with an employer.

The period from application to a recruitment agency to being offered employment appeared to take up to three months. The predominant trend was to accept the first job that was offered for fear that rejecting it might result in further delays. In most cases individuals were not aware of, and probably were not particularly concerned about the precise location of where they were going to work, or indeed the nature of employment.

A small number on the mainland and the Western Isles did, however, express some surprise about the isolated locations they had ended up in:

"In Poland there is high unemployment, not enough of jobs for someone with my experience. After my studies I decided to go exactly the same way as [A], but I did not know where I was going to. [The agency] just said they had a job for me. ... they asked me to call them if I accept. So I called them and they accepted me and then I checked where [...] is, then I looked at the internet ... and I thought –Oh! I am going to the middle of nowhere. There were no choices given, it was the first place I had been given ... I could reject it and wait for another one but I did not want to waste my time." (Male, EU accession state national Hospitality)

"I was looking specifically for a job in the UK, because there are lots of jobs over here and the wages and conditions are good. The health and safety is also good, and there is good support for you- it is easy to work here." (Male, EU accession state national, Construction)

Having found out where they were going to be located, very few (three participants) actually took proactive steps to find out more. However, those that did used the internet to access information about the area and the facilities.

5.3.2 Other ways of accessing work

Approximately 11 participants used other routes into accessing work in the Highlands and the Islands, for example:

- Through recommendations from friends and social networks based in the Highlands and Islands
- Relatives staying in the area.
- Previous study or employment in the area
- Responding to advertisements in national journals or newspapers, this was especially the case with those who were working in highly skilled occupations.
- Speculative approaches to the Job Centre

It would appear that returnee migrant workers with a predominantly economic motivation – especially those working in the food processing sector –tended to return to the same location due to networks already established amongst their fellow country workers. There was also a tendency to move from one employer to another within the Highlands and Islands, for example, as illustrated by the following quote through an interpreter:

"D and A first came from Poland to [Ross-shire] . They worked there, then returned to Poland after three months. They then decided to come to Morayshire to work at the [...], this was because they had a friend who helped them to come back and also helped them to find accommodation for a month." (Two Females, EU accession state nationals, Food Processing)

Whilst there were anxieties about unscrupulous operators and concerns expressed about the cost of some of the recruitment agencies, there were no suggestions forthcoming about how recruitment processes might be improved. There almost appeared to be an implicit acceptance of the situation as it is and most found it difficult to suggest any changes, particularly those who required visas:

"Before I applied to the agency I was trying to find a job myself, but the response was 'excuse me the position is filled...excuse me I'm not interested ...' it was very difficult." (Male, Non EU, Eastern European, SBS, Hospitality)

5.4 VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES AT WORK

The views and experiences of migrant workers with regard to their employment were complex and often contradictory; consequently, three contextual factors need to be taken into account:

- Most participants were often reluctant to appear openly critical of their employers.
- In addition, for those in semi-skilled and unskilled jobs, conditions of work were seen in relative terms –i.e. implicitly and explicitly they were constantly comparing conditions and pay in the UK with what it would be like in their home countries.
- Putting up with poor conditions was seen by migrants as a temporary measure until they improved their English and communications skills and was seen as a ‘foot in the door’ from which they might move on to education or better jobs.

5.4.1 Contracts

Very few migrant workers had permanent contracts, or indeed contracts that lasted a year or more. Setting aside the seasonal jobs in the agricultural sector, evidence from many participants in the study, suggested that there was tendency in some sectors, for example, in the food processing and the construction, to employ people on short term contracts of about twelve weeks. This created feelings of insecurity and uncertainty:

“We are often on short term [in this case 12 week] contracts and do not know if we can have another job . We cannot plan. This does not make me feel secure and makes planning quite difficult. It is also difficult to get employment rights if you haven’t worked for a year.” (Male, EU accession state national, Hospitality)

5.4.2 Nature of jobs and Qualifications

With the exception of four participants who were in skilled jobs, approximately 14 out of 24 people (excluding students and those in skilled jobs) had degrees or diploma level qualifications, and were undertaking semi-skilled or unskilled work. Whilst most recognised that their command of the English language was not good enough to get skilled work, a number, nevertheless, expressed frustration at not being able to use their skills and qualifications:

“I want to keep my skills up to date, so it is bad that I am not using my degree. I have tried applying for degree-related jobs in Scotland but my qualifications are not recognised. I would need a HND.” (Male, Non EU, Eastern European, SBS, Hospitality)

In addition, most lacked knowledge and information about how their qualifications and experience might be transferred into a UK context.

5.4.3 Working conditions

Issues around hours worked and pay appeared to be fairly complex and often lacking in transparency. The hours worked varied between 35-60 hours per week and most worked over 40 hours depending on the nature of the job. For example, within the same organisation an individual working as a waitress may work less hours than a kitchen porter; or in the case of work that is weather dependent (e.g. fish processing), individuals worked up to 60 hours some weeks and less (i.e. 30 hours) if the weather was poor:

“Although our wages are fixed [£5.05], we are guaranteed pay for 35 hour, for example, if the weather is very windy and rainy and fishing boat can’t go to sea, we may to stay at home for three days and at the end they will pay us for 35 hours not more; and vice versa, if there is a big catch of fish we could do 60 hours one week, for example, and less the next week ... it is a little bit strange, but over 40 hours my rate is £6.06 I think, I am not sure.” (Male, Non EU, Eastern European, SBS Fish Processing)

However, for most participants in the food processing and construction sectors, long hours and working six days a week were a feature of their working lives:

“You know we start work 7 or 8 o’clock in the morning and finish at 5 or 6 or sometimes 7 o’clock, when not busy we work 6 days and sometimes 7 days, in the summer we work 6 to 6 ... ” (Female, EU accession state national, Fish Processing)

Even those who did not work long hours found the nature of work they did exhausting:

“We work 30 hours a week, usually 1430- 2030 ... five days a week with overtime sometimes. We often work 6 days per week. The machine goes very fast and it is difficult to keep up with this machine, this is very tiring. We work 6 hours a day, but we are very tired.” (Female, EU accession state national, Food Processing)

“I don’t like the work because it is very hot and hard work. Even though the hours are not long. Kitchen work is hard, but I need money so I have to work there. My English is not good so it is very difficult to get work ... I need to speak better English to get better work.” (Male, Asian, Restaurant)

5.4.4 Pay

With the exception of those in skilled occupations, the weekly pay for all those employed in the food processing, agricultural, construction, and hospitality sectors was between £4.85 and £5.95. Those in the latter pay category were in the minority. In addition some companies made deductions from pay where accommodation was provided. For those on Sector Based Schemes, yearly contracts followed by the two month break meant that each time they returned they were placed at the bottom of the pay scale.

This often resulted in potentially difficult relations with co-workers who had continuous employment, albeit for a shorter time:

“... during my first year they increased my salary three times. Twice, because my employer and my supervisor wanted to do that and a third time was because the national wage was increased. But when I came back here for the second time I obtained a new contract and I had to start again, at the minimum wage. It is horrible, because, for example, when I came here the first time they were no Poles, they came here after I came and now they get a higher rate per hour, and I have been here longer than them. My employer is not guilty ... I can’t be angry with them, because it is a government rule that we have to obtain new contracts after these two months ... it is very complicated” (Male, Non EU, Eastern European, SBS, Fish Processing)

Irrespective of the type of work migrant workers were employed to do, the trend appeared to be for all migrant workers to get paid the same rate of pay, which gave rise to feelings of being discriminated against:

“Work relationships! They are very interesting. Sometimes I feel down, because you know, it is a little bit discriminatory. I feel discriminated against, because I know my qualifications. I know some people who work with me are just doing labelling. I work with machines ... with the computer but I get paid the same as someone doing labelling. Ok I can work anyway. I like working ... but this is a protest.” (Female, EU accession state national, Fish processing)

While recognising that they were receiving the minimum wage, those from Central and Eastern Europe in particular, constantly contrasted this with what they would be earning in their country of origin, which was very much less. Figures of one Pound an hour to salaries of £150.00 per month for teachers and engineers were frequently quoted. Feelings about the number of hours

worked were quite complex and not clear cut depending very much on the primary motivation for migrating. For those whose interest was to earn money, the key focus was to earn as much as they could. Most preferred to work all the hours they were offered and some complained about not being offered enough hours. A number preferred to forgo their holiday entitlements and receive payment instead:

"I enjoy my job, although it varies a lot- sometimes it is easy, sometimes it can be very busy. I had to sign away my working time rights so that I can work 48hrs plus overtime. My hours are from 7.30am to 5pm, but most days I work until 6pm. On a Saturday we only work until 1 or 2pm, but often we have a job to finish and we have to work hard. I have had only one public holiday [2nd May] since I started. The [migrant workers] in Aberdeen have had four holidays. We get paid for holidays rather than taking the time off, it is added on to our hourly pay. I am paid £4.85 but with free accommodation and half board." (Male, EU accession state national, Construction)

5.4.5 Experience of those in professional jobs

In contrast to those in semi-skilled and unskilled work, workers in skilled occupations felt that they were respected for their competence and treated well:

"I have a respectable relationship with the people who employ me. I feel I am treated fairly, they value my experience and I value their experience. We have a mutually respectful relationship ..." (Male, Asian, Information Technology)

One participant, who had spent five years working and obtaining higher qualifications in France, contrasted his experience there with his current experience:

"I can go back to France any time, but I prefer the system of medicine here, it is better for overseas doctor in the UK. The difference is that in the UK overseas doctors are treated as the same as indigenous doctors in terms of salary, and everything. Where as in France this is not the case and I did not like that. In France the hospitals are nice, but the French do not respect foreign doctors. Here you feel you are respected for being (a professional) and being competent." (Male, North African, Health)

5.4.6 Relationships with co-workers

With regard to relationships with co-workers, most reported having good relationships with their co-workers (Scottish and overseas). Scottish people were perceived as being 'nice and friendly'. A small minority of participants (three) specifically identified hostility from Scottish co-workers, who perceived migrant workers as displacing local labour. However, at the same time a participant expressed surprise at the lack of such hostility:

"I expected some [negative reactions] but have not had any. People are friendly, but perhaps it would not be as good if we didn't work in hospitality. I think people here know that they need us to do these jobs." (Male Non EU, Eastern European, SBS Hospitality)

There were a number of other problematic issues highlighted by some participants. For example a number felt discriminated against:

"They feel they work more hours and harder than the Scottish workers, for example, the supervisors [who are all Scottish] allow Scottish people to have more short breaks to talk, but the Polish workers do not get these breaks and are supervised more closely. They feel that they should be paid more, they work really hard and they are really tired at the end of the day but feel that this is not reflected in their pay." (3 Females, EU accession state nationals, Food Processing, through an interpreter)

There were some references to difficult relations amongst different migrant workers. This was often exacerbated by different cultural norms (for example, migrant groups had different attitudes towards gender roles at work), and the pressures of work at specific times of day (e.g. dinner / breakfast):

A⁴: Co- workers, some times it is difficult to deal with foreigners, especially with people from our Eastern border.

S: I do not know why they are like that ... because when I was in the USA, I worked with Brazilians, Mexicans, Thais, Puerto Ricans, Russians and everything was great. Here it is different ... may be because of that there are fewer people ...

A: There is huge competition ... everybody wants to be better than someone else. There is like a competition between everybody ... like they want to be the best worker because they are afraid of loosing their job. Breakfast is a especially difficult time, because the toast runs out and everyone is trying to make extra toast and there is a queue and everyone gets stressed.

S: This is a small place but nobody will be fired because of doing something wrong. The Russian people, they want to be in a group or something, they envy us because they find it difficult to get a visa and we do not have a problem. It will be more difficult for them (Those on Sector Based Schemes) to get a visa. (Female and Male, EU accession state nationals, Hospitality)

5.4.7 Contracts, employment rights and training

Whilst most (particularly those working for large organisations or companies) had contracts which provided information on hours of working and holiday entitlements, the majority were unaware of their employment rights or where to seek such information. With the exception of one individual who mentioned accessing information about rights using the internet, for the majority this was problematic, especially if they did not have a good command of English.

Apart from basic health and safety, and food hygiene training in the case of a small number of individuals (6) most said that they had not received any formal training for the jobs they undertook. Whilst one or two companies did appear to be exploring the possibility of organising English language classes within the work place, this was very exceptional and none of the workers involved in the study highlighted any such initiative amongst their employers.

5.4.7 Relationships with employers

Relationship with employers varied between different companies even within the same sector. Often the impression given by migrant workers was that their employers were either not interested or did not proactively facilitate or assist with access to information about employment entitlements. The following quotes reflect the views of mainly Central and East European women and men:

“Sometimes it is really hard to get some information, when we want to know about resident status. I asked my manager about that couple of times, and asked him this everyday. He says I will phone them and nothing happens. Maybe the (employers) are nice, but they do not do respond to our requests for information. When we ask (the manager) he says nicely “don’t worry, I call, I will find out and I will call you ... I will do it for you ... and it takes a long time.” (Male, Non EU, Eastern European, SBS, Hospitality)

⁴ The alphabet in this conversation, as well as others in the report is used instead of real names or pseudonyms.

“The managers did not know about the Workers Registration Scheme. I was worried about it and asked them. Shortly afterwards a message was sent around to all migrant workers telling us to register now! Before that the managers had said there was no hurry.” (Male, EU accession state national, Hospitality)

“We have asked for information about our tax. We asked the manager. but he keeps promising to let us know. Some people say that we have to go to the post office or to the tax office. Everyone says something different we do not have the right information.” (Female, EU accession state national, Hospitality)

Individuals were only too aware that making what might seem to employers as excessive demands may result in them being out of work, as well as homeless, especially if living in tied accommodation. They were very conscious of their vulnerability:

S: *Some people are leaving and I asked (the manager) whether I could work in the bar and collect glasses something .I wanted to do some extra work after my evening shift. After work I do not want to go to bed. I feel like I am closed in my four walls. I wanted to go downstairs collect glasses, see people and not only be in my room. It would also give me extra hours and extra money. He said he would speak to [...] about it, but still hasn't "*

A: *Remember what [the manager] told you if you don't like the job you can leave anytime and we can get other people.*

S: *Yes he said “you can leave whenever you want, just give me a few days notice. There are lots of people who are waiting for this position... “I just felt like (Male and Female, EU accession state nationals, Hospitality)*

In contrast, there were a small minority of individuals who highlighted positive experiences citing the Manager or the Human Resources Department of the companies they worked for as the first port of call for any information:

[The relationship with the Manager was described as] “...sometimes almost good! They will sometimes praise you for good work. Things are generally OK. You are sometimes allowed to have parties. If there are arguments the manager will settle the matter; he is the first person to ask for help. You could also go to the head office if you were not happy with his decision. The company produce leaflets (in English) which tell you about your rights ...” (Male, Non EU, Eastern European, SBS, Hospitality)

There were a small minority of companies who had built sufficient trust amongst migrant workers, and actively assisted them with opening of bank accounts and encouraged them to attend English classes. Furthermore, the majority of students doing summer jobs in the agricultural and outdoor tourism sectors were only too happy to return to these jobs each summer, and were willing to recommend the employers to friends and family.

5.5 ACCESS TO SERVICES

Accommodation, banks, libraries, English language provision and to a lesser extent medical services were the main services accessed by migrants. Accommodation and banking were the two issues highlighted as problematic across the board.

5.5.1 Accommodation

While the pattern of accommodation varied, the three key issues that were consistently raised across all geographical areas in the Highlands and Islands were: (i) difficulties in finding appropriate accommodation; (ii) the high cost for the quality of accommodation available; and, (iii) issues around multiple occupancies, and consequently, overcrowding. In a number of cases (6-8), accommodation was provided by the employer with some making deductions at

approximately 70 pence per hour from wages, whilst a small minority provided accommodation free. Accommodation varied, from single or double rooms in the places where they worked (e.g. hotels) to accommodation in bed and breakfasts, run-down hotels converted to accommodate migrant workers, caravans, and hostels where individuals shared rooms up to three in a room. Some individuals had been sharing rooms with co-workers for as long as four years. In some instances individuals were initially accommodated in hostels for one or two weeks by the recruitment agencies and then were expected to find their own accommodation.

For those who move on from employer provided accommodation or hostels, the primary means of finding accommodation was through contacts within their own communities and through adverts in local newspapers. Accommodation costs varied, between £80.00 per month per person for up to three individuals sharing caravans, to four sharing a two bedroom flat for £600 per month, excluding costs such as bills and council tax in some cases. While £150.00 per month plus bills may not appear costly from the perspective of settled communities and public agencies, poor quality of accommodation, overcrowding, sharing a room with co-workers, and the lack of privacy, inevitably put a strain on individuals, and was perceived as having an adverse impact on their quality of life. Even those in professional occupations expressed surprise at how limited and expensive the rental market is, both on the mainland and on the Islands.

There was a strong perception amongst migrant workers that local landlords were not keen to rent to migrant workers, as well as a growing sense amongst some migrants that access to accommodation in areas such as Inverness has become increasingly difficult over the last year (2004). Furthermore, multiple occupancy creates difficulties when it comes to opening bank accounts, which was another problem consistently mentioned by almost everyone in the study.

5.5.2 Banking

There were two issues highlighted by participants in relation to banking: (i) problems with regard to opening bank accounts; and (ii) obtaining debit cards to be able to make payments. All of this was exacerbated where individuals could not communicate effectively in English. Difficulties in opening bank accounts were raised by all migrant workers (including a professional worker from an EU country), and was the cause of much anxiety:

L: I had problems with the Bank [...]. I did not understand how to open an account, and I had to send off documents. Very confusing, lots of letters and delays, they were always asking for more information. I changed to (Bank) and got an account within fifteen minutes, with just one form.

*P- Bank [...] is not interested in people banking with them for only a short time.
(Focus group 1)*

Whilst negative experiences were not always confined to any one particular bank, two specific banks were mentioned frequently by many individuals as being the most difficult. Although it is acknowledged that the process for opening a bank account has been tightened up for everyone, this is exacerbated in the case of migrant workers. The main barriers experienced in opening bank accounts appeared to be two-fold. Firstly, proving they were going to be resident in the area for a reasonable length of time, which was difficult since they were only on short term contracts. Secondly, providing an address was problematic given the multi occupancy situation that they are in.

For most participants, being unable to open a bank account created difficulties with regard to being paid and sending remittances home. For one young woman who was planning to go home for a holiday, the idea of travelling with all her pay which she had accumulated over a six month period was a cause of great distress:

"The main problem is we do not know how to transfer our money from here to Poland .They [the bank] said we need to make an appointment so that they can bring some experts so that they can answer our questions. I do not think it is safe for me to take the money in my pocket." (Female EU accession state national, Hospitality)

Various strategies were used to cope with the situation. Some employers resorted to paying in cash for a short period of time. In other instances, migrant workers came to arrangements with friends who had bank accounts for their wages to be paid through them. There were also a small number of employers (3) who assisted the workers by helping them sort out any difficulties with the banks.

Having overcome the hurdles of opening a bank account, the next difficulty faced by migrant workers was not having access to debit cards:

"I have got a big problem with the bank; I can't get a debit card. I obtained my cash only card a few months after I had my arrived in Scotland. Now I would like to get a debit card to do shopping by internet, to pay in the shop with this card. I have tried to get a debit card many times and they say I am not a resident .It is confusing. I have enough money and been here enough of time. It is very strange! I don't want a loan I want to use my money. There are other (people) who are in the same situation. Every bank is the same, they say different things .One bank told me they need me to be here for at least two years and another said a few months, and I have been here for longer than that. I can't book my airplane ticket for example ...I have to ask my colleagues, a Scottish colleague here and I pay her in cash and she books my ticket...this should not be necessary. It is my personal problem..." (Male, Non EU, Eastern European, SBS, Fish Processing)

Consequently, individuals had to always carry large sums of cash if they were going shopping, for example, which was a major source of anxiety, and can also increase their vulnerability to crime. For example, one interviewee described her experience of being the victim of theft with no money left, when she was travelling from Scotland via London back to her country of origin with all the money she had earned working over the summer.

5.5.3 Internet Access

The local library (used mainly for internet access) and adult basic education providers were the first ports of call outwith the workplace. The internet was mainly used to communicate with family and friends. However, the three main issues raised consistently by all participants were, the library opening hours being too restrictive, lack of computers to meet the demand and the cost of accessing internet services through private providers (this was not available in all communities) being high:

"It would be good if the library were open for longer. The manager does not let us use the computer in the hotel. The coffee shop charges £2 per half hour which is quite expensive. Six months ago the manager promised a PC would be installed for staff internet use." (Male, Non EU, Eastern European, SBS, Hospitality)

"I am not satisfied with the internet service here. Internet access is not enough. Many computers are broken. There are many computers but they are not working and there are too many people for the number of computers available. The internet access is free, but we can use it only for one hour daily and they close the library at 5 o'clock. We cannot use it during the weekdays, but we can only use it at the weekend on a Saturday I think ... as it is closed on Sunday, this is not very good." (Male, Non EU, Eastern European, SBS, Fish Processing)

5.5.4 English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes

ESOL classes accessed by migrant workers involved in this study were mainly provided by local authority Adult Basic Education (ABE) providers, with a small minority attending classes provided by voluntary sector organisations. In the case of one local authority, a bilingual Polish tutor was being employed to help Polish workers to learn English. This was seen as an important first step for individuals who did not speak any English.

Approximately 16 individuals (of 35 in the focus groups and from those interviewed) attended ESOL classes, one to one and in small groups. In addition two participants also attended the ESOL/football coaching session provided by Ross County through ABE provision in Ross-shire. The views on flexibility and levels of provision were mixed; some felt that the provision was flexible and was arranged in negotiation with what suited learners, whilst others felt this was not the case. In a small minority of cases where they had a good basic grasp of the language the level of provision was seen as being too basic. Attitudes towards attending English classes were mixed amongst the minority who were not attending classes. For some long hours of work and the timing of provision made it problematic to attend classes. Whilst others felt that they could pick up what they needed by being at work, and were not interested in attending classes. In general, however, most felt that English language provision was adequate.

"Inverness is completely different from the other cities. It is changing day by day, we have Eastern European workers and the city has not prepared for all these workers. Accommodation is a big problem, so are the lack of English classes ... the college and Spectrum Centre do not have the places required. In places like Edinburgh or London they have many possibilities for classes." (Male, Asian, Information Technology)

In addition to the services highlighted so far, medical services were accessed by a few (approximately nine) participants. Their experiences were mixed: from those having little or no problems, with others highlighting difficulties due to language problems and lack of understanding how the system works, especially with regard to issues such as waiting times:

"About the hospital ... I was in hospital here. I went to see the doctor one day, and he said my English was not very good. I could not explain what was wrong with me and he did not want to really listen. He told me to go away and get somebody who can talk better English and come back later ... the doctor was so bad!" (Female, Asian, Restaurant)

I have been to the doctor here. I have been there three or four times, they are very kind and polite. But if I want to arrange a medical appointment I had to wait at least one week. It may have been more. May be there is a shortage of doctors ... I don't know ... but it is a long time." (Male Non EU, Eastern European, SBS, Fish Processing)

5.6 ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND ADVICE

Language and lack of easily available information were identified as the main barriers to accessing information on services and appropriate advice. A small minority cited the internet as a source of information. There were three routes to finding out about what was available locally.

Word of mouth through contact with other migrant workers was one that was mentioned most frequently:

“Yes indeed, there are other foreigners who have difficulties with the language. We are a few [Eastern Europeans], so there is no problem, as we help each other in the job centre, the hospital and the bank. .I found out information from my predecessors, e.g. which shops are cheapest, what is the best pub, etc.” (Male Non EU, Eastern European, SBS Hospitality)

The second source of information and support are the providers of ESOL, often this was perceived as an important independent contact which was a life –line for some. And finally, employers, usually the manager or the human resources department, were important sources of information. However, not everyone found their managers helpful:

“Sometimes we feel forsaken by our manager, as [S...] said, when we ask our manager for information they respond in a nice way but they do not do anything about it.”
(Female, EU accession state national, Hospitality)

5.7 VIEWS AND EXPERIENCE OF LIFE OUTSIDE WORK

5.7.1 Out of work activities

Out of work activities individuals engaged in included going to the library to use the internet, going shopping, walking, using sports facilities if these were available locally, watching TV, playing football and occasionally going to the pub. A few (mainly Polish) mentioned going to church, mainly the Catholic Church, however, there appeared to be very little interaction with the church community as such. The latter was attributed to their lack of ability to communicate in English. However there were two examples given of the church providing support, one in assisting with accommodation, and the other by offering English language classes.

Most of the young migrant workers living outside Inverness felt that there was little for them to do and said they were bored:

“Access to transport is a big problem. After six months I got very, very bored. This is a different life from what I was planning when I was moving from home. At weekends, I could go to pubs, nightclubs, and meet people ... young people [in his home town]. But here it is impossible, even if I go to a pub they close at 11. It is worse at nightsat night I only have two hours to go to a pub.” (Male, EU accession state national, Hospitality)

In a small number of cases individuals have been taking the opportunity to travel to other parts of Scotland and the UK, however distance and cost was an issue:

“Travel is a problem. It takes three hours to travel from here to the mainland. It is not expensive if you travel by foot but it is more expensive if you get car. It costs about £100. Yes I travelled four or five times last years. But if I go somewhere to the mainland I need to take at least one day holiday, because there are only two ferries a day and no ferries on Sunday, so I have to take an extra day off my holiday on a Friday or a Monday. The second problem is the flights are expensive and I do not have a car, so it is difficult. This Island is beautiful but I cannot travel a lot.” (Male, Non EU, Eastern European. SBS, Fish Processing)

“It can be quite boring! We don't have a car so it is difficult to go anywhere. There is nothing to do around here. We all live in [...] you can do some walking, or some shopping, sometimes we go to the pub. We also watch films and TV in English. We have visited Glasgow, but generally it is difficult to get to other places in Scotland.” (Focus Group 2)

With the exception of a small minority (3) who had cars, issues of distance and transport were raised by people on the islands as well as on the mainland in all areas outside Inverness.

5.7.2 Relationships with local communities

Whilst the majority of participants described the local communities in which they lived as friendly, and provided one or two instances of relationships developing between migrants and locals, most said that there were limited opportunities for meeting and socialising with local people. Although, most Central and Eastern Europeans suggested that there were more similarities than differences between their cultures and that of the Scots, there was little evidence of proactive social interaction outside work. Most migrant workers tended to interact amongst each other or with their fellow countrymen and women.

Issues of language, communication, child care and long and anti-social working hours (i.e. split-shifts) made it difficult to spend time socialising:

“The locals are friendly. When we first arrived people would come to see us because it was a new thing for them. However I still find language a problem. Other Latvians find it even more difficult. I was surprised to meet other Latvians in Inverness, it is good to meet these people, and I have met people in shops and around town because I hear the language spoken. We go to pubs together.” (Male, EU accession state national, Construction)

There were a small minority who perceived that there might be a view amongst local Scottish people that migrant workers are taking jobs away from them, as illustrated briefly by this dialogue between these two participants from Central and Eastern Europe:

*F: Not very easy to mix with Scottish people outside of work.
B: I think Scottish people don't like Poles- perhaps we did something wrong to them a long time ago. We work hard and are cheap; perhaps they think we are taking their jobs*
(Male and Female, EU accession state nationals, Fish processing)

Drunkenness and its consequences was a cause for concern for some groups, raising issues of community safety. Attempts to socialise on a Saturday night always carried a high risk of being subjected to racist verbal abuse. Consequently, many individuals tended to avoid going out and subjecting themselves to such experiences. While, these experiences were particularly evident amongst the visible minorities, it was not solely confined to them.

5.8 STAYING OR LEAVING

For most of those involved in this study the future appeared uncertain, and very few had long term plans with regard to staying or leaving. For those who were here primarily to earn money and to secure a better future for themselves and their families, the main issue was having a job, irrespective of location. Few expressed a specific preference for the Highlands and Islands, and for those that did, this was mainly related to a strong preference to being in a small place or town and avoiding large cities. Young people with good education and English language skills perceived living in rural areas as being a good place to be for families with children, and were more likely to express a preference for being in cities,

“I wanted to work in a bigger city, Manchester, Birmingham, London ... [He was offered a job in the Highlands] but I like Scotland, it is OK, but the weather is awful it rains too much. The biggest problem for me is that we cannot choose our job, for example, if I wanted to change my job that would be difficult.” (Male, Non EU, East European, SBS, Fish Farming)

Some saw themselves being in the UK for the next five years until they had earned enough to return home, others wished to explore educational opportunities in the UK, and yet others felt that they would not be returning to their countries of origin until the economic and political situation had improved and stabilised. There were also some references to friends spending six months of the year abroad in countries such as Canada and half the year in their home country, which was also seen as a possibility for the future.

For those in professional jobs the key issue was work prospects that would further their career, as well as the extent to which an infrastructure exists which makes overseas people feel at home:

"I don't have long terms plans to stay in the Highlands. I will probably stay here for one more year. My main reason for leaving is the isolation factor. Even though it is changing, the jobs are limited ... either fish factory, hotels. There are better opportunities elsewhere ... Edinburgh if Scotland, and London if in England. I would recommend the Highlands for a holiday but not for studying or working, mainly because of lack of any infrastructure for overseas visitors." (Male Asian, Information Technology)

Most young people from Central and Eastern Europe perceived their location as a good first step to find their feet before exploring other opportunities, and even those who had negative impressions and experiences said that they would recommend the place to others:

"It is a good work. I would recommend this place, because it is a good place to start your life in Scotland. You get a place to live and a good job for starter. Yes it is a good temporary job. But every day we do the same thing, the routine is boring. It is a good place to learn English we are dealing with people, mainly with older people, so right now I find myself getting bored. Everyday I say the same thing ... "good morning what can I get you? Can I get you a bread roll?" Right now I am going backwards ... but it is really good work if they want to save some money." (Female, EU accession state national Hospitality)

"Here it is a very nice and a friendly place. I have worked in many hospitals in [...]. Once you are here, you know you are somebody, you have sat a lot of exams, and so they respect you and are considered an equal." (Male, North African, Health)

5.9 SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Broadly there were two main suggestions for improving the experiences of migrant workers in the Highlands and Islands: (i) improved access to information and advice; (ii) work with local communities to improve their understanding of the role that migrant workers play in the economy and communities.

5.9.1 Information and Advice

There was support across the board for an information pack targeted at all newcomers to assist them in coping with life in a new country:

"A guide to Inverness [services] with basic information would be helpful. The kind that you get when you go to a University would be helpful. Information on accessing doctors, banks, places of worship, part-time and full time work, accommodation, social activities /networks ... organising social events for overseas people in community centres...things like that" (Male, Asian, Information Technology)

For those who had poor or no English language skills providing information bilingually was seen as important. The greatest need in terms of numbers that emerged in this study was the need for information in Polish. The type of information suggested for inclusion was:

- Employment rights /entitlement
- Banking services
- Taxation
- Worker Registration Scheme
- Health services
- Housing services
- Educational opportunities, including transfer of credits and qualifications
- English language provision
- Community networks
- Places of worship

5.9.2 Work with local communities

Whilst addressing the needs of migrant workers was considered important, it was also recognised that there is a need to work with the local settled communities too:

“The second thing that is very important about immigration is to inform local people about the advantages of encouraging immigrants. A lot of local people think that immigrants are illegal and have a very bad opinion of migrants. They think they are coming to take their jobs and this is very dangerous, it increases the racism in the community. If we want to address racism, we need to inform local people about the advantages. All of the foreigners I have met have similar feelings, not just in Scotland. It is very important to inform the local people that immigrants are important for the economy, they pay local taxes. This is very important if foreigners are to come here and stay.” (Male, North African, Health)

CHAPTER 6 THE VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES OF SERVICE PROVIDERS AND NATIONAL BODIES

This chapter provides an analysis of service providers' views and that of national bodies. One focus group, nine one to one interviews and a meeting convened by the unions to discuss migrant worker issues provides the basis for service providers' perspectives. Service providers included, individuals from a range services in the public sector (e.g. health, adult basic education, Procurator Fiscal Service and Communities Scotland), and voluntary sector representatives working with migrant workers and minority ethnic groups and recruitment agencies.

The main purpose for interviewing three national bodies was to develop a deeper insight into the wider strategic policy context which might inform the issues that emerge in the Highlands and Islands context. A meeting took place with two members of the Fresh Talent team and telephone interviews were conducted with a representative of STUC and COSLA.

The key issues that emerged from service providers and national bodies are summarised as follows:

- Role of migrant labour in Scotland
- Background of migrant workers
- Accessing employment and sectoral distribution
- Employment conditions
- Recognition of qualifications and other qualities
- Needs of migrant workers
- Community life
- Activities in support of migrant workers

6.1 ROLE OF MIGRANT LABOUR IN SCOTLAND

There was a consensus amongst the three national bodies as well as some local service providers that the Fresh Talent initiative is one strategy amongst others (e.g. ageing and fertility), designed to address the issue of demographic trends in Scotland. From a Scottish Executive perspective the overall aim of the Fresh Talent initiative is about promoting an ethos that '*Scotland is a good place to live*'. Scotland as a '*modern cutting edge economy*' was an important aspect of the image Fresh Talent is keen to promote. Encouraging people with skills, including entrepreneurial skills is considered to be an important element in this context. The emphasis is on people who can make a '*positive input into the economy*', and the main mechanisms for promoting the initiative are:

- Promotional activity /PR campaigns at home and abroad
- Commissioning research,
- Website: <http://www.scotlandistheplace.com/>
- Establishment of Relocation Advisory Service

Much of STUC's focus as well as that of COSLA until recently has tended to be on supporting initiatives designed to address the needs of asylum seekers and refugees. The STUC and COSLA while broadly endorsing the importance of the Fresh Talent initiative in '*achieving sustainable population balance*' (STUC 2005, p.2), emphasise the need to exercise caution.

They highlighted the following issues in particular (many of which were also raised by service providers):

- Doubts about the robustness of the statistical evidence used to demonstrate the need to attract people with 'entrepreneurial talent'.
- Scepticism about the extent to which migrant workers were being recruited for high skilled jobs.
- The extent to which the current migrants of single men in groups, in particular, would stay in Scotland in the long term and contribute to sustaining Scotland's population was perceived as an unknown.
- Many 'hard to fill' vacancies could be filled by appropriate schemes to get the '*indigenous economically inactive*' into work.
- The ethics of '*plundering underdeveloped countries*' by creaming off their qualified workforce.
- The importance of ensuring that the working conditions for all workers, including those who are migrants, is equitable and fair. In the latter context the STUC were particularly keen to emphasise the importance of the working environment and the employers' duty of care (e.g. availability of housing; encouraging an eths of tolerance) towards all workers. There were concerns expressed about the exploitation of migrant workers in some workplaces and sectors. Language and health and safety issues were highlighted as being especially important issues to address.

There was a recognition that there might be a need for different solutions in different places... '*regional solutions for regional problems.*' However, if this was happening it was considered important for local authorities to understand the needs of migrant workers. It was suggested that until recently there has been a tendency not to take the issue of migrant workers seriously, resulting in inconsistencies across local authorities on Scotland.

At the regional /local levels, views on the role of migrant workers and their impact on the labour market were mixed. Some viewed the local labour conditions as characterised by work that is unskilled, poorly paid, perceived as unpleasant (e.g. wet and smelly in fish processing), and local labour were unwilling to accept such conditions of work. In this context, participants noted that employers faced difficulties in recruiting in Scotland, and have, therefore, been recruiting from further afield. On the one hand, there was a view that in cases where UK employees were being replaced by migrant workers, this only tended to happen if local employees were deemed to be of very poor quality, or where applicants from overseas were of even better quality than Scottish candidates. It was noted that employers do not necessarily save money by recruiting from overseas - that is, if the recruitment takes place through a well regulated agency- as the wages must be the same for all workers, according to current legislation, irrespective of country of origin. On the other hand, a number of those interviewed also provided examples which might lead to question this view expressed on prevailing recruitment and pay practices.

There was widespread concern amongst service providers that in some parts of the Highlands and Islands employers might be using migrant workers to displace local workers and suppress wages, especially in relation to semi-skilled and unskilled work. An example was cited of a company which had made local workers redundant, but continued to employ migrant workers who had been there for a shorter time, despite the practice of 'last one in first out'. It would appear that issues of replacement were mainly raised in the context of semi- skilled and unskilled work and as one interviewee reflected, it is especially the most vulnerable people who have always lived in Scotland (e.g. those attending adult literacy courses) who have voiced negative opinions about migrant workers. It was suspected that this interpretation of events and

their fears are due to a lack of knowledge, and is something that should be addressed, for example, with the provision of information about the role of migrant workers.

The use of migrant labour was viewed as a stop-gap by at least two participants from slightly different perspectives. For example in the construction industry, there was a view that the gap in the construction industry is created by the lack of trained workers and that this would be resolved to some extent in the longer term through training apprentices. The other view was that in the long term as the local economy moves from unskilled work to skilled /diagnostic type of employment this would obviate the need for low paid migrant workers.

6.2 BACKGROUND OF MIGRANT WORKERS

All service providers had noted a change in the nationalities of migrant workers with whom they had contact with. For example, before 2003, Kurds (Iraqis), Spanish and Portuguese had the greatest presence. Where as in 2005, migrants from the accession states, Bulgaria, Russia and Ukraine were more noticeable. It was suspected that employers prefer EU workers, as they are not required to have work permits. Workers from the eight accession states only need to be registered with the Home Office, which was considered a simple and relatively quick procedure. Another potential explanation given for the strong presence of Polish workers in particular was Poland's historical link with Scotland: since the Second World War, there have been strong Polish communities in Scotland. Many Scots emigrated to Poland in the 16th century, and at the present time some Poles with such Scottish connections are coming to Scotland. In addition, one of the interviewees also suggested that there were more similarities than differences between Scottish and Polish cultures. Where there was a gap, it was perceived to exist in relation to accessing information and advice on service provision and access.

It would appear that there are broadly three groups of migrants: (i) Those whose primary motivation is economic; (ii) Gap year students who used to come from New Zealand, Australia, Canada and South Africa, but also come from Central and Eastern Europe at the present time; (iii) Those who want to see what life is like in Scotland and If they enjoy the experience, they may be likely to stay, and bring their families also.

Furthermore, migrant workers may start off in the Highlands or Islands, but once they find their feet they may decide to move on, usually further south. Cases across the Highlands and the Islands were highlighted of, for example, the Kurds moving south to Glasgow and to the North of England, the Portuguese from Moray to Aberdeen, and Bulgarians and those from the Philippines to the South East of England. Whilst the decision where to go in Scotland (for example, rural or urban) or elsewhere is predominantly job driven – for example, to find an occupation, which resembled the one they had previously - other factors were also considered important, such as access to better accommodation, social networks, availability of familiar foods and so on. The preference of young people to go to more urban areas with nightlife was also an important factor.

6.3 ACCESSING EMPLOYMENT AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION

There were considered to be three main routes into accessing work:

- Individuals arrive in London and slowly make their way up from the South to the North.
- Those recruited by what were described as 'dodgy' recruitment agencies.
- Those recruited through well regulated recruitment agencies, including one local agency which was identified as being a good example of how recruitment ought to happen.

It was acknowledged that good recruitment agencies can make a big difference to the working conditions of migrant workers and reduce their vulnerability to exploitation. An example was provided of a company which ensured that everything was in order by providing all the appropriate information about terms and conditions of employment to potential workers, and by keeping in touch with employers and candidates. However, such comprehensive and committed support does not appear to be universal, as illustrated by the following comment:

“I reckon that the workers are doing OK. For example, they start off in hostel type places, and then go on to find better accommodation.”

Hence, it seems that migrant workers in this situation were more likely to be left to their own devices.

Despite the dominance of some groups (e.g. Polish) in the labour market, most of those who are in contact with migrant workers highlight the diversity of nationalities, as well as the tendency for some groups to cluster around specific industrial sectors. For example, in the main:

- Those in nursing and social care tended to be from the Philippines or Bulgaria.
- Lorry drivers appeared to be Czech or Polish.
- Construction workers were from the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania).
- People from skilled trades tended to be from Poland, the Czech Republic or Slovakia.
- Information Technology jobs appeared to be associated with Czech candidates, as their English tends to be very proficient.

6.4 EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

With the exception of one interviewee who described working conditions for migrant workers in general to be satisfactory, service providers noted mainly evidence to the contrary. The issue of low wages was raised by several individuals who had contact with migrant workers. It was reported that many migrant workers were being paid low wages, described by one interviewee as ‘illegally *low wages*’. Examples were given of some workers being paid £3.80 per hour, because employers found ways of getting around the minimum wage rates. Deductions made for accommodation and other services were not always transparent. According to one interviewee, it was mainly nationals of Baltic States who tended to take up jobs at the minimum wage level. In the West of Poland and the Czech Republic, where wages are closer to the UK minimum wage, semi-skilled and unskilled jobs are not likely to be very attractive. However, in the East of the two countries, where unemployment is around 20%, this may be a different situation.

Conditions of work for migrant workers in some companies were considered to be poor. For example, long hours of work often (48 hours plus a week) at minimum wages or below meant they felt that they had to work long hours to earn the money they required to send remittances home. However, in general employees appeared unwilling to complain or take action on improving their pay or work conditions for fear of losing their job. Furthermore, if they were living in tied accommodation loss of employment could result in homelessness. Those on Sector Based Schemes (SBS) also felt vulnerable, for fear of their visas not being renewed due to the changing policy and political context, and fears of being replaced by workers from the EU accession eight countries.

Concerns were also expressed by a number of those interviewed about the short-term nature of the contracts of employment, which created a great deal of uncertainty and insecurity. Apart from making long term planning problematic, it also increases feelings of vulnerability and

militates against individuals accruing entitlements if they had contracts that last more than a year.

However, there were examples highlighted of what was described as 'good practice' amongst a small minority of employers mainly in relation to language issues. For example, employers being willing to allow migrant workers to attend English language classes in work time and the translation of company information into Polish. In contrast, there were many examples given of employers' indifference to whether migrant workers could speak English. Furthermore, it was also suggested that there was tendency for some employers to give the appearance of being interested in working with agencies to deliver English language provision, but never followed this up with any firm commitment.

6.5 RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS AND OTHER QUALITIES

There were concerns amongst many of the service providers that a relatively high number of migrant workers from Central and Eastern Europe have degree level qualifications and above, and yet, are employed in mainly semi-skilled and unskilled jobs. There generally appeared to be a lack of knowledge about transferability of overseas qualifications and experience amongst service providers. Whilst some professions, such as nursing and medicine, have procedures for recognition of overseas qualifications, recognition procedures for other professions are not clear-cut.

There were conflicting views on the recognition and evaluation of craft skills, qualifications and experience obtained overseas in relation to migrant workers. One participant viewed the position taken on employing overseas workers by unions, particularly in the construction industry, as "*protectionism*", and described local workers as being 'lazy' and producing poor quality work. In contrast, examples were given of inappropriate recruitment; for example, a company had recruited what it thought were qualified construction workers for a building site to discover that in fact they had recruited qualified ship builders. Against this background, the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) reported that they were working at a national level with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to assist with benchmarking construction industry skills in the UK, and to regulate the issue of qualifications and skills that are emerging with regard to migrant workers. Issues with regard to health and safety are also seen as important, and initiatives are being undertaken in relation to language, training and health and safety information in other languages. In addition, a Highland European Business led initiative was cited where the emphasis is on recruiting skilled construction workers from Denmark and Germany to the Highlands and Islands, because of the downturn in their economies and confidence in the skills levels of these workers. It was suggested that the basis for this confidence was due to the fact that Scottish workers had previously worked in these countries and were aware of and confident in their levels of construction skills.

However, it is important to emphasise that all interviewees praised the high motivation of migrant workers, their work ethic, and the great quality of their work. In some cases, the fact that some migrants speak several foreign languages was also particularly emphasised.

6.6 NEEDS OF MIGRANT WORKERS

Experiences and needs of migrant workers vary enormously and most service providers highlighted the diverse nature of the groups they are working with. One interviewee had observed that those with professional qualifications, who work in the area in which they are qualified, have a different experience from others, mainly because they speak good English and integrate more easily. The challenge of integration is exacerbated because migrants often do not appear to complain. The four main issues that were mentioned by most service providers

were language difficulties, accommodation, difficulties with banking services and lack of information about employment rights. These and other specific areas of need mentioned are discussed below.

6.6.1 Language

Communication difficulties can make the expression of needs difficult, and language barriers can cause concern for health and safety of migrant workers. For many public services, information on services is not available in other languages (discussed in more detail below). With the exception of one organisation which reported it was offering translation and interpretation services to their clients, in general, access to such facilities was considered to be virtually non-existent. The organisation that does offer translation and interpretation facilities mainly used Language Line as well as local interpreters, if feasible and arranged well in advance. Language Line was regarded to be working well for the organisation and was perceived as the easiest way of getting nearly immediate interpretation. This view was not supported by another service provider who felt that Language Line was not capable of dealing with regional dialects and language variations in a country. The possibility of using video conferencing facilities to deliver interpretation and translation facilities was also suggested as an option to consider alongside Language Line and face-to-face services.

Most service providers highlighted the importance of acquiring good English communication skills in order to access public services, as well as employment opportunities that would use their professional qualifications and skills. People with poor language skills were prevalent across most of the industrial sectors- e.g. food processing, hotel and tourism and health- care/ nursing homes.

Poor communication skills amongst migrant workers were identified as one of the biggest barriers to accessing public services and to communicating their needs. In this context, the delivery of ESOL classes has been identified as a priority. Whilst both the local authority and the voluntary sectors are actively involved in delivering ESOL classes, the need for more collaboration between providers, to avoid duplication and develop more coherent provision was identified as an issue for action. In addition, it would appear that ESOL provision is not consistently available in all areas of the Highlands and Islands, and the recruitment and training of ESOL tutors to meet the growing demand for ESOL were identified as major challenges across most areas.

A number of barriers to attending ESOL courses were identified, including shift patterns, long hours of working and unexpected calls to be at work at short notice, all of which militate against workers being able to commit to regular activities, as well as making it difficult to plan and sustain provision. Their conditions of work are such that individuals are often too tired to participate fully in the classes. Moreover, in some cases, migrant workers are bussed from their accommodation to their places of work, resulting in time as well as transport difficulties in accessing provision. Possible solutions offered to overcome such barriers included the provision of ESOL classes at the workplace. However, as discussed previously, not all employers would necessarily be willing to participate in this. There was a perception amongst some service providers that some employers were not interested in training staff for fear that they would move on to other better paid work.

Recruitment to classes takes a number of mainly informal forms, for example through Adult Basic Education (ABE), libraries and employers. In one case, a Scottish partner to a Polish migrant was reported to have proven very effective in communicating to other Poles information about available ESOL courses, and also giving them lifts to the classes. In the case of Moray

Council the appointment of a Polish individual to work with the Polish community has been critical in attracting this group to classes (5 across Morayshire). Being able to provide initial classes bilingually for those who have no English language skills whatsoever was seen as an important motivating factor for many. Other factors that were considered crucial in communicating information about classes as well as other relevant services included: providing the information in the languages spoken by migrants; ensuring that the information is displayed in places where migrants are likely to frequent; and, making contact with key informants or leaders where they exist amongst groups.

Barriers to providing good quality learning experiences were also noted, for example, when tutors have a wide range of ability in their class. Abilities can range from knowledge of a few words of English to a need for more advanced lessons. However, it was also stressed that English learning should be more firmly embedded in social practice – that is, working with local people to strengthen relationships is also important. At present people from the same nationality tend to work together and speak their mother tongue with each other, with few opportunities to practice English.

6.6.2 Accommodation

Difficulties with accommodation were highlighted across the Highlands and Islands. Migrant workers have to compete for housing in an already tight housing market. One interviewee noted that the Scottish Executive guidance on aspects related to homelessness, housing benefits and right to housing are in a confused state with regard to who is eligible for what, especially in the context of EU accession eight countries.

The main issues identified included: chronic housing shortages generally, and examples were given of local homeless people having to be placed in emergency housing outwith the region; multiple occupancy and overcrowding; over pricing of what is available; and, tied accommodation which made it difficult to stay on in Scotland once a contract is finished . A number highlighted cases of homelessness resulting from loss of employment.

Migrant workers were unable to access local authority accommodation, and were also discriminated against in the private market. Examples were given of instances where the prices of flats suddenly went up when migrant workers wanted to rent them, or of owners of accommodation simply increasing the number of beds in the accommodation. The likelihood of experiencing discrimination was greater for visible minorities.

An interviewee reported that as a rule, the agency or the employer tends to conduct a search for accommodation before the person arrived. It was suggested that good employers would inspect the place beforehand, negotiate a good rent, and would pay rent for the first month and for food and other necessary items until workers received their first wage. The interviewee was of the opinion that employers are the best people to help: if they have happy workers, they would benefit from that.

6.6.3 Banking

Access to banking services was another area where a number of service providers found themselves frequently intervening on behalf of individual migrant workers. Language and understanding the requirements for opening and accessing accounts were seen as the two critical issues. Banks were thought to be unsure about providing bank accounts to migrant workers, in part due to money laundering legislation. Consequently, this led to migrants having to carry a lot of cash on them, which increased their vulnerability to becoming victims of crime. In terms of addressing this situation, it was suggested that awareness should be raised amongst

bank management and employers, and it was thought that if employers can provide confirmation that migrants work for them, this may help to improve the situation. In addition, the need to put pressure on banks to respond to the needs of migrants was considered important.

6.6.4 Needs of young people and children

A number of service providers noted a trend amongst migrant workers especially from Poland to be followed by family members. In this context, at least three participants raised concerns about the difficulties experienced by families in ensuring that the language needs of their children and young people were being addressed. Examples were given where teenagers, aged between 16-18 years, who could not speak English were not accepted by local schools because they did not have the required language skills. As these young people were eligible to leave school, the decision to accept them is at the school's discretion. In these cases the response was refusal, as the schools felt that they did not have the resources to address ESOL needs. Consequently, ABE (whose primary target are adults) has found itself having to allocate resources to provide intensive language support to enable the young people to continue with their education. In Moray a Polish worker was employed to work with families to assist them with learning English.

6.6.5 Other Issues

A number of other issues were also highlighted in relation to needs of workers:

- Difficulties in obtaining a driving license in the absence of a good command of English. There is no information available in different languages that would, for example, explain what needs to be done to maintain a car or to apply for a license. The Highway Code is only available in English, which results in a high failure rate when migrants sit tests. To help address their situation, examples were given of migrant workers (e.g. Kurds) taking driving lessons with an interpreter in the back of the car.
- Due to difficulties in communication and accessing information in different languages, there may be an apprehension about using health services, and an uncertainty about what to expect. There is also a lack of interpretation services provided by the NHS. A common practice was for migrant workers to rely on family or friends to provide interpretation which may not always be appropriate when there is a health concern that the person may not wish to share with kin or acquaintances.
- Applying for NINo could be difficult sometimes, as the authorities were not always perceived to be cooperative.
- It was noted that migrants' experiences with police in their country of origin can pose a barrier when they may need to make contact with the police in Scotland.
- One interviewee had observed discrimination in areas such as pubs and night clubs. Where Scottish people have no problems getting in, some migrant workers may not be allowed. (Incidences were reported in Ross-shire and Inverness).
- The need for independent information and advice was seen as problematic in a context where people had language and communications difficulties. Some of the main areas in which information and advice were needed included, immigration and visa advice, welfare entitlements, taxation, employment rights, law and order issues, and services (i.e. accommodation, banking, education and ESOL).
- Accessing migrant workers was seen as a challenge. Libraries, ESOL providers, some voluntary organisation, employers, unions and the appointment of link workers are all potential routes. Building relationships and trust, as well as understanding the ways in which the groups work may be time consuming, but were considered essential ingredients in working effectively with migrant workers.

6.7 COMMUNITY LIFE

A few examples of migrant workers engaging in community activities were identified. For example, playing football once a week with Scots and other nationalities, often their co-workers. In Morayshire a pub has come to be known as the 'Polish Pub' and is well known as a place for Poles to meet informally. In some areas (e.g. Morayshire and Ross-shire) the Catholic Church provides social and other types of support. However, there were also instances of inter- group conflicts in some communities (Ross-shire and Fort William) which have been the cause for concern. The reasons are seen as complex and include the challenge of having sizeable groups of single people perceived by locals as 'descending' on their communities, as well as racist attitudes which have led to a number of incidents being taken up by the Procurator Fiscal Service.

6.8 ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF MIGRANT WORKERS

A wide range of activities were identified by service providers and national bodies. However, in assessing needs all service providers emphasised the heterogeneity (i.e. culture, nationality and age) that exists amongst migrant workers, as well as the fact that current activities targeted at this group are disjointed and lack coordination.

Service providers are involved in or are aware of a number of activities in support of migrant workers:

- Plans to develop 'Information Packs' or booklets in Fort William, Morayshire, and Ross-shire as well as by Highlands and Islands Equality Forum were mentioned.
- ABE Ross-shire has been piloting an ESOL football coaching session with Ross County and was planning to roll out the pilot to Inverness.
- In collaboration with ABE, Ross and Cromarty Enterprise (RACE) were undertaking/funding a number of activities: an information day on services with interpreters to be available; ESOL classes; and Citizenship classes to be delivered by the Workers Education Association (WEA). In addition funding is being provided by RACE to Career Scotland to work on credit/qualification transfers.
- Morayshire Council have appointed an individual who is Polish on a short-term contract to provide ESOL classes and develop a 'Welcome Pack' in Polish.
- Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) Scotland has funded Lochaber CAB to run a pilot specifically focusing on migrant workers.
- A local action group has been established in Dingwall to deal with potential inter-community conflicts and issues.
- A multi –agency forum for agencies to discuss migrant worker issues has been established in Fort William.
- Caithness Voluntary Group (CVG) organised a session on immigration by bringing immigration specialists to Highland.
- The Unions led by the STUC and GMB in the Highlands and Islands are exploring the possibility of developing language /citizenship education for migrant workers.
- Communities Scotland has commissioned an E-Survey of front line public sector staffs' experiences of dealing with migrants.
- NHS Highland is undertaking a health needs assessment of migrants.
- COSLA is undertaking a mapping exercise on migrant workers outside urban Scotland.
- UCAT are developing language provision and health and safety information in other languages for the construction industry
- CITB at the UK level are involved with DTI in benchmarking construction industry skills to take into account qualifications obtained overseas.

- 'Staying Safe' document produced by Scottish Executive and Strathclyde Police, and available in many languages, such as Albanian, Arabic, Russian, Somali.
- The Scottish Executive has launched a consultation on a Strategy for ESOL in Scotland.
- Police in process of developing language identification cards, where people can indicate what language they speak, and interpreters can be organised on this basis.
- Action plan related to policing diversity, and engaging with hard to reach communities
- COSLA is undertaking a mapping exercise on issues facing migrant workers in Scotland, as well as planning some training sessions for Local Authorities on their roles and responsibilities in this context.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION

While this study has demonstrated that the views and experiences of all participants involved in this study are complex and at times contradictory, there are also many similarities. Many of the experiences described by employers, migrant workers and service providers in this study are also supported by other research and literature available on this subject. This study is the first step in trying to map out the following emerging issues that are relevant to employers, migrant workers, service providers and communities, in general, in the Highlands and Islands:

- The role of migrant labour
- Changing trends
- Recruitment into work
- Employment conditions
- Motivation for coming to the Highlands and Islands
- Access to services
- Life outside work
- Retention
- Addressing the needs of migrant workers
- Addressing the needs of employers

7.1 THE ROLE OF MIGRANT LABOUR

Although there was a consensus amongst participants (e.g. national organisations, services providers) that the demographic trends in Scotland have consequences for the labour market with regard to skills gaps and shortages, there were varying opinions as to how much emphasis should be placed on the recruitment of migrant workers to address the situation. The Scottish Executive emphasise that the 'Fresh Talent Initiative' is one strategy amongst others, designed to address the demographic trends in Scotland. The STUC and COSLA have tended to argue that the present labour market shortages can be addressed by using the people resources that currently exist more effectively –e.g. asylum seekers and refugees- as well as by funding apprenticeships to develop more 'home grown' skilled workers. Despite these differences in emphasis, it was acknowledged that different regions may indeed require different strategies.

With the exception of a small number of individuals (e.g. the health sector), who believed that migrant workers were being recruited in jobs where there were skill gaps and / or shortages, evidence from the literature reviewed and virtually all the participants involved in this study suggests the contrary. There was strong evidence that migrant workers are being recruited to work predominantly in low paid, semi-skilled and unskilled work, and in employment where conditions of work are perceived to be unattractive by potential local employees. The predominant view was that migrant workers were being used to undertake work that local people did not want. What is unclear, however, is whether in such cases there tend to be inherently unattractive elements in the jobs (for example, fish processing is associated with a smelly environment), or indeed whether these jobs are designed in a way which predominantly suits those who wish to work the maximum number of hours for the largest possible financial gain over a short period of time. In the latter case, people with caring commitments or those who wish to have a reasonable life-work balance may sometimes be unable (rather than unwilling) to apply.

A high proportion (29 out of 36) of the migrant workers involved in the research had completed or were studying for vocational and /or degree and post-graduate qualifications. All but a few of these individuals were involved in semi-skilled or unskilled work. Lack of English language and communication skills were seen as the biggest barrier to finding work that utilised their

qualifications and experience, as well as in accessing further educational opportunities. There was little information or understanding of credit transfer arrangements for qualifications and experience achieved overseas. In addition, some employers reported difficulties in obtaining references, which often results in migrant workers being employed in jobs below their abilities.

7.2 CHANGING TRENDS

NINo applications and registration records clearly show that EU enlargement has led to a much stronger flow of migrant workers to the Highlands and Islands Enterprise area. For example, NINo registrations by overseas nationals to the HIE area doubled between 2003/04 and 2004/05. Moreover, the anticipated demand for migrant workers expressed by employers, and the dynamic process the initial phase of recruitment has set off – that is, those already in employment encouraging family and friends to join them- suggests that this trend is likely to continue.

All participants involved in this study noted a growing trend since 2004 towards recruiting workers from Central and Eastern Europe, and more specifically from Poland in 2005. It would appear that companies which had previously employed workers under the Sector Based Schemes from Eastern Europe and Kurdish workers (who had been granted refugee status) were switching to workers from EU accession eight countries. Potential reasons suggested by participants for this trend were costs and less onerous procedures. Some also suggested that prevalence of racism towards visible minorities was a factor. Furthermore, in the hotel and restaurant sectors, it was the high demand for jobs by the new EU nationals, which made them a stronger force than the (seasonal) employees from the countries that traditionally had strong representation, for example, Australia, New Zealand and North America. This new composition of nationalities was sometimes reported to be the cause of friction and tension between workers in some work places.

7.3 RECRUITMENT INTO WORK

The majority of migrant workers involved in the study were recruited by agencies often based in their countries of origin. A small minority were employed directly by the agencies themselves. The fees paid varied from £30 to £1000, although most paid around £200-£300. While most complained about the high costs of using a recruitment agency, it was considered to be more straightforward than arriving in the country speculatively or applying for jobs directly. Other routes into accessing work included, responding to adverts in professional journals and word of mouth through friends and relatives. A few employers who may have started by working through an agency have found the individuals they employ can be a useful source of further recruitment. The latter were only too keen to suggest their friends and family. The latter appears to be a growing trend.

Some employers expressed concerns about the procedures adopted by recruitment agencies especially with regard to assessing levels of English fluency. It was argued that more vetting of migrants before their arrival, especially with regard to their levels of fluency in English, would be desirable. In general, however, the recruitment process posed few difficulties, and was reported to be facilitated by a very high supply of migrant workers interested in working in the UK.

In addition, difficulties associated with recruitment in rural areas was an important theme for employers. Partly due to out-migration of local young people, there is a particularly high demand for labour in some rural areas. However, the recruitment of migrant workers to remote rural areas did not always go smoothly; for example, migrants often arrive at their place of employment without a clear idea what life in the remote areas of the Highlands and Islands

entails, and sometimes seem surprised by the isolation. The lack of services, including ESOL provision, exacerbates the situation.

7.4 EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

There was a strong perception amongst service provider and two of the national bodies involved in this study, that migrant workers are concentrated in sectors where the conditions of work are difficult or unpleasant, and local people are not prepared to undertake these jobs. Interviews with employers also supported this perception. Employment in semi-skilled or unskilled positions in all sectors was characterised by short-term contracts, minimum pay, irregular patterns of working, and lack of training opportunities. The short term nature of contracts created a great deal of uncertainty, made planning difficult, and mitigated against individuals accruing employment rights. However, despite these conditions it is important to emphasise that most migrant workers were pleased to have a job and felt that even at the minimum wage they were better off than they would be in their countries of origin. Furthermore, one of the clearest findings of the study was the employers' overwhelmingly positive experience with migrant workers. Nearly all employers praised highly migrant workers' commitment, flexibility and quality of work.

7.5 MOTIVATION FOR COMING TO THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS

Earning an income and creating a better life for themselves and their families were the primary reasons given by migrant workers for being in the Highlands and Islands. High unemployment and low wages in their own countries were the main drivers for those from Central and Eastern Europe. However, most of the migrant workers involved in this study did not make a proactive choice to come to the Highlands and Islands, but rather took the first job offered by the recruitment agencies.

Having arrived in the Highlands and Islands individuals reacted in one of two ways depending on their age and other circumstances. On the one hand, young people with good qualifications perceived being in the Highlands and Islands as a good first step to find one's feet, but were keen to move to a city as soon as an opportunity arose. On the other hand, individuals who were older and had family responsibilities, or individuals who had little or no formal education qualifications were more likely to see their current location as being of the right size and the culture as being not too alien, and were more likely to say that they are happy to be in the Highlands and Islands. Those in the latter category were also more likely to encourage other family members and friends to come to join them. Other reasons for being in the Highlands and Islands included learning English, training opportunities, experiencing the culture and joining other family members or friends.

7.6 ACCESS TO SERVICES

Migrant workers are not a homogenous group and have diverse needs which services need to take into account. The tendency has been to respond to the situation in an *ad hoc* and fragmented manner, with different areas in the Highlands and Islands responding differently. While it may well be appropriate to respond to location-specific situations in a particular manner, it seems that at present, the potential for duplication of effort and resources is likely to be high.

In general, the migrants involved in this study accessed a limited range of services, for example, the library for internet access, some ESOL provision and occasionally health services. One of the main barriers consistently mentioned by migrant workers and service providers in accessing services was poor English language and communications skills. This is exacerbated by the lack of interpretation and translation facilities.

Four issues identified as problematic across the board, by migrant workers, employers and service providers were:

- **Accommodation:** Multiple occupancies, overcrowding, and generally poor quality accommodation, at sometimes overly high charges, were consistently highlighted as problematic. Some groups were also more likely to experience problems in accessing the private housing market, in part because of prejudice they had encountered. In addition there appeared to be some lack of clarity on entitlements to housing. While some recruitment agencies ensure the availability of good quality accommodation before migrant workers are placed with an employer, in other cases, migrant workers are left to find accommodation themselves. Many of the employers in this study appeared to be trying their best to help migrant workers with their accommodation needs, sometimes finding creative solutions. However, where the context is a community in which there is a chronic housing shortage, this seems to be an almost insurmountable challenge.
- **Banking:** All participants in this study consistently raised the issue of banking difficulties. For migrant workers, difficulties in opening bank accounts and being refused debit cards created a great deal of anxiety. Negative experiences with un-cooperative banks were highlighted in particular in the focus group with employers. They repeatedly emphasised the extra expenses migrant workers faced because of delays in gaining access to a bank account, and stressed the time and money wasted by human resource personnel, who ended up having to deal with these difficulties.
- **Information:** Lack of easily accessible information on a range of issues, including employment rights, taxation, educational opportunities and health services were consistently identified by all participants.
- **ESOL provision:** Although there is growing ESOL provision there are a number of challenges in developing and sustaining the provision, as well as in quality control. The employment conditions of migrant workers militate against them making a regular commitment to classes; consequently, developing flexible provision is critical. At the same time, employers' obligations with regard to facilitating the attendance of workers in ESOL provision should be explored. There is also a need for different levels of provision from absolute beginners to advance level and a need to encourage providers (ABE, voluntary sector and the colleges) to work together to ensure coherent provision.

7.7 LIFE OUTSIDE WORK

Most of those in semi-skilled and unskilled work felt that the nature of their work left them with little time to do anything else and many said that they were exhausted. In a number of cases individuals preferred to get paid for their holidays rather than take time off. Migrant workers engaged in a limited range of activities outside of work, including playing football, going to the gym or shopping. For a small minority going to church was an important activity and some managed to travel to other parts of Scotland and the UK. Whilst most commented on the friendliness of local people, few had much direct social contact with Scottish people outwith work. Language, emphasis on drinking in some communities, distance and lack of transport were the most commonly mentioned barriers to engaging in activities outside work. The fear of experiencing abuse (especially when people were drunk) amongst visible minority groups was mentioned as a constraining factor in accessing public spaces. Young people living and working outside Inverness commented on the limited opportunities and places for young people to socialise and were bored.

A small minority of migrant workers, employers and service providers referred to some antagonism from local communities with regard to issues of labour replacement and wage suppression. On the whole, these attitudes tended to be attributed to those who were in precarious or vulnerable situations themselves.

7.8 RETENTION

From the study it is not possible to come to any specific conclusion about individual's long term intention to remain in the Highlands and Islands. Most migrant workers when asked this question were unable to respond one way or another. Some perceived the job opportunities and access to social networks as very limited and were unlikely to stay, whilst others saw the Highlands and Islands as a good place to be if one has a family. For most it was a very uncertain future, much depended on how the situation in their home countries developed in the short to medium term, and perhaps more importantly on having positive experiences as well as access to good quality accommodation and services whilst here. The importance of migrant workers having a good impression of work and life in Scotland if they were to stay was also emphasised by service providers and employers.

7.9 ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF MIGRANT WORKERS

The importance of developing the infrastructures (housing, education and so on) that can support migrant workers was seen as vital in any strategy for attracting and retaining migrants. There were two main suggestions that emerged from migrant workers, employers and service providers with regard to addressing the situation of migrant workers.

7.9.1 Information and Support

All the participants in this study supported the development of an information pack for anyone new coming to the Highlands and Islands. Making this information pack available in other languages was seen as important. The type of information recommended for inclusion included:

- Employment rights /entitlements to welfare and other benefits
- Banking services
- Taxation
- Worker Registration Scheme
- Health services
- Housing services
- Educational opportunities, including transfer of credits and qualifications
- English language provision
- Community networks
- Places of worship

Some employers suggested that there was a role to be played by companies to ensure awareness of migrant workers' needs, for example, by having a designated, trained person whose task it is to link with migrant workers. Moreover, the provision of awareness sessions for line managers was also proposed.

7.9.2 Working with the 'settled communities'

There is little understanding of the views of local communities with regard to migrant worker issues. A number highlighted the importance of working alongside local communities to inform them of the benefits of having migrant workers and highlighting the contribution they make to local communities and the economy. Some service providers stressed the importance of working in particular with local people who are socially and economically vulnerable, and who are likely to see migrant workers as a threat.

7.10 ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF EMPLOYERS

Employers' need for information overlapped with that of migrant workers with regard to issues of accommodation, banking and ESOL. In addition, given that employers have similar requirements in relation to the employment of migrant workers, the need for a regional (Highlands and Islands) initiative in the form of an information booklet was suggested.

Suggestions for items to be included were two fold:

- How to recruit migrant workers (Which recruitment agencies are reliable? What paper work needs to be completed, and what support is there for completing it? What legal requirements and regulations need to be taken into account?)
- What services (e.g. interpreting and translating) are there in the Highlands and Islands area that may be useful contact points for employers in terms of obtaining more information?

Finally, employers were keen to see joint initiatives where possible, for example health and safety information, which is very similar for companies in the same sector could be centrally translated.

CHAPTER 8 RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing from research participants, relevant literature and initiatives already underway this section of the report presents recommendations with a view to promoting consistent and evolving 'good practice'. It sets out key principles and approaches that should underpin work undertaken to address some of the issues highlighted in this report, and then identifies a number of recommended actions.

8.1 PRINCIPLES AND APPROACHES

- It is important to recognise that integration is an **interactive process**, involving migrants as well as the host society- e.g. individual citizens, employers, employees, local and central government and the voluntary sector.
- A **coordinated approach** is required which draws on the public and private sectors as well as civil society to explore how they might jointly address fundamental infrastructural issues (e.g. housing, access to health, education, translation and interpretation facilities).
- *There is a need to **clarify and agree responsibilities and obligations*** of all stakeholders – i.e. employers, public sector bodies at local, regional and national, local communities and the voluntary sector.
- **Sharing 'good practice'** - There is a need to create opportunities for sharing, and implementing 'good practice' across sectors, organisations, stakeholders and geographical areas.

8.2 LABOUR MARKET ISSUES

- More in-depth evidence is required to develop a better understanding of the roles migrant workers play in local labour markets, taking into account existing pools of labour (for example, older workers, workers with a disability; ethnic minorities and asylum/refugees). Furthermore, current and evolving policy initiatives (such as Fresh Talent) need to be based on such evidence.
- In collaboration with employers and other key stakeholders, there should be better forward planning related to population movement and demographic developments, with a view to ascertaining the infrastructural (housing, education and so on) requirements that need to be in place, to address the needs of changing and diverse populations.
- Employers should be encouraged to use only well regulated recruitment agencies with transparent fee structures, which involve migrant workers' associations, adhere to health and safety conditions and to the payment of at least the National Minimum Wage. Information about and contact details of such recruitment agencies should be made easily available, for example, through an information pack (see below).
- Mechanisms need to be in place to ensure that migrant workers do not suffer from exploitative wages and other poor working conditions. This is linked to the provision of clear information and advice (see below).

- There is some indicative evidence that migrant workers rarely receive an induction / orientation programme nor do they benefit from formal training offers. This area merits further investigation in terms of the extent to which migrant workers may disproportionately be deprived of such benefits and the reasons for this.

8.3 INFORMATION

There are two issues which require to be addressed: access to information and access to independent advice and support.

8.3.1 Access to information

- There is a need to develop a comprehensive information pack for migrant workers (and, indeed, all newcomers) and employers. The information packs should aim to: (i) clarify obligations and responsibilities of migrant workers, employers and service providers and local communities (ii) assist migrant workers and employers to navigate through the various complexities that each has to face (iii) provide contact details of services available to support migrant workers in work and life related issues, and to support employers in their recruitment of migrant workers and their endeavours to contribute to integration.
- Information packs should be developed collaboratively across agencies and should involve migrants, employers, local authorities and trade unions at a regional level (Highlands and Islands).
- There should be an option to insert relevant local information, and an opportunity to update information as required
- The packs should be available in the predominant languages spoken by migrants, and the possibility of publishing information in a variety of formats (e.g. video, audio, and internet) should also be investigated.

Suggested list of topics to be included in Information Packs

Migrant workers	Employers
Employment rights / entitlement Employment opportunities Banking services Taxation Worker Registration Scheme General immigration issues Health services Housing services and rights Educational opportunities/system/qualifications Transfer of credits and qualifications English language provision Community networks Places of worship Information on living and working in rural and remote areas	Recruitment process and procedures Information and contact points of services available for migrant workers

8.3.2 Access to independent advice and support.

- There is a need to have an independent source of advice and information that migrant workers can access. It is important to build on the work being undertaken by CAB Scotland in Fort William, and to explore how information and advice services could be made more widely and consistently accessible to all geographical areas in the Highlands and Islands.

8.4 PROMOTING GOOD RELATIONS

- Initiatives which will help to provide a bridge between migrants, other employees and local citizens to promote social inclusion and understanding should be actively promoted and supported. These should focus on the 'assets' (for example, qualifications, skills and experiences) that migrant workers bring to communities. A variety of mechanisms, such as mentoring / buddying and the use of the arts, should be explored in this context:
 - Mentoring /buddying systems. In this context opportunities for transferring good practice from initiatives such as the 'New Glaswegians' Project and the 'Bridges Project' in Glasgow should be explored (STUC 2004).
 - Preparing employees for a multi-cultural working environment, and promoting 'cultural exchanges' – e.g. through 'mentoring' systems.
 - Preparing local communities- e.g. using the arts; welcome days, etc. and providing information on the backgrounds of migrant workers and their role in the community.
 - Employment of 'outreach' or community workers to reach out to and work with migrant communities, in order to develop a better understanding of migrant communities and develop their capacity to participate in society fully. In this context a useful starting point is Communities Scotland's (2005) 'National Standards for Community Engagement' at http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/lccs_008411.pdf

8.5 PROMOTING INCLUSION

- It is widely recognised that English language classes alone are insufficient to promote effective integration and should be integrated within the employment and social context. A coherent multi-agency (including employer involvement) approach is required with regard to ESOL provision which addresses issues related to:
 - The needs of migrants in terms of level of provision, progression and context (time and place) for learning.
 - Mapping of providers and their ability to deliver good quality provision at appropriate levels.
 - Other infrastructural issues required for effective language learning – e.g. training of ESOL tutors, including migrant workers and learning resources, such as learning materials which could be available in libraries and to purchase from local bookshops.
 - Delivery mechanisms given the geography of the Highlands and Islands.
 - The role of employers in the financing and actual provision of ESOL services, and the removal of indirect barriers, for example, conflicts between work commitments and availability of language tuition.
 - Promoting social and cultural understanding: for migrants an understanding of Scottish society and for settled communities an understanding of migrants' cultures.
- In addition, consideration should also be given to funding provision which combines language with 'social orientation' classes, which all migrants should be encouraged to access as an initial introduction. Employers should also be made aware of the importance of such classes, and encouraged to enable their workers to attend.

- The focus of 'social orientation' classes should be two fold: on service provision, as well as on the expected norms, values and behaviours of the host society. The best mechanisms to deliver such 'introductory' provision should be discussed at a strategic level to prevent the current *ad hoc* responses and initiatives.
- It is important that ESOL initiatives in the Highlands and Islands take into account the outcomes of the Scottish Executive consultation currently underway.

8.6 SERVICES

- If the Highlands and Islands is to realise its objective of being recognised as a '*...globally attractive location where people chose to live, study, work and do business*' (HIE 2005), then there is a need for the public, private and voluntary sectors to jointly address some fundamental infrastructural issues. While there are actions that can be taken at the regional and local level with regard to most public and voluntary sector services, there are some issues – especially banking and possibly housing - which require both regional (Highlands and Islands) and more national (Scotland and UK) level interventions.

8.6.1 Public and voluntary sector

- The three main issues that require to be addressed with regard to all services (e.g. education, careers advice, health, police employment and housing) are:
 - Enhanced information and awareness about services available which should be addressed through the various mechanisms discussed above.
 - A multi-agency approach to interpretation and translation services which explores and uses a variety of media (e.g. telephone, face to face and video-conferencing) so there is a consistent level of service.
 - An emphasis on delivering 'culturally competent' services tailored to a wide range of cultures.

8.6.2 Accreditation of qualifications and experience

- There is a need to explore with Careers Scotland, relevant professional bodies and Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) the best way to progress and support individuals on the issue of accrediting qualifications obtained overseas. In this context it is important to train front-line staff who provide careers and qualifications advice to acquire relevant expertise in the area.

8.6.3 Bank accounts

- The issue of opening bank accounts and accessing debit cards creates major difficulties for migrants and several employers and local councillors have already attempted to address this issue to no avail. For this issue to be seriously addressed requires intervention at regional (Highland and Islands) and national (Scottish and UK) levels.

8.6.4 Housing

- Often migrant workers are in areas where there are already chronic housing shortages. However, it is important to have a mechanism in place for identifying the locations where migrant workers are likely to be employed in order to aid forward planning. This requires all agencies with responsibility for housing to work closely with employers.
- There is a need to clarify the rights of migrant workers to housing and to provide them with information on accessing affordable and adequate housing.

8.7 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- HIE with its partners should explore and start to implement monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and strategies for attracting and retaining migrant populations.
- It is also important to give some consideration to how the inclusion of migrant workers is progressing. In this context mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the impact of infrastructural initiatives (e.g. ESOL, social orientation classes, provision of information and so on) will need to be in place. The issue of identifying indicators of inclusion in this context is a new and evolving field and is already receiving some focused attention at the European and UK levels (Spencer et al 2004) as well as by the Scottish Refugee Council based in Glasgow.
- Monitoring and evaluation activities should take place at the highest level possible to ensure a co-ordinated and comprehensive approach. Innovative practices introduced at local level (for example, types of mentoring) should be monitored with a view to assessing their value for the HIE area as a whole.

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