



Economic and employment issues relevant to Migrant Workers in the Haven Gateway sub-region

**Will Sambrook and David Larmour, The
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Executive Summary

This report looks to clarify the numbers of Migrant Workers in the Haven Gateway Sub Region and asks what needs to be done to make it easier for migrant workers to integrate into the local economy.

In the course of the study views of migrant workers, employers and other interested agencies were sought. These views were considered against a literature review of regional and national research.

The migrant worker picture changed radically in May 2004 when the ten EU Accession countries finally joined. The number of National Insurance Numbers issued to Polish and other Eastern European nationalities jumped considerably. However some other nationality groups actually fell below previous years.

This report focuses on documented workers who are working in the UK legitimately. For these reasons the views of the undocumented workers and asylum-seekers are not included. It is possible this might skew the overall picture, since the undocumented labour is more likely to be at the bottom of the pay and conditions hierarchy. The views of the workers were sought through a mixture of focus group work and individual interviews. The latter proved to be significantly more productive.

Lack of good English was found to be the single most important barrier to the integration of migrant workers into the local economic community. Their poor English will condemn migrant workers to the periphery of our society. However ESOL classes are not always the answer, since migrant workers often work irregular shift patterns and may well be in a different job next week from this week. Individual tuition and tuition on employers' premises needs to be expanded.

There is some evidence of social isolation partly because of poor English. The opportunity to converse with native English speakers would speed up the development of strong language skills.

Migrant workers are not aware of a number the local support organisations and agencies. They find it difficult to get support and often do not know where to start.

There are issues of migrant workers not understanding their employment rights and employers either not following procedures due to lack of knowledge or taking advantage of the situation. There also appears to be issues of poor management as reported by Migrant Workers.

This research recognises that most migrant workers will start out in basic, routine work (these after all are the jobs that UK nationals do not wish to undertake) and so we contacted employment agencies, who are more likely to supply labour for such jobs, to find out their experiences. Overall the views presented were very positive. Migrant workers make a significant contribution to the local economy and are beginning to be sought after primarily for their "work ethic". Employers felt that the best way to speed up integration is to expand ESOL provision. The employer view is a largely positive one. As the EEDA ⁴ report indicates many businesses in the East of England would be forced to operate below full capacity if migrant workers were not available.

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Introduction

Background

The success of the UK economy over the past 10 years has led to a considerable increase in the numbers of people who come here to work and to advance themselves. In the press we have seen a lot about Refugees and Asylum Seekers and indeed amongst these groups will be some who wish to come to the UK simply to make a better life for themselves but who feel that by claiming Asylum there is a greater chance of being allowed to stay. The group which this research has focused on is those people who come to the UK primarily to find work and who plan to remain for at least 12 months

The Haven Gateway Partnership (HGP) are aware that there are substantial numbers of Migrant workers in the Haven Gateway sub-region and they want to ensure that these people are made welcome and to help them to be as economically active as they can. As such this research is taken from an economic and employment perspective. Comparisons will be made with more social reports carried out with regards to migrant workers. (See for example the EEDA report⁴)

In economically buoyant times those areas which have done well tend to need more labour than can be locally supplied. This is the case with the HGP sub-region. That is not to say that there are not pockets of deprivation in the area but broadly it is an economically successful area whose close proximity to London has fuelled its growth.

The approach

The Haven Gateway Partnership is aware that there are substantial numbers of non UK workers in their local population. Many of these workers come to do the more basic and unpopular jobs, however anecdotal evidence suggests that many of them are highly qualified in their home countries.

The research recognises this and seeks to establish what can be done locally to assist these people to lead effective and economically productive lives. It seeks to identify the issues that hold back migrant workers and frustrate them in their attempts to make an increasingly important contribution to the local economy.

The approach was to review existing research on the topic and test to see whether the experiences of migrant workers, employers and agencies fitted with this research evidence.

To do this we:-

- Initially attempted to gauge the numbers of Migrant workers in the HGP area from officially published sources.
- Carried out a review of Regional and National Research relevant to our area of study
- Sought the views of a range of social agencies (both statutory and voluntary) which are working with migrant workers.
- Spoke to local employers and employment agencies to establish what issues they face when dealing with Migrant workers.
- Spoke to Migrant workers in small groups and individually to find out their views on the issues which face them.

Definition of a Migrant Worker

The Home Office RDS paper 75⁽⁷⁾ (see Chapter 2) focuses, in part, on how to define a migrant worker, the conclusion reached suggests that a given individual may fit several categories and their status may change over time.

The papers authors suggest (p15) that statistical counts of migrants tend to be low on undocumented (illegal) workers since their status will not encourage them to respond to requests for information from governmental sources.

The Commission for Racial Equality has an interesting article debating issues related to migration and asylum seeking. In the end it suggests that the most reliable definition of a migrant is the one used by the International Passenger Survey - Those who intend to stay in or out of the UK for a year or more, having lived abroad or in the UK for a year or more, are counted as migrants

Hansard (Feb 16th 2006) reports that in response to a question from Hywel Williams, Karen Dunnell (the National Statistician) replied in a written response:

A person is defined as an in-migrant, and therefore usually resident, if they intend to stay in the UK for 12 months or more. This conforms to the UN definition of a long-term migrant, the requirement for which is a stay of at least 12 months. Therefore, temporary migrant workers, who intend to stay in the UK for under one year, are not included in the mid-year resident population estimates.

The National Insurance Number survey (2004) Page 15 provides an overview of a number of organisations which have attempted to define migrant workers.

This definition of migrants – overseas nationals allocated a NINo - differs from other published statistics in the area, such as International Migration statistics derived from the International Passenger Survey (IPS), and statistics on foreign workers derived from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The IPS-based statistics define a migrant as someone who stays in the UK for at least a year following arrival. The LFS defines a foreign worker as someone who works but has foreign citizenship, and a foreign-born worker as anyone born outside of the UK, including British citizens. The various definitions of migrants mean the data sources may have different numbers of migrants for the same time period.

By implication the definition used in Robinson's article includes those workers who have applied for a national Insurance Number (NINo).

So from all these definitions we could define a migrant worker as someone who is a non-UK citizen (being born abroad is not sufficient since a UK citizen could be born in a country other than UK) who has moved to the UK to find or take up work and has registered for a National Insurance number.

To be defined as a migrant (as distinct from a visitor) there must be an intention to remain in the UK for a reasonable period of time. The NINo and the IPS surveys settle on a 12 month stay as a minimum. Below that level they are not classified as a migrant.

This study is focused on the needs of migrant workers and barriers to employment. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, we can reasonably discount white English speaking workers as they can usually find their way around the system to find out what they need to know. While they may have different (or unrecognised) qualifications they do not suffer the added disadvantage of language.

As this study has an economic flavour we have focused on people who come to the UK primarily to seek employment. This group includes a number of sub groups some of which have been excluded from our analysis.

We were interested primarily in those who planned to stay for a reasonable period of time; this excluded Seasonal Agricultural Workers (who are afforded a category of their own - SAWS). They are by definition transient so it was felt that it would not be productive to include them in the study.

The study also excludes people who come on a Student Visa (which usually lasts as long as their course plus a few months either end). Students are permitted to work up to 20 hours per week during term time. Once they have completed their studies (and in vacation times) they can work as many hours as they want until their visa expires.

We have also excluded people who come to the UK primarily because they are under threat in their home country. Such people will claim Asylum Seeker status and as

such are debarred from seeking employment until they have gained Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR).

In summary, in order to be included in this study, migrants must be primarily seeking work and they must plan to stay at least 12 months. This is the one of the classifications used in the International Passenger Survey.² An additional consideration of this study are workers who are qualified to a level beyond the demands of the jobs likely to be available to them because of their language disadvantage.

Numbers

It needs to be recognised that the world of Migrant workers has changed since the arrival of the ten European Union (EU) Accession countries in May 2004. Prior to that time the biggest press scares and debates were about asylum seekers, refugees and people traffickers. There was considerable press hysteria surrounding these groups. One of the most significant issues was that there were no clearly defined easily accessible figures related to non UK nationals who had or had not got the right to legally reside in the UK and further what these non UK nationals were entitled to in relation to seeking work and using local public services.

However one factor which was clear was that many people were attracted to the UK due to our economy and the opportunities (real or perceived) available to improve their lives.

Measures put in place by various public bodies post 2001 started to ease press comment but the next big 'fear' was that with the accession of additional countries to the EU, the UK would be 'flooded' with people who had the right to move here under the labour mobility rules of the EU. There was much debate about the supposed huge wave of Polish plumbers just waiting to meet the needs of a public which was experiencing a severe skills shortage leading to high costs and low standards in this particular trade. After the accession of Poland the press seemed unable to find direct (indeed any) evidence of such a deluge!

In trying to establish the numbers of Migrant workers in the HGP sub-region we are faced with a before and after situation - before the EU accession countries joined and after. As a group it has proved difficult to obtain definitive figures for a given location. We could use the 2001 Census figures which give country of origin down to District Council level but from previous comments we can see that this would probably not reflect the current reality. The world of labour migration has changed dramatically post May 2004. While Migrant workers are an important part of the local economy, data on this group is notoriously difficult to obtain.

Arguably the best indication of numbers can be created from the very recent figures on National Insurance Number (NINo) registrations. People who want to work legitimately in the UK need to have a NINo. They may not need it on day one but

soon after starting work they will need to obtain one. With particular reference to EU Accession countries a NINo is essential if they should need to claim work related benefits between periods of employment.

However the way this data is presented prevents a direct relationship between what is available and what this research needs to know. The chart below is as good an estimate as we believe is available at this time of the nationalities of origin of migrant workers in the HGP sub-region. The figures we have used are an estimate and Appendix 1 shows the detail of what data is available and how the figures below have been arrived at.

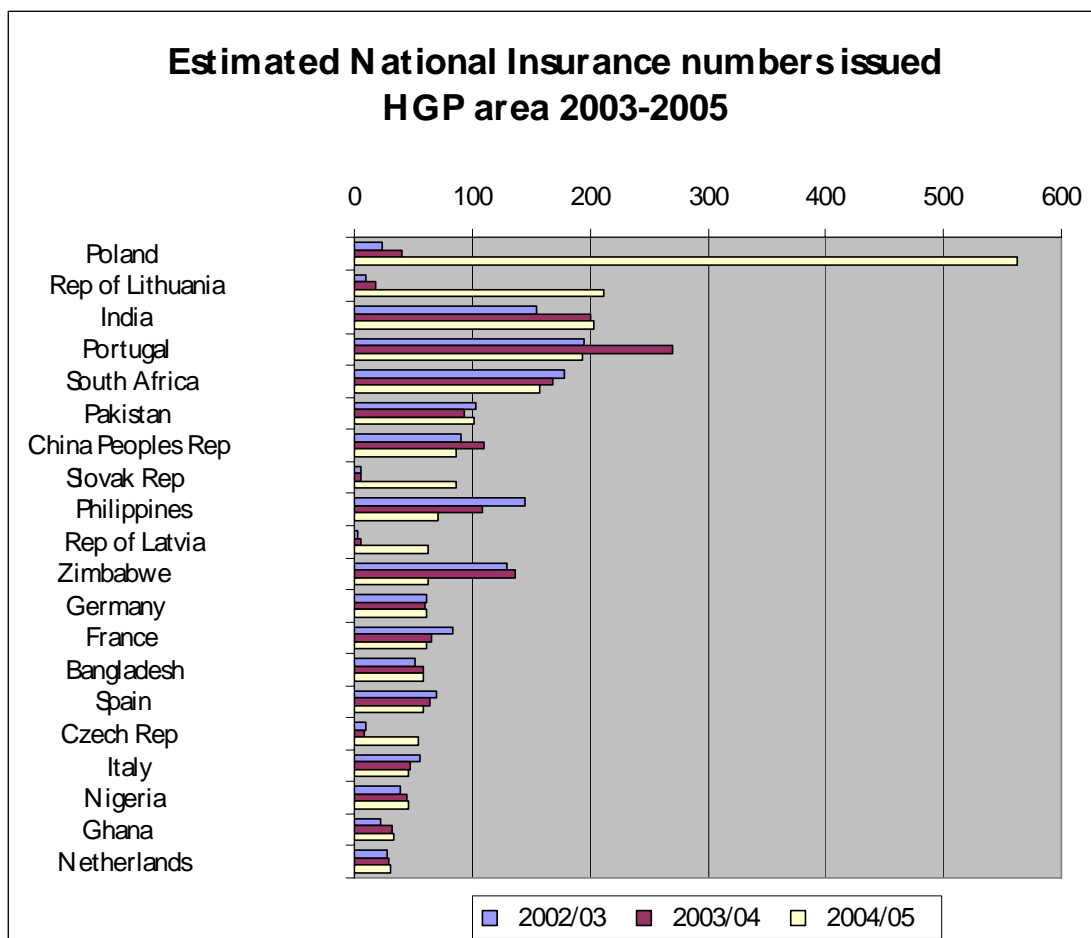


Fig 1

The range of data available from the NINo dataset is much more extensive but a decision was taken to concentrate on a limited range of nationalities for ease of display and because beyond these countries the numbers per country are very small.

The figures used exclude Anglo-Saxon or predominantly white English speaking nations (largely but not exclusively Old Commonwealth nations) which would have

shown in the top 20 list. The logic of excluding these groups was that (a) they mostly speak English and (b) they are more culturally attuned to UK values and processes; in practice they are likely to experience fewer barriers to successful integration into the local work force than most of the nationalities shown above.

Looking at the above chart gives the clearest possible demonstration for this study of the impact of the EU Accession countries joining the EU in May 2004.

The table below gives a wider picture but reinforces further the importance of the May 2004 date. The table comes from the Dept work & Pensions³ report page 13.

Overseas Nationals entering the UK and allocated a NINo,
by Year of Registration and Continent of Origin

	Thousands		
	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
All	349.3	370.8	439.8
Europe – EU Accession Countries	11.7	20	110.5
Europe – EU excluding Accession Countries	80.7	84.9	81.3
Europe – non-EU	21	24.5	22.8
Asia and Middle East	114.5	115	110
Australasia and Oceania	27.3	24.2	23.4
The Americas	26.6	31.2	26.7
Africa	66.7	70.1	64.5
Others and Unknown	0.8	0.8	0.6

Source: 100% extract from National Insurance Recording System at 25th June2005.
Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred and may not sum due to rounding.

Table 1

The gender distribution

The numbers of males and females shown below is based on the recorded NINo registrations in each year group. Each gender is shown as a percentage of all NINo registrations in the East of England for that year. The chart visually exaggerates the situation as the differences are actually relatively small. However the situation for 2002/03 is interesting in that slightly more females than males registered that year in the East of England. It is unlikely that the gender ratios will differ at local authority level within HGP District Councils.

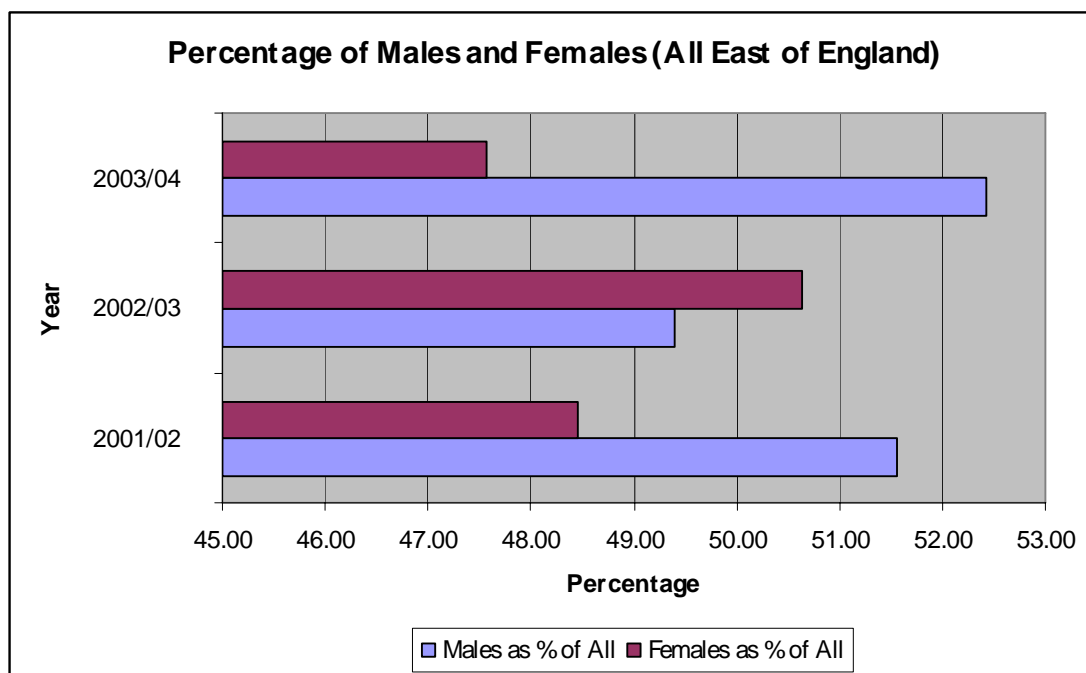


Fig 2

A Regional and National Perspective

In this section we consider some of the regional and national research which provides a relevant background to our study on the Haven Gateway Sub-Region.

McKay, S and Winkleman-Gleed, A. Migrant workers in the East of England – Project Report (2005) Published by EEDA.

This is a major piece of work commissioned by the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) and carried out by the Working Lives Research Institute at London Metropolitan University. It has looked at the entire Eastern region and has carried out detailed employer surveys and in depth interviews with a wide range of migrant workers. In some ways it is a sociological rather than an economic study, as a big part of the research is devoted to the experiences of migrant workers. It has attempted to deal with some of the issues around undocumented workers i.e. their lack of legitimacy and their potential for exploitation by unscrupulous employers.

The first recommendation that the EEDA report makes is to improve the information on the range of agencies supporting migrant workers. It also identifies the problems that migrant workers have in using the financial system in this country. Setting up a bank account is possible with an Employers letter, however most employment agencies will not submit people for jobs if they do not already have a bank account.

The EEDA report also suggests that there is a difficulty in obtaining access to services, we would suggest that a greater issue is migrant workers not knowing what services are available to them – see the case studies in 'A Local Perspective' later in this report.

The EEDA report recommends better ESOL provision and recognises the difficulties that migrant workers have in gaining recognition for their qualifications in the UK. Again, we do not disagree with these findings but would suggest specific recommendations for ESOL provision – more one to one and employer based provision.

Robinson, D and Reeve, K (2006) - Neighbourhood experiences of new immigration: Reflections from the evidence base. Published by The Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

This report is fairly broad based and makes some useful points. However their definition of 'new immigration' encompasses both asylum seekers and migrant workers.

The report looks at what is currently known about new immigrants, what factors are shaping the settlement experiences of new immigrants and what lessons can be learned about the management of migration neighbourhood level. Finally it identified gaps in the evidence base.

The report recognises that migrants are making a positive contribution to the local and national economy and they may also be helping with the regeneration and revitalisation of declining neighbourhoods.

However, it appears that we have learned little from previous immigration, and that to some extent immigrants are an ignored group. Migrants tend to cluster where people with a common identity have previously settled and that when migrants are moved to areas without previous experience of migrants they may suffer additional pressures and disadvantages. The authors feel that regardless of the type of immigration (i.e. their legal status or ethnic origin) migrants typically live in poor quality housing and may also face harassment, hostility and experience difficulty in accessing support.

Anderson, B Ruhs, M Rogally, B and Spencer, S (2006) - Fair enough? Central and East European migrants in low-wage employment in the UK published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. It is available as a free download from www.jrf.org.uk .

This research covered a substantial number of migrant workers and their employers, through postal surveys and interviews. It attempted to compare the experiences of migrants from four of the EU accession countries (A8 group) with those from two non A8 countries (Bulgaria and Ukraine).

As the report says "The employment of migrant workers is one of the most contested public policy issues in the UK." It goes on to state that migrants from A8 countries

are required to register under the Migrant Worker Scheme, but points out that both migrants and their UK employers find the scheme bureaucratic and confusing. The comment made in the JRF study that some employers considered the scheme (MWS) just a money raising mechanism, directly reflects comments made to this study as well.

One of the key findings is that there is some doubt about what is legal and illegal employment. Someone on a student visa can work 20 hours per week in term time, in practice most work more. Employers connive at this and are happy to have hardworking people working hard. Likewise the issue of au pair's working more than 25 hours a week and doing more than child minding is common, again host families appear to be unaware of these rules and often encourage au pairs to find work outside of the home.

The report finds strong evidence of migrant workers being employed below their capabilities. Migrants are happy to do this in part because of a trade off between improving their English and relatively better wage rates compared to their home countries. However migrants are valued by employers mainly because of their 'work ethic' which reflects comments made to our study by employers. Over 75% of employers surveyed felt that enlargement had been good for business, again reflecting conclusions reached in the EEDA report and comments made to us by employers.

It is interesting that the majority of people from the A8 countries felt that things had got better since May 2004 (the Accession date), while the non A8 employees largely felt that things had got worse. In the majority of cases the non A8 employees felt that it was harder to find and keep jobs and 30% of those surveyed felt that working conditions had deteriorated.

A number of other pieces of research are underway and publications have been produced.

One such publication has been published by the Institute of Employment Rights called Labour Migration and Employment Rights. More details can be found at: - <http://www.ier.org.uk/migrant.htm>

The Working Lives Research Institute at London Metropolitan University is carrying out research aimed at assessing the patterns of employment of migrant workers in England and Wales and the main health and safety at work risks that they encounter. The Health and Safety Executive is funding this project. More details can be found at:
- <http://www.workinglives.org/migrantworkerssafety.html>

The BBC has published an interesting piece of work under the title of the Born Abroad Survey, details can be found on their web site at:-
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4220024.stm>

The TUC is believed to be carrying out some research on migrant workers but details are hard to come by as the work is still in progress. However they have produced an excellent guide to workers rights for workers new to the UK:-
“Working in the UK: your rights”. The leaflet is simply presented and jargon-free.
<http://www.tuc.org.uk/tuc/workingintheuk.pdf>

A Local Perspective

To gain a local perspective we sought to compare the views of employers, agencies and migrant workers to help us better understand the needs of Migrant Workers and the potential barriers to economic inclusion. Our approach was as follows:

- To speak with Migrant workers in small groups and individually to find out their views on the issues which face them.
- To seek the views of a range of social agencies (both statutory and voluntary) which are working with migrant workers.
- To interview local employers and employment agencies to establish what issues they face when working with Migrant workers.

The Workers perspective

The original intention had been to identify community groups and use these as a base for group discussions on the issues identified. In the event this proved to be very difficult to organise. While some groups existed, there did not appear to be any organisations that represented many of the nationalities that were a central focus of this study. In addition two other issues arise out of this approach, (1) How easy would it be to approach a community group, gain their confidence, gain acceptance of the idea of discussions and do all this in the timescale available? (2) We were not convinced that the established groups would be relevant to the younger wave of migrant workers. This view was in fact reinforced by comments from individual interviewees.

After reflection it was decided to approach ESOL class leaders in both Ipswich and Colchester and to invite their assistance. In the event not everyone in the ESOL class groups were workers but we were able to filter out those that were and speak with them.

Initially it was thought that we might be able to speak with employees on employer's premises. However following enquiries with a number of employers they all declined to be involved, whether this was an issue of disrupting the work of the company or a reluctance to have an outsider quizzing employees about conditions with that

particular employer is difficult to establish. Initially it had been suggested that it would be relatively straight forward to organise some focus groups in care homes (a large employer of migrant workers), however in the event this proved impossible due to the reluctance of the employers involved. This has some resonance with the experiences of Ipswich & Suffolk Council for Racial Equality which suggested that a high number of care workers felt that they had been treated unfairly. Two of the case study people worked in a care environment and were the most disaffected of all those interviewed.

Focus groups

In order not to disrupt ESOL classes unduly a block of time was allocated which we felt students could cope with and would not affect their learning. Using this approach we spent 30 minutes talking to a group and then did some very brief individual interviews afterwards. This experience proved salutary in that there were wide ranges of intellectual capability, and of understanding of English. On one hand the students were struggling to deal with some relatively high level concepts in a foreign language, and the researcher was attempting to reduce the same high-level concepts to simple language bites without losing the meaning of what they were attempting to establish.

Following a review of the focus group approach it was decided to pursue individual interviews, this proved much more successful as it allowed the interviewees time to consider and clarify the questions and not be embarrassed by having difficulty in formulating responses. The researcher was able to more easily reduce concepts to an individual level when it was possible to see how much students understood.

The following case-studies came out of these individual interviews. We are indebted to Christine Horsley (Suffolk County Council Community Learning) and Caroline Baker (Colchester Institute of Higher Education) for giving us access to their ESOL students and to the students for giving up their valuable time.

Case Studies

The following case studies are based on individual interviews with a range of students on ESOL courses who were in employment. They represent a combination

of views expressed by the students and interpretation of their comments and body-language by the researcher.

Just over half of the students were graduates, and two of them had come to the UK through sponsorship by an employer. The industries covered were retail, catering, and care work. In all cases they were doing jobs considerably lower than their qualifications would have enabled them to do had they been able to find jobs in their home countries. In the one case where the person could have realistically expected to get an equivalent job in the UK, the issue was a lack of equivalence between his Slovakian vocational qualifications and the UK equivalent. While there are systems in place to assist with these issues a degree of perseverance is required to match the documentation.

In each of these case studies the key questions being asked were:-

- what are the good aspects of working in the UK,
- what is the downside of working in the UK,
- what could be done to make the transition easier,
- some exploration of their understanding of local services, and
- the extent to which they could meet with native English speakers and practise their English language skills.

Case Study 1

E.

Female Spanish speaker.

E has been educated to degree-level and is qualified to teach primary school children in Spain. She subsequently read for a Masters Degree in Human Resources practice. She has been in the UK for about 18 months and currently is a cook in an Italian restaurant. She enjoys her work but it is not what she is trained for and does not intellectually extend her.

In Spain she worked as a Human Resources manager for a large national company but she realised that if she wanted to pursue a career to the highest levels in Spain, she would need to improve her English. This was a prime motivation in coming to the UK. She wants to improve her written and spoken English to as high a standard as possible. Having worked here and made a start in formal English training she is

considering trying for Human Resource /Office jobs in the UK. She accepts that this will inevitably be at a basic level and is happy with that for now. When she arrived in the UK 18 months ago she did the rounds of the Employment Agencies but was told repeatedly that her English was not good enough for office work. Once she got her catering job she stopped looking for alternative employment.

What has been good about coming to the UK?

Being here is a chance for her to develop her English which will give her better prospects longer term in Spain. She thinks there are plenty of jobs locally but most of them are basic and casual. This will continue to be the case until she can demonstrate a stronger command of English.

What has been the downside?

She is not doing what she is trained to do and though she enjoys cooking it does not really present intellectual challenges to her.

We discussed her access to local services. She is registered with a doctor and she is confident about how to use the NHS. When we discussed how she would deal with accommodation problems she was much less clear. She was unaware of the availability of housing advice from the Borough Council, or from Citizens Advice Bureau. She was aware of the Job Centre and had tried to use employment agencies.

What would make it easier to settle in the local area?

She felt that she was poorly informed about the range of local services which are available to her and how to access them.

She has had some opportunities to meet English speakers through work but she would welcome more opportunities at the right level.

Case-study 2

J.

Male, Polish speaker.

J had been recruited in Poland by a national retail chain that offered him a job, helped him with accommodation and promised to provide English courses when he got to the UK. While the company had delivered on the first promise they had not

delivered on the latter, and he had taken a period of time to find out about local courses and become enrolled.

He is employed by the company as a Night General Assistant, which means that he works five nights a week doing shelf filling and other general duties in the store. He came across as a very positive person and seemed to be generally happy with what he's doing. He sees this work as an interim experience and was happy to accept the job because of the unemployment levels in Poland. He is a History graduate and is qualified to teach in Poland however with 20 per cent unemployment, jobs of any sort are hard to come by in his home country. Coming to the UK gives him a good income and he expects to remit something like 20 to 25 per cent of net income back to his family in Poland. His mother lives alone and needs financial support. J does not see himself doing this work for very much longer, he plans to remain in the UK until December and he will then review the situation and decide whether to stay on for another year, or longer. He sees his being in the UK as a means to an end - to improve his spoken and written English and once he has done this he feels that his chances of a job with prospects will be enhanced in Poland. He has no firm long-term plans but he thinks he will not stay in the UK for more than five years. He is aware of the established Polish groups in the area but has no contact with them.

His transition to the UK has been reasonably smooth because of the support offered by his employer. As a company they have recruited a number of people at the same time and he is part of a group that works the same shift and share accommodation. His employer helped him to set up a bank account and in some ways play a big part in his life. He might be seen as overly dependent on his employer. However after having been here for 16 months he is beginning to think about alternatives but does not yet feel ready to try for jobs outside his current place of work. He feels that his lack of English would be a barrier. While talking to J it is clear that while he does have a strong accent, he is able to understand and make himself understood relatively easily.

One of his main disappointments was that his employer had not provided English classes as they had promised. After having been here for some time he managed to find out about classes in the local further education college. He feels these classes are excellent but recognises that he has few opportunities to speak English as he lives with a group of Polish speakers and the colleagues who share his shift are all Polish speakers as well. In practice his main contact with English speakers is through

his managers who generally do not have the time or inclination for social exchange. He generally finds the other colleagues at work in the company are friendly and he does not feel that there is any suspicion of him as a "foreigner"

What would make his transition easier?

More opportunities to speak English, and knowledge of how the system works.

He seemed to be aware of how the NHS operates, but has not yet registered with a doctor as he has not had any health problems. He has not had any accommodation issues because they can be dealt with through the agency appointed by his employer. He was aware of the Job Centre but had not yet used its services.

Case study 3

P

Male, Polish speaker.

P has been in the UK for about 11 months and he was recruited in Poland by the same employer as J. He is a Night General Assistant or as he describes it a Shelf Designer.

P is much less enthusiastic about being in the UK. He is a graduate of Political Science with a Masters Degree in journalism. He is keen to improve his English so that he can move to a job that engages him. He feels that his current job is extremely boring and that he can do it without any intellectual effort whatsoever. When we looked at what alternatives might be open to him he pointed out that night shifts left him the day free to study English and attend classes etc., and he was not confident this would apply to other jobs. However given his views of the work it is likely he will change at some point. He is in a similar situation to J, in that he lives with and works with Polish speakers and as a consequence does not have many opportunities to speak with native English-speakers. He finds the constant night shifts disruptive and wearing. P does not remit to Poland; he said, "I do not need to".

The benefits of being in the UK

To him learning English is the key, in addition he has a reasonably well paid job because in Poland work is very hard to find.

The downside

He finds the work extremely boring with no prospects, he is an intelligent person but finds that the people who manage him in his current place of work, share none of his interests or intellectual capabilities. He might characterise his situation as "cannon-fodder" - valued for his hard work and nothing else. He commented that given his education he could do more if only his managers would give him a chance.

His employer has helped him find accommodation through agencies which they employ and this is valued. He is considering applying for other jobs but feels that his English would hold him back, his view is that the jobs which he might enjoy doing need higher standards of English and the jobs which are available to him, as he currently stands, are likely to be low-grade.

We briefly discussed local services and he was generally unaware of the range of local services. He was aware of health care services but he felt that he was young and healthy and did not need to use them. Housing was provided through the accommodation agency retained by his employer, so he didn't see any potential problems (but was not aware of who to go to if any problems did arise). He was aware of the Job Centre but less so of employment agencies.

He came across as someone doing something which he was not enjoying; it was a means to an end. When he has improved his English things will be different; he will be trying to go into media jobs and is considering making contact with Polish speaking media employees in the UK.

Case Studies 4 & 5

A and I

A is a female Polish speaker and I is a male Slovak speaker. Their views will be presented jointly as they appeared to be more than just work mates.

The difference between A & I and the other people interviewed for these case studies is that they were slightly less academically qualified. A had completed a management qualification at a Polytechnic and I was a qualified mechanical engineer (probably at craft level).

Both had been in the UK for almost 12 months and they both worked at a local hospital as House Keepers. This work is a combination of cleaning duties and delivering meals to patients (but not usually feeding them).

Although they work in the hospital they are not employed directly by the NHS but by a specialist agency and this may be the source of the comments made about their working conditions.

They find the patients and nursing staff fine to work with but they had definite issues about the people who directly manage them. The way they had been treated had changed over the last few months. There appeared to have been some changes in their managers and they felt that the new managers definitely treated them differently from local (UK) staff. They felt harassed and were not given anything other than the legally required breaks. I admitted to being a 'subversive' (as he described it!). He was inclined to argue when he was pushed unreasonably and this probably did not endear him to his managers. Both felt that they were considered to be unimportant and this appeared to be leading them toward feelings of disillusion. They felt that when it came to a dispute the UK nationals were always believed and they were not.

The good side of being in the UK was that they both had jobs and were learning English. They have the opportunity to work and study. A has had some contact with the established Polish community through her church but found that when she asked for help from them it was not forthcoming, so she now preferred to get on and find her own solutions.

The downside was that they were suffering from (as they saw it) low grade management. They had found it very difficult to set up bank accounts in the UK. Employment agencies were less inclined to employ them without accounts and without a verifiable address, banks were not prepared to help.

This perhaps was their main request when it came to making life easier for migrant workers, help to set up a bank account. When people come to the UK un-sponsored they have to find out the hard way how to do the necessary detail of everyday living. Added to this would be a better understanding of 'how the system' works.

So the experiences of these two young people have been quite different from their more educated compatriots in that they have come to the UK on their own and to do

jobs which could be agreeable but which are being made unpalatable by local managers who are at best unsympathetic.

Case Study 6

S

Female Chinese speaker

S works in a local hospital serving food to patients (she did not mention doing cleaning work so it may have been a different job from A & I above). She is a graduate who had been working in Beijing in what seemed to be a medical rep type role. She has been in the UK for 4 years and she finds her current work unsatisfying. She has previously lived in London and found the support mechanisms better there. She is keen to set up a business but cannot find anyone to explain to her how the financial system works. She had spoken to Business Link in London but did not realise that there was a similar local organisation.

We discussed how useful the local Chinese Community organisation would be to her but she felt that she would much prefer to use official channels. She had a strongly held belief that people who run such community based organisations did so for their own self interest.

The good thing about being in the UK was that there were many jobs but she felt that because she did not understand the system most of the more interesting jobs would not be available to her. Her greatest concern was to understand about banks and loans but she did not know where to go for independent advice.

When we discussed opportunities to speak English she felt that she had plenty of opportunities to speak at a basic level, through her contact with patients in hospital. However as a graduate she was seeking opportunities to extend and develop her vocabulary but was finding this quite difficult. So from her point of view opportunities to converse on a higher level would be welcome.

She expressed a feeling of isolation in that she was not sure who to go to for help. Despite having lived in the UK for four years, her English was not particularly strong.

Case study 7

M

Male, Portuguese speaker

M came to the UK about nine months ago and currently works as a cook and general assistant in a restaurant which is managed by a friend who persuaded him to come from Brazil to do the job. In Brazil he had been a personal trainer and had undertaken considerable training and study to achieve this profession. One of his disappointments was that he felt he could not practise this profession in the UK as he had not been trained here.

When we discussed the benefits of working in the UK his main considerations were actually nothing to do with finance or personal advancement in a material sense, but he was engaged by experiencing a new culture, which he felt had opened his mind and had changed him.

The downside was the weather, the food and the impossibly expensive transport.

M feels that he gets sufficient opportunities to practise his English, since he can talk to customers in the restaurant. He comes across as a natural extrovert who probably would not have any problems making friends anywhere in the world. He certainly did not feel isolated just because he was in a strange country. He was different from all the other interviewees in as much as he was more concerned about his spiritual development than his material development. He left the impression that he was a natural optimist who would survive and thrive wherever went. His key mission was to learn the language and find out what is going on.

Key Issues

What lessons can we draw from these case-studies? Perhaps the main lesson is that people who come to work in the UK want to improve their English. It needs to be recognised that the group spoken to may not be wholly typical. They were part of an ESOL class and had thus demonstrated their desire to improve their English. If they had come to UK primarily to earn money they may very well not bother with the ESOL classes.

Beyond the issue of learning English, there is also an issue of practising English. If you live with and work with people who speak your language and you never have the chance to speak English, then the rate of development is likely to be slow. Most of the people in these case-studies recognise this fact. However they were not sure how to change things. Therefore one message from this study would be that of learning English, the second lesson would be the chance to practise English. As an extension of this latter issue, with some workers it is appropriate for them to seek practice at a higher level than just day-to-day exchanges.

The third message would be that most workers seem to have some confusion about what services are available locally to support them, and indeed what services they are entitled to use. Simple things like setting up a bank account can be extraordinarily difficult for someone who is not already based in the UK. Banks and Building Societies will normally require utility bills, possibly a passport, certainly an address before they will consider you as a customer. When a company sponsors employees this appears to be much simpler but for the individual it can be quite a stressful and protracted experience.

An implication which is implicit rather than explicit in all of this is that migrant workers really do not have a point of contact with UK society. They may not be working alongside UK nationals but even if they are, they can feel isolated.

The one instance where the worker interviewed had skills which could be directly relevant to the UK was an interesting case. He had trained as a mechanical engineer, but could not demonstrate to UK employers that he had the relevant certification. Employers usually like to see evidence of competence before they employ people using expensive machinery doing delicate tasks. In this case the worker was not unduly worried about not practising his trade but given that there is a shortage of skilled engineering talent he could probably have earned more doing that, than the basic routine job he was doing in a hospital.

The Support Agencies View

This project has focused on migrant workers for reasons already outlined. However clearly there are people living in the UK who come from a different ethnic origin but have lived here for many years and may even be second or third generation. Some live here because of social or political disruption in their home countries (refugee and asylum seekers).

So if you have not been born in the UK or are from a minority ethnic group what sorts of support groups are available to help you? The mostly widely available support is provided by Racial Equality Councils (RECs), who have over the years expanded their role from a purely minority ethnic support to a slightly wider role. More recently such groups have been offering support to refugee and asylum seekers. So if someone who belongs to a minority ethnic group needs help it is likely that they will think to use existing support groups. However it is worth pointing out that many of the workers from Accession countries will not see themselves as belonging to minority ethnic groups and therefore may not believe that RECs and refugee support groups will be available to help them.

In the Haven Gateway sub-region two groups have provided us with information on their work and these reports are of interest to this study.

The two groups are

- Tendring and Colchester Minority Ethnic Partnership
- Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality.

Tendring and Colchester Minority Ethnic Partnership (T&CMEP)

This organisation has a focus, according to its aims ⁵, of working towards improving the wellbeing of people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. A recent study which they will soon publish examined the needs of the minority ethnic population in Tendring and Colchester.

The report is wide-ranging and deals with topics such as access to health care, housing, education and employment. A large part of the report is devoted to the

results of focus groups and as such reflects the authentic voice of the people and groups involved.

One short section of the report deals with Migrant Workers and concludes that Migrant Workers are widely used in a narrow range of industries i.e. healthcare, Ethnic catering, hotel work and basic production work. Interviewees felt that they were paid at the minimum rate and as a consequence needed to work long hours to keep afloat economically. They displayed a limited knowledge of the health care and housing systems and generally they were poorly informed about local services.

Some of the more common issues to come out of the report are that:-

- A lack of English is the key factor in accessing all services.
- Health care providers do not provide translation facilities (Language Line) and this can lead to people leaving consultations and treatment without having issues satisfactorily dealt with.
- Generally speaking minority ethnic groups and individuals appear to have a low awareness of how to use "the system". This may be due to issues of cultural awareness as much on behalf of the users as the providers of local services.

The main recommendations made by the writers of the report are as follows:-

- Advocacy and interpreting - there is a need to improve provision.
- Information - there's a need for user friendly material which includes advice on how to use local services. However these materials should be written in close consultation with the minority ethnic community.
- Service providers - there is a need for ongoing training on minority ethnic issues.
- Resources - grants should be made to minority ethnic communities and there should be provision of cultural counselling and advocacy.

Perhaps one of the strongest messages from the T&CMEP study is the need for advocacy. While this particular study has a health focus there is no reason to suppose that the need for advocacy does not apply across all the sources of service provision.

For reasons outlined in the introduction to this section it is likely that TaCMEP is not seen as relevant to the needs of Eastern European workers as it is to those who view themselves as coming from a minority ethnic group. However, from our discussions with migrant workers it is clear that advocacy is an important issue. Migrants do not always recognise the need because at any given time they do not have an issue. However when a problem does arise and the worker does not know who to turn to (or if officialdom does not appear to be listening) then an advocate who knows the system can be invaluable.

While the T&CMEP study was carried out in only one part of the Haven Gateway sub-region and it was primarily focused on refugees and asylum-seekers, there really is nothing here to suggest that what is demonstrated by this report would not apply to migrant workers throughout the HGP area.

Ipswich & Suffolk Council for Racial Equality

The information provided by ISCRE includes their periodical analysis of casework and it covers the period September 2005 to January 2006. ISCRE is a racial equality council therefore could be perceived as having a particular focus in the minds of potential users. Given the nature of the migrant worker population in the Haven Gateway Partnership area (see Fig 1), many workers involved may not think of approaching a racial equality council for help. However a large number of migrant workers do fall within the RECs specification, so the findings which this reports demonstrate is of direct relevance to this study.

Users self define nationality or ethnic group when applying for assistance. Of all the cases dealt with in this period 60 per cent of them were foreign nationals, as distinct from UK nationals of minority ethnic background. The list of nationals documented is as follows:

Filipinos(6) Iraqis (4) Iranians (4) Poles (2) Americans (1) Indian (1) Mauritian (1) Spanish (1) Sri Lankan (1) Ugandan (1) Zimbabwean (1) African (1).

Almost 60 per cent of the cases involve discrimination in employment or recruitment. Employers were usually taking advantage of people not knowing their basic employment rights. Foreign workers involved in the care industry seemed to

experience significant levels of discrimination in the workplace. Some instances of problems with local service provision were also evident. The report also suggests that perceived "Arabness" of Iraqis and Iranians was the main issue in their discrimination.

ISCRE is an advocacy organisation and they indicate that a significant number of cases have an employment bias. Because there is race equality in the organisation's title it may not seem as relevant to groups who feel that they do not fit the CRE profile. However, issues relating to the treatment of care workers maps with our experience in talking to A & I (see case studies previously).

Key issues

From both these studies it is clear that advocacy is an issue. With TaCMEP it was social and health issues, with ICSCRE clients it was more economic and employment issues.

Lack of English is an issue since people cannot make themselves understood to service providers, and employers. Employers may then feel more confident about taking advantage of the worker.

Some evidence of poor cultural understanding exist. Anyone unused to the workings of the UK system are likely to struggle and may just give up rather than persist. Again, from our case studies, the issue of opening a bank account or obtaining a loan are examples of how something we see as simple processes may seem daunting to someone who is not familiar with local cultural norms.

The Employer Experience

Given that the evidence suggests that the majority of migrant workers will start out in basic/unskilled production type work, no matter how well qualified they are, it was decided to make contact with a number of employment agencies to gain an understanding of the barriers faced in employing Migrant Workers. Several agencies were identified which dealt with a large number of migrant workers including one agency which was almost exclusively dealing with one nationality group. We were also able to make contact with several employers who employ significant numbers of migrant workers.

From the employers point of view migrant workers are welcome, "they want to work", they have a strong work ethic", "as long as they can understand enough English to cope with the health and safety induction we will use them". These are some of the comments made when employers were asked about their experiences of employing migrant labour.

Natural cynicism might suggest that employers like Migrant Workers because they are cheaper than native labour. However the limited sample of employers interviewed all said that they paid the industry standard rates and that really it was enthusiasm for the job and availability which made Migrant Workers suitable for employment. However, it is recognised amongst employment agencies that there are 'cowboys' who do exploit migrant workers by paying the national minimum wage (or below!) and levying additional charges on the workers for accommodation and especially transport. All of which pushes workers down to subsistence levels of remuneration.

Asked about problems/issues which they faced in relation to employing migrant workers, overwhelmingly it was language. While some migrant workers do have a reasonable level of English, many do not. The main concern here was the ease of training to do the job and above all, health and safety.

Ideally all potential employees would be able to speak enough English to go straight to the job after a company induction. The manager of a port was prepared to employ people with very low levels of English provided they worked in a team where there was a reasonable level of spoken English. In the relatively dangerous job of working a ship's hold the inability to understand a warning could present a serious health and safety risk.

On the topic of "over-qualified" staff no real problems were identified from an employer point of view. Most of the employers spoken to only needed basic unskilled jobs doing, so employee qualifications were not an issue. However one employer spoken to recognised that some of his migrant workers were well qualified academically and he felt that this might be where he could find his future supervisors and managers. When discussing engineering skills there was some evidence that migrant workers may have levels of skill that would be useful but because of the relative difficulty in cross-referencing between countries the skill level was mostly being ignored. The UKNARIC and Inter Skills websites⁶ are useful for cross-referencing but the Inter Skills database is not yet comprehensive and is only slowly being developed.

One construction manager which we contacted commented that a significant MOD project in Colchester had been expected to force up wage rates in the area. This in fact had not happened, a circumstance attributed by this manager to migrant workers. It has proved difficult to establish conclusively how migrant construction workers demonstrate skill levels to get their Construction Skills Certification Scheme card. UK nationals are awarded this card on production of a formal skill training award (e.g. NVQ 2 in Bricklaying or in Carpentry). There is some evidence that on bigger sites a worker can at least get a start if they can actually demonstrate their skill level by doing a satisfactory job but they may start out being paid as a labourer but have higher level skills.

Some references have been made in relation to Health Care workers, that it is very difficult for nurses trained and experienced abroad to achieve the certification to practise in the UK. The system is said to be unduly bureaucratic and results in people being forced to work below their skill level. These sorts of instances are hard to 'prove'. It is possible that this is a myth; however the levels of bureaucracy inherent in the NHS suggest that the 'myth' may have foundations in reality.

The impression we were given by employers was that as a group migrant workers are reasonably well treated, however ISCRE have provided some evidence that workers are feeling exploited because of their poor English: their most recent casework analysis displayed that 60% of the casework involved discrimination in employment or recruitment.

It needs to be recognised that the contacts which we were able to make naturally led us down the road to jobs which were largely unskilled, casual and with employers who appear to treat their employees in a humane and reasonable manner. This may not be the whole story. One of the employment agencies we contacted volunteered that "there are cowboys in this business", people who charge extortionate rates for accommodation but more often it is the transport charges which are used to fleece their migrant workers. It was not clear if this was anecdotal or from real inside knowledge.

Key Issues

From an employers point of view migrant workers are useful and welcome, especially if they have reasonable levels of English.

While well-qualified staff maybe a useful "nursery" for future supervisory talent the issue of vocational equivalence was not yet seen as a major issue. In reality employers have only one plea - more English training and at all levels to speed up the integration of migrant workers and to ensure they have a future in the UK economy if that is what they want.

Recommendations

There is an almost universal recognition that the single most useful thing that could be done to help migrant workers is to ensure access to ESOL training. Clearly there is a lot of ESOL being provided both in an employer context and in a community context. However by the nature of their work, migrant workers tend to have long shifts and irregular periods of work. This can make it difficult to make and sustain a commitment to formal classes at fixed times, even if it is accepted that students will not be able to attend on a regular basis; if attendance is irregular this will slow up the students progress. In some way it is necessary to make access easier or at least more flexible for students.

Employers admit to a real benefit from the availability of migrant labour – the EEDA report suggested that “if migrant workers were not available, some businesses would not be able to function to full capacity.” Perhaps employers should be encouraged to ‘put something back’ by way of helping migrants improve their spoken and written English.

There could almost be seen to be two groups of employed migrants, those who are in regular (but temporary) employment with businesses who have a consistent need for staff, and those at the more casual end of the spectrum. It is this latter group who seem most vulnerable. The former group can be (and are) catered for through employer focused ESOL provision such as Training Matters, when it is done on the employers premises. The workers can fit it in as part of their working day and it will fit with working patterns of the business. The more casual workers can be in a job today and not working tomorrow. They can be reluctant to sign up for courses knowing that the instant some work comes up they will have to stop attending.

So, more ESOL, but flexibly delivered is a request which both employers and workers will sign up to.

Evidence from both individual discussions with migrant workers and from the work carried out by ISCRE, TACMEP and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation indicate that migrant workers face a range of issues but rarely know how to have these issues addressed. It could be an unreasonable (or corrupt) employer, it could be a medical practitioner who does not understand, or it could be an exploitative landlord: all these

are situations where the migrant worker has an issue which needs resolution but they do not know who to turn to. We have identified that in the HGP area the majority of migrants are most likely to be Polish or Lithuanian. These people may well not think that an REC could help them, since they probably do not see themselves as falling under the 'racial' or 'ethnic' heading. However if there was an advocacy service which was seen as appealing to a wider audience then they may be more likely to use it.

Social isolation has been identified as an issue which can be linked back to fluency in English. Usually migrant workers live (and work) in close proximity to other migrants of the same nationality or ethnic group. They tend to speak their own language at home and probably in the work place. Because of this they do not get enough opportunities to practice their use of English. This means that they cannot interact easily with native English speakers and so it becomes difficult to socialise. This results in migrant workers remaining isolated from their wider local community.

What is needed are opportunities for migrant workers to meet and socialise with native English speakers. Where this happens it is likely to have two effects (i) they become more fluent and thus confident in their use of English, (ii) the barriers (real or imagined) between the migrant and their local community start to be broken down. It may also begin to address issues of cultural misunderstandings.

Compared to the more pressing issue of language, there is limited evidence of migrant workers needing to demonstrate that the skills they have achieved in their home countries have equivalence in the UK. However employers might find it useful to be aware of the Global Qualifications (<http://www.naric.org.uk/>) and Interskills (<http://www.uknarp.org.uk/>) websites provided by UK NARIC which is an agency of DfES. These are subscription services and IAG providers in Suffolk have access to them but there may well be merit in wider publicity of the service.

So, if we accept that migrant workers need access to more ESOL training, backed up by increased opportunities to practice with native English speakers and they need some form of advocacy service, which they recognise as being relevant to their needs, what might this imply?

It could be that some sort of 'Centre' which has a focused interest in migrants and their families, could provide a range of ESOL, classes and other means of delivery,

social facilities for groups to meet and develop their own support systems and opportunities for cultural training (or cultural counselling).

An example of such a centre is 'The New Link' in Peterborough which seems to be effective in attracting attention from both policy makers and local migrants and asylum seekers.

In 2001 Peterborough was designated a Dispersal City to ease the pressure of refugees and asylum-seekers arriving in the South-East of England. This designation dramatically added to the number and the range of nationalities residing in the city. The multi-agency forum decided to bid to the Home Office - Invest to Save Fund, to provide facilities in the City for these groups. They were awarded £2.2 million over three years, to set up and run the new Link Centre. With the passage of time refugees and asylum seeker numbers have decreased but the migrant worker numbers have increased, so the centre has adjusted to this by providing a different range of services.

The centre is located just beyond the city-centre in a redundant primary school which it shares with a number of other community-based organisations and agencies.

The primary role of New Link is social cohesion, the centre has 15 different language groups using it and the staff at the centre see their role primarily as signposting and supporting these groups. It is significant that their publicity leaflet clearly states "we do not give advice", however they usually know someone who can.

There are nine programme themes running in the centre at any one time:

Active Management Centre

The Resource Centre is a community focussed centre established to deliver services to new arrivals and to provide a venue for community activities.

Translation and Interpreting Service

To provide a Peterborough wide centralised interpreting and translating service.

Information Integration and Delivery

To use electronic means to deliver a number of key services to users and service providers.

Training and Awareness

To support and enable the target group to gain the range of skills needed to ensure full integration as citizens. This project is additionally working with agencies.

Community Safety

To provide the Police and other enforcement agencies with accurate information on community safety linked to asylum seekers and refugees.

Having a Voice

There are two projects which increase the visibility of the achievements of minority ethnic communities and research the experiences and perceptions of, newly arrived children.

Enhanced Health Service

To integrate CAB services with local healthcare provision.

Community Capacity

Establish new community organisations, build individual and group capacity through training, developing contact and relationships with other organisations.

From talking with staff some interesting points emerge. One of the big savings locally is in translation services. The Centre has access to Language Assistants from all the language groups using the centre and so when Police, NHS or City Council staff need an interpreter New Link is usually able to help.

One scheme which is being developed with a view to the future is that of Community Champions. It is recognised that migrant groups can be invisible to the established local population and that this can lead to mistrust and misunderstanding. The idea is to recruit volunteers from the wider community who will be trained in a variety of aspects of the cultures of migrant groups. The community champions will then go back into the local community and be available as a reference point in explaining to local citizens about the issues and pressures on migrants. This project is in its early days but shows signs of being an effective way forward when the centre is less active.

The centre encourages local migrant communities to form social groups. The key to this is to form a management group and formalise their existence by completing a document which will enable the group to bid for funds from a range of charitable organisations. The City Council will provide an initial £150 to get the group established and once formalised £300 is available to support the group in the early days.

The table below shows the delivery schedule currently in operation. The centre is closed on Thursday as on this day each week the community groups have exclusive use of the centre.

New Link Service Delivery Schedule (As of 15/04/06)

Time	Monday	Time	Tuesday	Time	Wednesday	Time	Thursday	Time	Friday
1000-1400	Auley's Solicitors Appointments Only Fortnightly	900-1200	NHS Health Visitor Drop-in	1100-1600	Refugee Council for Unaccompanied Minors Appointments Only		Centre Closed to the public	0930-1230	Debt & Welfare Officer Appointments Only
1000-1200	Form Filling Appointments Only	1000-1200	Form Filling Appointments Only	1100-1600	Next Step Appointments Only	1000-1600		Citizen Advice Bureau Appointments Only	
		1000-1200	Victim Support Drop-in Fortnightly	1000-1400	Prince's Trust Drop-in sessions	1400-1700		Somali Group Drop in sessions	
		1200-1400	Police Community Support Officers Drop-in	1400-1600	Children's Services Drop-in sessions				
		1300-1600	Women's Group Women Only Drop-in/Activities	1300-1600	Bridgegate Drugs Advisory Service				
		1300-1600	NHS Health Visitor Women Only Appointments	1600-1800	New Link Youth Group Drop-in				
		1400-1500	Victim Support Women Only Appointments						
		1700-2000	Citizen Advice Bureau Appointments						
930-1300	Drop in Session	0930-1300	Drop In Session	0930-1300	Drop in Session			0930-1300	Drop in Sessions
1400-1600	Appointments	1400-1600	Appointments	1400-1600	Appointments			1400-1600	Appointments

Conclusions

This study has considered national and local perspectives in understanding the needs of Migrant Workers in the Haven Gateway sub-region.

It is clear from talking to employers that migrant workers are an increasingly important part of the local economy. The EEDA report suggested that many businesses in the Eastern Region could not run at full capacity without migrant workers. They are welcome because they work hard (the work ethic which the Joseph Rowntree Foundation report – Fair Enough? referred to.)

However, to be of most value migrant workers need functional English at least. The nature of the migrants working life often means that formal community based classes can be difficult to sustain. In what other ways can English language skills be acquired? Classes on employer's premises and individual tuition need further examination. To what extent should employers be supporting ESOL delivery, rather than just expecting the education service to pick up the tab?

Employers are not universally meeting acceptable standards. Evidence from ISCRE and anecdotal evidence from some employers suggests a degree of exploitation is taking place. Would tighter regulation be one way to squeeze out poor employment practices? Regulation is never popular with employers but the MWS scheme exists, and although it appears not to be taken seriously by either migrant workers or employers, it could be one route to establishing which employers are behaving reasonably toward their migrant employees.

Is there a need for a central advocacy service that is focused on supporting migrant workers, could the Peterborough example be useful here?

Acknowledgements, Appendices and References

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Migrant worker statistics – the basis of the estimation.

The National Insurance Number (NINo) data supplied by Cambridge County Council Research Team shows all available National Insurance Number registrations in two data sets

1. The NINo registrations by nationality in the East of England
2. The total number of non UK NINo registrations at Local Authority District level.

The methodology

Step one: - calculate the total number of non UK resident NINos issued for the HGP Local Authority Districts (LAD) in each of the 3 years.

Step two: - calculate for each year what % of the total East of England registrants were for HGP LAD residents.

Step three: - Use the 2005 registration figures to rank order all nationalities.

Step four: - Take the top 20 in the list (after excluding the White English speaking nations for the reasons outlined in the body of the report).

Step five: - apply the annual % calculated in Step 2, in order to arrive at yearly nationality registrations at LAD level.

Thus the figures shown in the chart shown in the report are an approximation rather than a direct report at LAD level. The evidence in the figures is that there was a substantial increase in the numbers of migrant workers from the EU Accession countries during 2004-5.

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1. International Passenger Survey. For back ground and definitions see:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_transport/Ttrends1999.pdf

for detail on the codes and definitions see:

<http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/doc/4157%5Cmrdoc%5Cpdf%5Ca4157ubb.pdf>

2. National Insurance Number Allocations to Overseas Nationals Entering the UK (previously Migrant Workers Statistics) 2005

http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/niall/niall_report.pdf

3. The full report - Neighbourhood experiences of new immigration: Reflections from the evidence base by David Robinson and Kesia Reeve, is published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (ISBN 978 1 85935 441 4, price £14.95).

4. Migrant workers in the East of England – Project report, written by Dr Sonia McKay & Dr Andrea Winkleman-Gleed. Published autumn 2005 and sponsored by EEDA.

5. Tendring and Colchester Minority Ethnic Partnership is a charitable organisation which works towards improving the wellbeing of people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. Initially organised by health service workers in Colchester, many of whom came from the Caribbean, TaCMEP continues to focus on health promotion alongside developing communities and supporting individuals.

See:- http://www.colchester.gov.uk/news_det.asp?art_id=2959&sec_id=27

6. UKNARIC provides a service which enables subscribers to take a qualification obtained in a foreign land and to reference it against UK qualifications. More recently they have begun to do the same for Vocational qualifications however this system is much less well developed than the academic system. Further information can be obtained at:-

<http://www.globalqualifications.org.uk/newusers/index.html> (see product demonstration link)

<http://www.interskills.info/> (full product details link gives more information on the service available)

7. Home Office RDS Occasional paper 75 2001

International migration and the United Kingdom: Recent patterns and trends

Final report to the Home Office December 2001

Janet Dobson, Khalid Koser, Gail Mclaughlan and John Salt

with the assistance of James Clarke, Charlie Pinkerton and Isobel Salt

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/adhocpubs1.html>