

Working together

Coordinating strategies for migrant workers



Transcripts from the national conference

22 November 2007

Introduction

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Chair, East of England Development Agency

I am pleased to be able to introduce the transcript of the migrant worker conference held at the British Library on 22 November 2007. As I said at the conference, worker mobility is a vital part of the modern economic world and we all need to make the most of the opportunities that it presents, both now and in the future. The theme of the conference was 'working together: coordinating strategies for migrant workers' and, from the discussion on the day, I think there is a clear commitment from all those present to doing just that.

The conference looked at three needs identified by practitioners at a seminar in July: the need for better coordination at national level; for better population and migration statistics to inform service planning and provision; and for improved flows of information and advice for migrant workers and employers.

In the interactive discussions, a number of further key issues were raised by delegates: the importance of tackling the myths surrounding migrant workers; the need for a better indication of future migration patterns – possibly using scenario planning; how enforcement agencies need to be sufficiently resourced to protect people's employment rights; the complexities of housing issues, migration and community cohesion; and what a future national information portal might look like.

We are very pleased to be the lead regional development agency on this issue and are committed to working with others to ensure that we all benefit from the opportunities that migration presents, while also addressing the challenges it brings. Over the coming months we will continue to work with partners to develop plans for a national information portal. At the same time, we will be opening a greater dialogue with businesses in the East of England on the benefits and challenges of employing migrants. We trust that our experiences in this region will showcase the role that the private sector can play in ensuring that migrant workers make a positive contribution to the UK.

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Rt. Hon. Hazel Blears MP

Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

I'm absolutely delighted to be here and I'm so pleased that you've taken the initiative to organise this conference because clearly the issues that you're going to be discussing throughout today are absolutely topical, important and central to our concerns. I am particularly pleased that you've got such a variety of people talking to you today and that you're going to have an interactive session with Richard Howitt later on this afternoon. The fact that you've got the TUC here is very important in terms of the particular insight and view that the Trade Unions have taken on these issues. In some ways, I think many people at the grassroots have been ahead of the curve of bigger organisations.

Migration has always been a controversial subject to discuss. It can provoke very strong reactions, it certainly raises legitimate concerns, but it also can be manipulated by some unscrupulous politicians to provoke some pretty base reactions within the community. What we need is a mature and balanced debate about it, and unless political leaders are prepared to address the concerns, empathise with the fears and tackle the myths of migration, then we end up in the worst place of all. We end up with politicians speaking one language and the public speaking another, and that is bad for democracy and it's bad for all of us. I think we do need to recognise the positive economic and cultural contribution of migration but equally the impact that it can have on communities. I also think that we should share the positive and practical things that are being done now right across the country.

Migration has been vital to Britain's success. For centuries in this country openness to trade, openness to new ideas and to new people has enriched and strengthened all of us.

There is a pub in my constituency called the Flemish Weaver, named in tribute to artisans who made Manchester their home in the 14th Century. They brought a craft with them that would go on to make the North West the world's textile capital, creating jobs and generating wealth. For three hundred and fifty years, Jewish communities have made an incalculable contribution to business, to science, to arts and to civic life. And after the second world war it was new arrivals from the Commonwealth who helped put the NHS on its feet and support the crucial public services.

I think it was the late Robin Cook who pointed out that Britain's national dish, chicken tikka masala, is a combination of Indian style chicken and good old British gravy, a perfect metaphor for the way that our indigenous culture is actually enhanced by migration. My own favourite is fish and chips - French fried potatoes introduced by the Huguenots and Jewish fried fish, introduced by eastern European and Russian Jews. And, as we all know, there's nothing more British than fish and chips.

In rural areas, such as the East of England, migrants do play a big role in agriculture, hospitality and tourism and I think EEDA's own research in 2005 found that migrant workers contributed approximately £360 million a year to the region's economy. But it's not just low skilled industries. It's also students from abroad who decide to stay here and put their talents to use. It's professionals attracted by the vibrancy of the UK economy and, without talent from abroad, the City of London, the huge financial and economic driver for this country, would not be as successful as it is, and nor would manufacturing.

Last week I was in the North East where as well as nurturing local talent, they've seen really quite a renaissance of the chemical and petrochemical industries. They're now looking to Eastern Europe for some of their skills and they're hoping to be the centre for process industries for the whole country. So very high-tech, very serious manufacturing there.

Just yesterday I had a meeting with a whole range of local authority chief executives from right across the country and they were saying to me that what's been really important in their communities is not just the fact of new migrants, it was also something that perhaps hasn't come across strongly enough and it's the issue of young people. Having young people with dynamism, with energy, with freshness and with talent actually is something that perhaps we haven't celebrated as much as we ought to do. Young communities that are filled with this kind of entrepreneurialism and ambition are really important, and you can pretty well predict that in twenty or fifty years time, some of the most successful, dynamic businesses in Britain will be the ones that have been started in the past five years by recent young migrants.

But if we are going to have a balanced debate, we also need to have our eyes open to the challenges as well as the benefits. It is clear, as patterns of migration change and as international travel makes it easier, including for many British citizens, to study and work abroad, that some communities are experiencing these changes for the first time, and others are experiencing change on a dramatically new scale. And that can be unsettling. Some

public services, like schools and hospitals, suddenly need to meet those new needs. Charities are seeing people who come for help who don't speak English as their first language. In some places relations between people from different backgrounds can be difficult, where people don't have the skills or the knowledge about how to get along with people who are different from themselves.

Sometimes the challenge is not so much what migrants do, as the perceptions of the settled communities. At its worst, extremists look to use all of this as an opportunity to try to create divisions and to drive a wedge between those different communities, and these are genuine challenges for all of us.

So what we do need are positive, practical steps to ensure that migration continues to strengthen and enrich this country and it continues to be a part of what makes Britain great. I do recognise that it is often local government on the front line doing just this. Seeing the issues first, reacting quickly, working with a whole range of organisations from employers, to schools, to hospitals, to charities – and it's local government organising, coordinating and providing that collective sense of direction. And I do want to pay tribute to that, particularly to those individual local authorities who are experiencing more changes than others. In many places you've done great work, and shown true leadership.

I was struck recently, listening to a school head whose Catholic school had seen their rolls absolutely swell thanks to the number of Polish children who were coming in to the school. In fact, the head teacher was delighted because the education authority had responded really quickly and got a whole range of new teaching assistants into the school. The parish priest was particularly pleased because he had a full congregation which he hadn't had for very many years. Also what was interesting was that there were some mums of the children who were going to the school from that local area and they said it's great, our children are learning Polish nursery rhymes. Because the system had reacted quickly and increased its capacity there was no sense of resentment from the indigenous population to that really quite significant increase of Polish children and their families, and that for me was a really good example of things working in the way that they ought to do.

The Commission on Integration and Cohesion and the Institute of Community Cohesion have been trying to showcase some of the excellent work that is going on. I think there is a danger in this debate that, unless we get some of these good news stories up, we all think that this is

far too difficult and we lurch into pessimism. Sometimes it's small misunderstandings that can lead to tensions, for example when people don't know when they should put their bins out for them to be collected, something as simple as that. In Langport, which is a small town in Somerset, the local development trust have appointed a specific person to give new arrivals information about their rights, but also about their responsibilities, and the way that things are done in their local area so that they can fit in more quickly.

Sometimes new migrants are particularly vulnerable to being exploited by unscrupulous gang masters. The chief executive from Boston was talking to me yesterday and saying that that is a really big issue - trying to give people support when they are being constantly moved around the area and are in hock to gang masters who not only are in charge of their work but also in charge of their accommodation and the rest of their lives. It was quite difficult to get access.

Sometimes in terms of housing, I think we've all seen examples where new migrants have been put into properties often way in excess of the capacity that those properties can take, and again, that has a series of problems about it. In places as diverse as Cornwall and Manchester they've actually gripped these problems, done something about it, appointed people specifically to work with them and I think if you get it right, then that has a big impact on the settled community. For example, enforcing the minimum wage means that low paid people don't feel that they're being undercut by some of the migrant workers coming in. Making sure people are not living in substandard, overcrowded accommodation, having a pretty rigorous attitude to enforcement is very important as well.

Sometimes on the softer side, things can be improved by having a forum where people can come together, discuss the issues, share experiences. In Coventry they've got a very good scheme going on celebrating Coventry, where they have events to mark civic pride, what it is to be somebody who lives in Coventry, which has been very successful. Similarly in Sheffield as well. In Goole, in North Yorkshire, again with a big influx of Polish migrants, the council there has made its English lessons much more accessible, around people's working day, so doing it in the beginning of the day or the end of the day. They've made more books available in their libraries about learning English. They've tried to make sure that their services are adapting quite quickly.

All that kind of work is absolutely vital and that's why there are now new measures for cohesion in the local government performance indicator set, which will be the basis for negotiating the local area agreements over the next few months. I know that there are some local authorities who are putting those indicators into their local area agreements, recognising the importance of these issues, not just for local government, but also for partners in police, in health, in education - right across the public services.

In response to the Commission on Integration and Cohesion's report, I recently announced a 10 point action plan backed up by £50m of investment over the next 3 years, and as part of that from next year we are going to be piloting specialist integration and cohesion teams. These people, who've got experience from a whole range of different places that have handled the changes well, will actually go out and help local leaders find the solutions that fit the local picture, whether that is information packs, whether it's citizens days or myth busting events for settled residents. We need to share that experience and that knowledge because in some places if you're facing this for the first time it can be very very unsettling for local leaders as well as for local communities. We will be producing some guidance on translation for local authorities indicating when things should be translated, and when they shouldn't, as part of our move towards integration. And we will be giving some advice about how we can fund community groups in the best way to encourage cohesion and integration as well.

Now there is a lot going on across Whitehall, and I think there is a need to join this up in a much more coordinated and integrated way. We've obviously got work in the Home Office which is strengthening the borders and enforcing the immigration laws that we've got, coming in with the points system, earned citizenship, all of that agenda. I do think that the new points system coming in next year will make sure that we get the migrants we need with the right skills for our economy.

My department is responsible for housing, one of the areas most prone to myths and misconceptions. We've had the lies from the far right in parts of east London where they alleged that migrants were being given £50,000 and houses in order to move out of London and move into Essex. Completely absurd, untrue, offensive, and absolutely essential that we bust those myths. But as well as those kind of overt things, there are also the more subtle, but just as false, suggestions that migrants get special priority for council housing, when the facts are that not everyone is eligible. When they are eligible they go through exactly the same process for assessing housing need as anybody else does.

We do want to look in more detail at the impact of migration on social housing; in the private rented sector - where I think 85% of the migrants who've come to this country are actually now living - but also the impact on housing affordability and the housing projections that we've got in the years going forward. Unless we've got these facts and we understand the impact, then we won't be able to deal with it properly.

We are also working with the commission for equality and human rights, on the review of housing allocations that Trevor Phillips announced recently, again to make sure that we get the information that's absolutely factual and correct.

But the issues go beyond my department. If you look at the role of the English language, one of the most important factors in building that sense of shared belonging and for people to get on - to get a job, to be able to bring up their children - is the ability to speak English. The way that we support that teaching of English as a second language can have a big impact on cohesion. The Department for Innovation Universities and Skills are now talking to all of their partners at local level, and they've taken a fresh look at the national policy on ESOL to see if we can give a bigger focus around cohesion in the way that that's done.

If you look at the Department of Health, they're reviewing the reciprocal healthcare arrangements that we've got with European Economic Area countries. They're looking at how foreign nationals access primary care and secondary care, again, seeking to see what the impact is, and how we can cope with that. So these are really important practical issues on the ground - health, housing and education. There is a lot of work underway, but in the coming months I think we're going to see much more.

There is a big challenge for us in Whitehall. I think we need to get better at bringing together what we do. Joining forces, making sure that we're all pulling in the same direction. And increasingly, I want my department, with its responsibilities for local government and supporting strong communities, to be the people thinking strategically to achieve that kind of integration of policy and direction for us across government.

Equally, as the patterns of migration change and shift we need to be able to keep up to date with those changes. Above all, people need to feel that the system is fair, that no one is getting a free ride whilst they have to work harder than ever. The system has to be transparent and absolutely fair and that's why the Migration Impact Forum which we set up

earlier this year is so important. My department and the Home Office co-chair the forum. It was established for us to have a dialogue with people who have the knowledge on the ground, including local government, who understand the difference that migration is making in local areas and the forum's already been looking at the evidence that's there about the impact of migration. At the last meeting it looked at community cohesion, in January it's going to look at housing, and future meetings are going to look at crime and disorder and the impact on our health services as well. So the government is listening and learning from people who are absolutely at the sharp end and feeding that into our future policy development.

We are also very aware about the impact of the statistics that we use on measuring the population, which reflects the number of migrants in different parts of the country and then the support that we provide to local authorities on the back of those statistics. The Office for National Statistics has made some important improvements, which reflect a better understanding of just where in the country migrants travel to and from. The local government settlement, which will be going out to consultation this year, will actually be based upon a revised set of population projections based on 2004 figures but published in September this year.

That's the latest that we've got, and whilst the ONS data, I am the first to admit, are not perfect they are the best data currently available that treat all authorities on a consistent basis. That's of fundamental importance and it simply wouldn't make sense to use different measures for different parts of the country when you're looking at a three year settlement for local government - it's got to be based on figures which are consistent across the rest of the country. But like any other statistics, those statistics can actually be improved, and I really welcome the substantial programme of work that ONS is undertaking to improve the statistics. Local authorities are going to play a very important part in that and I know that you're hearing later on today from the ONS.

Many people are already taking up the challenge from the Commission on Integration and Cohesion to gather more information, to understand what's going on in their communities and how they should react. And I do believe that we've got the right fundamental approach here. One that's positive about the opportunities of migration, but pretty hard nosed as well about its impact on public services and cohesion. Understanding that Britain is a nation of Danes, Normans, Romans, Jews, Huguenots, Asians, Chinese, Irish, Afro-Caribbeans,

Africans, Australians, Poles and home to every race, faith, ethnicity and nationality under the sun.

Understanding that, welcoming it, celebrating it, knowing that our diversity is part of our strength is a very important part of this narrative. I don't for a moment believe that we would have won the Olympics without that sense of London being one of the most diverse cities across the world, and that sense of celebration. It's very interesting that the team that we sent out in our Olympics bid wasn't actually a team made up of businessmen and important, public service people. The team that went out to bid for the Olympics was fifty school children, from a whole range of ethnically diverse schools right across London. It was that youth and energy and dynamism that I think was very very powerful indeed.

So recognising that, celebrating it and championing it is important. But also on the other hand, recognising that change is sometimes difficult for people to cope with - it is unsettling when you see your community changing before your eyes - recognising that and then putting in place the practical action to address the pressures. Whether it's on the health service, whether it's on schools, whether it's on transport, and indeed whether it's on that less kind of tangible issue, but fundamental to the health of our communities, that sense of belonging and togetherness. Recognising that we have to do more to promote that in many of our areas is incredibly important.

I think that by working together, and the work that you in particular are carrying out in the East of England from a very informed perspective, means that we have a chance to make sure that migration can be seen as a benefit to this country, and not simply a burden. I think that you're dealing with some of the most challenging and difficult issues in a very, very constructive way, and I certainly will look forward to the results of the rest of the day and the issues that are going to be raised, and hopefully some of the practical ways forward as well.

Q&A with Hazel Blears

Richard Ellis, chair: *Thanks very much Hazel. Kindly you agreed to answer a few questions from the audience but if I could just pitch first of all. One of the things I think we're seeing in the East of England is that patterns of migration are changing so quickly from Portuguese to Poles, Latvians and Lithuanians and it's how do we adapt to that, because we tend, as the public sector, to be looking back and very historical. Do you think there are new ways we have to start working to adapt to the increased pace of change?*

Yes, I think there are two things. One is about the information and the data that you can have. I was talking to these chief executives yesterday and they were saying to me that in other parts of the world they have got migration observatories who ought to be in the business of looking ahead and looking for the trends that are coming, but actually what they are doing is looking backwards. So they are recording what's happened, rather than trying to have a sense of what's actually coming. I think that maybe we need to look at the way in which we get information and, while it's never going to be an exact science, I think we would all feel a lot more comfortable if we could just get ahead of the curve a little bit and see across the world where are the pressures, where are the strains, where are people likely to be making their decisions to come.

I will never forget being on a show with Andrew Neil, which is never the nicest experience, and he was harassing me about how many Polish people would be coming to this country. In the end I ended up saying, I don't know how many Polish people wake up in a morning and decide that that day is the day that they want to come to Britain. But actually, I think we need to be better at finding out that information. Secondly, I think maybe we, particularly in local government - and I speak as a former councillor and officer, so I am not being critical - tend to define a problem and then want a specific discreet solution to that particular issue, rather than saying, it might be different people coming in a different way, but what are the common threads that run through that. Because, if we set up an infrastructure just to deal with a particular issue, then when it moves on that's out of date and we have spent our money. I think we need to be a bit smarter about saying what are the common needs that people will have and then addressing those.

Nigel Costley, regional secretary for the South West TUC and chair of the migrant worker forum in the South West: *I'd like to follow up your points about making the links with the workplace because often the myths and social tensions in neighbourhoods can be tracked back to the way people have been brought, recruited and treated at the workplace. Although we have got legislation covering minimum standard of holidays, pay, etc., they're just simply unenforceable if an individual has to put his or her job and house on the line simply to complain or simply to ask. So how can we empower trade unions and community organisations to do that enforcement? It is too easy for me to say we want more enforcement bodies. We want to be able to empower people on the ground to take that first step in making sure people are treated fairly.*

Well the reason that at the beginning of my remarks I highlighted the contribution of the TUC wasn't just to be nice to you, Nigel, although I would love to do that. It was really about saying that it's so important that people have this sense of solidarity, because that's what will give them the confidence and the power to meet this challenge. In many ways we are talking about migration as a kind of new phenomenon, but it has happened for hundreds of years and the trade union movement has played a really big role in protecting people who are vulnerable, whether they are migrants or whether they're women or whether they're low paid people, whatever. Now I think in this debate, not just in your area but in the North West as well, it has been the trade unions who have actually been a little bit ahead, because they've been experiencing the real impact in the workplace and I think perhaps there's more that we can do. I just have a sense that trade unions are kind of sitting outside a little bit and maybe the public sector organisations in their totality can help to make the trade unions a little bit more integrated into the plans to deal with this because, at the moment, as I said, I just think it's a bit arms length.

If you think about language training for example, I don't know how many trade union learning reps there are now, maybe fifty thousand people out there. Now if they could be part of our system for giving people English skills, if you do that together, not only are you helping each other with your English skills, you are building that sense of solidarity and support that again makes people a little bit more confident about taking the action that they need to. I think we need a bigger challenge to employers. I think FirstBus and Tesco are two of the examples I know who are doing English language training, but not all the employers are putting back the benefits that they are actually getting out of migrant workers so I think we need to be a little bit more challenging to employers on that front as well. So if you have got some practical

suggestions, perhaps as a result of today, about some things that we could do, then I am certainly more than open and actually actively looking for that kind of action.

Michelle von Ahn, London Borough of Newham: *I've been involved for quite a long time in this debate about the population statistics and I wanted to raise the issue of short term residence, as opposed to resident population. Newham has long been an area where there have been new immigrant communities, and we cherish that as part of our identity, but it is untenable that Newham was the sole London borough last year who lost population in the mid-year estimates. We're a host community for the Olympics, we've got one of the largest house building programmes in London and yet, according to the Office of National Statistics, we are losing population. We have one of the highest levels of national insurance number registrants in London and that transient community, if they are actually not residents, needs to be recognised in the funding for local government and that is not what is happening with the use of the current statistics. We need to have some kind of recognition for the number of residents that we have who are not counted in the resident population.*

Obviously this is a fundamental part of the debate because unless we've got some better data then our policy formulations and our interventions are not necessarily going to reach the people that we want to. I have to be frank with you about the difficulties and the tensions of having a three-year local government settlement, which local government has desperately wanted for years, based on a set of statistics which have some integrity across the nation. But then what do you do about other issues as they arise because, if you have a three-year settlement, it is not going to be flexible and nimble enough to cope with these kind of fluctuations. By announcing the £50m cohesion integration fund we have recognised that in some areas there will be more difficulties than in other areas, but we have to have a negotiation through the local area agreement process about what is the impact in those specific areas and then what do all the partners, not just local government, do. If you've got a problem for example, with people turning up at A&E rather than registering with their GP, then the health service has got to deal with that problem. If you have got an issue about children coming into schools at all points through the school year with the myriad of languages that they'll have in Newham, then you've got to make sure that the schools are able to cope with that. But there is a tension because people are saying to me, use the GP registration numbers, but one of the issues is that people don't register with their GP, so how accurate are those? Then they are saying, use the national insurance numbers, but that only

measures the people who are in work, what about the rest of the people who are not in work? So there is no magic bullet to the statistics issue and I have no doubt whoever is coming from the ONS will say some of that. But, I think there's more that we have to do because we can't just keep saying this is the best we've got, we've got to try and see can we augment it, can we give it a better texture, a bit more granularity around it. So, I can't promise you a magic solution but I am very aware of the problem.

Keith Bennett, Advice for Live, Cambridgeshire: *You talked about looking ahead a little bit better and having better statistics about future trends. One of the things I think is beginning to concern us is that this debate continues to be just about immigration to Britain. At some point, and not too far away, we are going to be in competition for young workers in this country and I wonder what plans, what discussions are going on in your department, about how we change that mindset to attract people, which is what is going to be the future in our view.*

Well can I first of all say that I really welcome the way in which you've put that issue, and in the current public debate, what I would say to you is that you'd be the one voice out there saying that, so it is really refreshing that you've put it that way. I think it is very important because, as the economies of Eastern Europe improve and we get to perhaps a more level playing field, then the big draw factor is not necessarily going to be there. Therefore, if we are going to compete with India and China and a new global economy, we are going to need people with really bright minds, a lot of skills, and a lot of energy if this country is going to continue to be a powerhouse for change.

I think you've got some big choices to make here. You are either an inward looking nation, you're pessimistic and you're 'fortress Britain' and pull down the shutters. Or, you are confident, you're optimistic, you're outward looking, you welcome change, and for me, as a left politician, that's absolutely where we have to be, absolutely where we have to be. Getting the debate to even shift that little bit needs leadership - needs leadership from people like us, needs leadership at local level. But you can't do that unless you are tackling the practical issues that people are raising with you, because you can't simply make great big broad brush political statements about what a wonderful world it will be in twenty years time, which I believe it will, without saying that we've got stresses and strains here and now, and therefore what are we going to do about that, so people are assured that their livelihoods are not going

to be taken away and undercut by people who are in a position to take lower wages, worse conditions, whatever. So, it's a balance. But I think you're right, we have to start, and that's why I was talking about the importance of youth and energy and I don't think we've really started to shift it that way. If you look at Scotland, the Scottish economy, which needs to grow quite dramatically, they are desperately in need of people with skills and dynamism. So I am delighted you've put it that way. I wouldn't say that there is a prospect, in the very short-term of getting the public into that place, but we've got to try and move them along.

Richard Ellis, chair: *Ok, thanks very much Hazel. Just out of slight interest, an item on the Today programme this morning which got bounced by the third runway at Heathrow announcement which is coming today, was a debate which I was due to take part in with a chap from a Dutch company who are recruiting skilled polish workers and trying to persuade them to relocate from here over to Holland. So within Europe it is starting to happen that we are seeing the most skilled people being pulled to where the economy is most attractive and the jobs are there for them. I think it's starting to come and I think we will see that debate coming a little more but I likewise welcome the positive approach on that.*

So thanks very much Hazel for staying for a few questions, it is most appreciated. Thanks for being with us this morning.

Better coordination: a union perspective

Sean Bamford

Migrant Worker Policy Officer, TUC

Richard Ellis, chair: *For our next speaker, I am pleased to say we have with us Sean Bamford of the TUC. Sean works in their European and International Relations department. He is their Policy Officer responsible for migration issues and he speaks frequently for the TUC on such topics. He is a visiting lecturer as well at LSE and has been working with EEDA on this agenda for the past couple of years. We hosted a conference in May 2006 at the TUC in conjunction with them, so I was pleased to hear the TUC question earlier. I think it is very important we have trade unions as well as, as Hazel says, employers are very closely involved in this agenda. So could I ask you please to welcome Sean Bamford.*

Thank you Richard for pointing out that we have been developing a relationship around this issue for a couple of years and it's a relationship which we very much prize. I think the only thing I would take issue with, with Hazel Blears, because much of what she said particularly about the positive contribution of migration to our society is very important, but the only thing that I take exception with is that we are very much engaged in the wider community - not necessarily people like me sitting in a head office, but people like Nigel [regional secretary for the South West TUC] involved in their local communities and involved in their regional development agencies. That's not to say we don't want more involvement, but I don't think we are sitting in our regional offices etc, not engaging in this issue with the wider community.

As you can see, [slide 1] my presentation is called "Better Coordination" which is really what this conference is about, but I have added a caveat, 'a union perspective', because very largely I am going to talk about the workplace, because that is the focus of the TUC's activity.

[Slide 2] In terms of my presentation I will say something very briefly about the benefits of migrant workers. As Hazel was saying, it is very important in conducting this debate to keep hammering home the importance of migrant workers to the economy and society as a whole, to put it in a positive context. I also want to say something very briefly about the profile of A8 migrants in particular, which again we are very largely focusing on. That profile gives you a very good indication of what sorts of demands these people are going to make on our society. Thirdly, I want to look at both the problems of migrant workers, and again

emphasising problems within the workplace, but also the challenges and concerns of local communities. And lastly, returning to the theme, what can we do to work together more to improve the lot of migrant workers, but also to alleviate some of the fears of local communities.

[Slide 3] In terms of benefiting migrant workers, Hazel spent much of her speech talking about that. Sometimes however, we do need some hard facts and these facts basically have come from the government's own submission to the recent House of Lords select committee looking at the economic impacts of migration. We all know that migrants are brought into this country, or let into this country on the basis that they are going to fill jobs which either Brits don't want to do or there are skill shortages. I should say that's very much about the managed side of migration because we have to be very clear when it comes to fellow European citizens ultimately, as Hazel was saying, we don't know what people are going to do. You can't manage if a Pole wants to come to this country, you can't manage that and say you can or you can't or you must tell us about it first, or whatever. It's very similar to us you know, if we want to go and work in East Anglia then that's our prerogative, that's our right. So I think we have to be very clear when we talk about migration, the distinctions between fellow EU citizens and those of migrants from outside.

In terms of growth in the economy, this [£6 billion] is a figure that was put forward by the Treasury to talk about growth *per se*. But also it's important to say that in terms of net contribution to the Exchequer not only do migrant workers contribute positively, but they do so more than indigenous workers. So they are creating real net wealth within our society.

[Slide 4] Now just looking at some of the key statistics relating to the profile of these people, and these again are all effectively government statistics. There is certainly a perception for those coming into the country from the A8 countries that their stay in the UK is going to be of a limited duration. Though, as always with migration, you never ultimately know whether that's true or not. Many people have come across from Ireland and the West Indies to gain work and stay in this country for a brief period of time and now they've got grandkids in this country, so you never know. One of the big factors obviously, will be the state of the Polish economy. But, this perception of staying for brief periods of time in this country I think impacts in all sorts of ways for us. In the trade union movement it is very hard to get someone to join up to the trade union movement if they think they are only going to be here three, four or six months etc. Indeed when it comes to accessing services in this country,

signing up with your local GP that Hazel referred to, if you're young and you think you're only going to be here for five, six months or whatever, people don't get around to do that. So there are all sorts of issues related to that sort of short-termism.

[Slide 5] Overwhelmingly, not surprisingly, the migrant workers who are coming from the A8 countries are young and that's important to remember. And again when we look at dependents, [slide 6] certainly in the UK, these are young people very largely with proportionally few dependents. I think it's important to bear that profile in mind when we look at some of the impacts they're having.

These next few slides, if they've got MIF on them they've actually been taken from evidence that was given to the second meeting of the Migration Impact Forum which was looking at the issue of A2 migration and whether or not transitional measures should be lifted from Bulgarians and Romanians. But also it was looking back at the experience of A8 people in this country and their impacts in the areas that are flagged up there [slide 7].

Now I am not going to say anything about cohesion because there were only two regions who actually flagged this up as an issue at all, whereas in the other areas - health, education, housing and crime - most of the regions flagged these up as an issue for them.

[Slide 8] I think we all know now the patterns of migration with the A8 nationals is somewhat different from our experiences of other waves of migration, where people have largely gone to large conurbations, and indeed this is a big issue for the East of England etc. The areas which have not experienced migration are experiencing it for the first time.

[slide 9] Again I am not going to read through all of this, but one of the things which we need to keep flagging up is that these people are not coming into the country and grabbing all our social housing. If you look at the profile of these people they are not likely to be in the running for social housing at all frankly. Where there is a problem, and this is where the world of work impacts on the wider community, is in the private rented sector. With more workers in an area comes additional demand for housing, and let's not forget that the government believes that we need to build something like another three million homes in this country. So access to housing is a big issue. It's an even bigger issue in many regional areas where wages are relatively low and there are many second homes. As a result, many employers, either directly or indirectly to get around the minimum wage legislation, have found it as

lucrative to provide these workers with accommodation, as getting value out of their labour *per se*. So we are finding a situation in which unscrupulous landlords are packing people into houses, usually charge them more than what's allowed for by the law, and actually contributing in a small but sensitive way to pushing your house prices in some of these regions. It is one of those flashpoints that we have to be very, very aware of.

[slide 10] On health, these people are very largely young, their demands on the National Health Service are relatively light and again we must remember that without migrants, and certainly previous waves of migration, then our health service would actually collapse. So we must bear in mind the demands upon this area of the state, but also the contributions that these people are actually making to providing those services themselves.

[slide 11] On crime, which was featured in a very powerful way in relationship to the Cambridge Force not long ago, one has to remember that not only are migrants potential breakers of the law, they are often victims. Not only are they exploited by unscrupulous landlords but they are subject to all forms of abuse including, in the extreme, physical abuse. Another area in which many of the police forces in this country have been very proactive is preventing petty crimes being committed simply because new migrants don't know what the law is. The police could do without that, and we can do without it in terms of the negative news that it creates. So police forces have in many instances gone to great lengths to try and provide information to migrants to ensure that at least they know what the law is.

[slide 12] I am going to skip over this issue because I am going to come back to it probably on the next slide, namely what have the impacts been of migrants within the workplace? Now the one thing that's not on this slide [13] is the issue about is migrant labour undercutting the labour of indigenous people? I think that all the evidence from researchers and from government is that it's not a huge issue - it might be at the very bottom of the pay ladder, but the fact that we've got a national minimum wage has dampened that, if I can put it that way. But, the positive effects of the national minimum wage can only take effect if it's in force. So we are back to the issue about ok to write, but is it enforced? Most of the other issues down there [slide 13] relate to what in the law would be considered unlawful deductions from pay, which is basically people not getting their wages which they've been promised.

[slide 14] Now coming quickly to action, these are three areas that I've identified, one of which is enforcement of rights which my colleague Nigel spoke about and indeed Hazel

referred to. Secondly, provision of information and again I've already flagged up a couple of very concrete areas where if migrants are provided with information it can have positive effects in relation to the law. But also one of the things that MIF flagged up was this overuse of hospitals' accident and emergency departments by migrant workers because they're not signed up to a local GP. Now some of that is about short-termism but some of it is about not actually knowing the procedures, so information. Thirdly, improving the planning to ensure better allocation of central resources - I just want to flag that up, that's obviously a very big issue, again Hazel referred to, and speakers later on will be talking about the information base on which these resources are actually allocated and how that can be improved.

[slide 15] Now in terms of enforcement of rights, we want to move to a position which is a bit more akin to what is happening in the Irish Republic where there is real social dialogue between the employers, the representative of the employees and indeed government. If Hazel wants us more involved then we're more than happy to be more involved in this area. After all, the legislators can't have a situation in which laws are passed but then are broken, it makes a nonsense of our democratic process. We do not want to see workers' rights abused. Why? One, because it is wrong and two, where vulnerable groups of workers have their rights abused, then it threatens other workers within the workplace. Thirdly it's important for employers that there is an even playing field and that these cowboy employers cannot undercut them in bidding for trade.

[Slide 16] I am going to finish on this slide because I am running out of time, but just to hammer home some of the issues around enforcement. One of the things which we are looking at in some detail at the moment as a movement, is the issue of all the enforcement agencies - what rights they have, how they can work together, what obstacles need to be removed for their effective working. We will be coming forward to government in the spring with some very concrete proposals on how that working together across agencies, enforcement agencies can be given effect. So unfortunately I have run out of time, I'll stop there, but over coffee if people want to ask me questions etc please do so. Thank you.

The need for data sharing in population statistics development

Roma Chappell

Head of Population Statistics R&D, ONS Centre for Demography

Richard Ellis, chair: *Our next speaker is Roma Chappell. She was obviously one of these people who knew what she wanted to do in life, she started out post-university working on public expenditure statistics at the Treasury but she didn't stay in Government, she's then worked in the RAF, and in the pharmaceutical industry. She then had a period at the University of Southampton involved in teaching statistics courses and also in demographic research, but for the last thirteen years she has been working for the ONS and we are very pleased to have her with us here today. She is now Head of Population Statistics Development in the ONS Centre for Demography and Roma's main concern is improving population statistics which is something that all of us share a concern in. So can I please ask you to welcome Roma Chappell.*

Thank you for that nice introduction. What I want to do today is to tell you a bit about the importance of population statistics and the role of migration in that; the challenges that we face, the work that we're doing to improve migration statistics, and bring out the need for data sharing across government. I have got quite a few slides and quite a lot of information on each slide but, apart from the first four slides, which I will spend some time on, I'm going to just be pulling out some key messages.

[Slide 2] Population statistics are very important. They have a wide range of some very key uses and Hazel Blears has already really set the scene for me here. One of the key uses of population statistics are in resource allocation and nearly £26 billion of money is distributed in the formula grant distribution to local authorities in England. Population indicators are key to that process, and the population projections that ONS produce are one of those indicators.

The way we produce population estimates and projections is using a method called the 'Cohort Component Method', and that requires us to estimate population change. Migration is one of the key drivers of change, the other being births and deaths, so population grows through birth and immigration and it declines through deaths and emigration. Of course, births and deaths are registered in this country and so estimating population growth or decline due to births and deaths is relatively straightforward. Migration on the other hand is

much more challenging to estimate accurately. I am going to go on and say a little bit more about that, but before I do, I just wanted to take this opportunity to stress that the migration figures that ONS produce are based on the UN definition of a long term migrant - that is someone who comes to the UK, or in the case of emigrants who leaves the UK, for a period of twelve months or more.

What this means in terms of migrant workers is that a migrant worker who comes to this country and who says, "I am only coming here for three months", is not included in the official migrant estimates. We recognise that as a gap and I will come back to that. It also means however, that on the other side our migration statistics cover everyone who comes here for a year or more whether they say they are going to be working or not. So it includes students, and it includes people who come here to join other people. So these are not just migrant workers.

[Slide 3] This slide illustrates the cohort component method, so you start with a population and you add natural change. If you are making an estimate at a national level you have migration or international migrants. If you're estimating at local levels you have to have a way of estimating moves within the UK so moves between local areas.

[Slide 4] I wanted to show you what the figures actually look like and this slide shows the two major components of change, natural change and migration, over time, from 1991 up to mid 2006, which is the year for which we have latest official estimates. The interesting thing here is if you look at the left hand side of the graph, the top line is natural change. So in the early 90s the major reason for growth of the UK population was the excess of births over deaths, and at that time net migration was slightly negative so there were slightly more emigrants than immigrants.

Now that changed over the 90s, so that by 1998 net migration overtook natural change as the main driver of growth, and migration is now the major driver of growth. But then you will see if you look at the natural change line, that natural change has been increasing over recent years and that's because births have been increasing and deaths have been decreasing. The reason for births to increase is both because fertility rates of UK born women have been increasing as well as [the number of] births to migrants.

If you look at the migration line, the top line in recent years, you might wonder what's happening up to mid-2006 and what might happen next, and the answer is we don't know. That line could go back up again. You might say have we got a downturn there, well no, we can't tell that that's a downturn at all - what you might be looking at there is actually a very high blip in 2005.

[Slide 5] I thought it would also be nice to show you the pattern over recent years, this is since 1997, of in-migration and out-migration. You can see that in-migration has been consistently higher than out-migration. You can see that both of the trends have been upwards and I want to stress that this is long-term migrants only. These lines, based on long-term migrants only, still reflect the increasing trend in migration.

[Slide 6] It is a challenge to measure migration accurately and the main reason is because of the lack of a single source of migration data. New sources will become available as new initiatives and new systems are put into place. The Home Office E-Border systems to make our borders more secure, will provide us with data which will provide a better count, at a national level, of people coming to the UK and people leaving the UK, through the swiping of passports. This will help, but I want to stress it's not a panacea. What this will do for us is provide a better national count, and perhaps in a more timely way, but what it won't do is tell us where these migrants are living in a local area and, when they leave, where they were living. So we still need an improvement strategy, we still need to make use of other sources of data and to put them all together. Of course surveys are the main source of information about international migration at the moment.

[Slide 7] Looking to the future, towards 2011, a major reason from the ONS point of view for having an improvement strategy for migration statistics and hence population statistics, is so that when we get the results from the census in 2011 there is not a large gap between the census estimates and the estimates that we have been making during the intercensal period. So we have been researching improvements and when we have a package of improvements to implement in the mid-year estimates that we produce we will do that. And every time we do that, we will implement those improvements right back to the beginning of the decade so that you get a consistent series of estimates. That is our revisions policy, that is something we did this year and if we implement improvements in 2009 or 2010 we will review the need for revisions again.

[Slide 8] Recognising the difficulty of making migration estimates accurately right down to local authority area level, the national statistician convened an interdepartmental taskforce last year which reported in December 2006. The purpose of this was to bring together from across government all the major holders of data that covered migrants. We've heard today about migrants needing services - education, health, and working of course, getting national insurance numbers - and we all got together to think about ways in which we can put our data together more effectively to get better information about migrants. The task force recommendations can be grouped and I have got them on the slide - I am not going to go through all of these now because I haven't got time but you can ask me questions later. The idea is to recognise where the data sources exist, to put them together to improve our methods and to make a more coherent story because we are very conscious that different departments publish statistics that may appear to give a slightly different story but in actual fact it's a question of definitions, it's a question of what your research question is and so how you have extracted data. We need to do more to explain how the figures fit together for people.

[Slide 9] I wanted to say something about recent progress and I think probably the key thing to pull out here, rather than to go through every single thing, is the short-term migrant issue. I did say at the beginning that our estimates cover long-term migrants only and we recognise that there is a gap in the information needs there that we are not meeting. So we have been researching how to produce estimates of short-term migrants and on the 25th October we published the first estimates of short-term migrants on a national level and a London/non-London split. They're experimental estimates. We have got further work to do to get these down to a local area level, and that's where using administrative data is going to be particularly important, because we will not be able to get that information from surveys which we have to rely on for migration information to a great extent. I would like to also say, a little bit of a plug for my team who did this work, that this is pretty cutting edge stuff. There isn't another national statistics institute, apart from Cyprus, who have actually tackled this issue and produced these estimates.

[Slide 10] Our improvement work will continue and I've got a couple of slides talking about what we will do in 2008 and 2009. Again I am not going to go through all these in great detail because of the time, but I think the important thing to say about 2008 is that the Statistics and Registration Service Act, which includes new data sharing powers, will come into being

and that will give us an opportunity to start testing these data sharing powers and to pilot putting data sources together across government to improve statistics.

[Slide 11] Focusing on the potential use of administrative data sources, because that is an interest for today, we are currently looking at whether we can make better use of admin sources in aggregate within our methods where we distribute international migrants at a regional or an intermediate geography level that's not as low as a local authority area - but we distribute them down to the local authority area at the moment using census data - and the question is whether we can improve that by using admin sources together. Also, as I've mentioned, using them to get short-term migrant estimates down to local authority area level and seeing what we can do if we link data sources, because one of the problems with admin sources is that people tend not to be taken off of these registers so you tend to get list inflation and that's something else we need to look at, the impact for statistics.

[Slide 12] My last few slides are about the impact of independence for ONS. The Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 creates a new body called the Statistics Board, and from April 2008 ONS will become independent and we will report to the new Statistics Board. The remit of the Statistics Board covers the whole of the UK statistical system and the overall objective, as you can see on the slide, is something I am sure we can all sign up to, "to promote and safeguard the quality of official statistics that serve the public good". ONS will report to this Statistics Board and Karen Dunnell who is the National Statistician will be the Chief Executive of ONS.

[Slide 13] This slide tells you a little bit more about what the Act will do. The Act provides us with a legislative gateway for data sharing and the slide says a little bit about what the provisions are. So for instance, the data sharing is subject to Parliamentary approval. With me here today in the audience is a colleague of mine, Minda Phillips, who is Head of Administrative Data Development at ONS and she knows more about data sharing than I do. So if you did want to ask any questions about that she's a good person to ask.

[Slide 14] This actually is my final slide. I think the key thing to stress here is that ONS is very keen to achieve greater sharing of administrative data between government departments, and the key reason for doing so is to improve population and migration statistics. It is also to facilitate work on the 2011 census which again is to provide the population base for statistics post-2011.

[Slide 15] I think that's a good point on which to stop because that's the thing that concerns us in what we're talking about today. And so actually my final slide there is giving you contact numbers if you wanted to get in touch with me or my team after today then that's the contact number on the bottom of that slide. The top is a link to our website where you will find updates and there you can get access to the improvements that we've made so far and papers that we've published so far on our work.

The other thing I did want to say is that improving migration is a very challenging area, it's a very stimulating and exciting time to be leading work to develop population statistics, but it is a challenge that a lot of us are facing together. If any of you think that there's something that we're not aware of and you want to let us know then please do feel free to contact us and let us know your views, and you can either contact us through the IMPS Team which stands for Improving Migration and Population Statistics or you can contact through your regional statisticians.

Towards a national European Migrant Information Portal

Neil Stott

Chief Executive, Keystone Development Trust

Richard Ellis, chair: *Our next speaker is Neil Stott from the Keystone Development Trust, where he's chief executive. It's one of the largest development trusts in the country, works primarily in south Norfolk and west Suffolk, delivering children's and youth services, community development, social enterprise, property development and migrant support, and works very closely with EEDA. He's also Eastern Region chair of the Development Trust Association, a director of Social Enterprise East of England, and a visiting fellow at Anglia Ruskin University. He sits on the regional Migrant Worker Advisory Forum and Executive.*

Today I am talking about a National European Migrant Information Portal and I am making a call for its birth, shall we say. At the moment we have a very mixed scenario in terms of what information is available to migrant workers up and down the country. We have pockets of very good practice, we have pockets of mixed practice and frankly, pockets of very poor practice. I think there is a need for a national portal which is useful for migrants, for employers, for policy makers and practitioners. A portal which:

- builds on emerging good practice and leadership by organisations like EEDA and many of you in the room
- learns hard lessons from previous waves of mainly urban migration since the 1950's
- balances the needs of agencies like our own for communicating with migrants, but let's not forget also migrants' needs for information which sometimes is a little different than our needs
- recognises our need to balance top-down approaches with localised solutions such as capacity building and face-to-face support, which I am not dwelling on today but that's where my heart is.

For many of you, and I think I am speaking to the converted, I would hope that a national portal would be the logical extension of a lot of work that has gone on over the last few years and is in fact commonsense. In fact, EEDA's regional migrant portal, or gateway, which consists of websites and information and a hotline is a national portal in waiting - a lot of time

and investment has gone into that - if we chose to do so. I think EEDA should be applauded for taking leadership not only on that, but nationally in terms of the migrant worker work - it is not something that you would expect and long may they continue.

The essence of the portal would be to build from EEDA's pilot - which lasts for another year and will be evaluated - and provide coordinated, timely, accurate, relevant, trusted - and that's trusted by migrant workers in particular, and cost-effective information to migrants and others in the appropriate languages. The key purpose is to furnish migrants with information on which to make key decisions:

1. about making a move to the UK - because there are a lot of half stories out there
2. settling in
3. engaging with public agencies, and
4. handling emergencies.

The portal would be in English and people's first languages

I think one of the key issues that faces us all, and taxes the media imagination, is providing information in a range of languages. It is challenging, it can be costly and if nothing else the portal has the opportunity to save us all money. We're all collectively hard pressed for resources.

Now unfortunately when you mention migrants, maybe not in this audience but in general, the temperature rises and common sense often departs. As we know, and we have heard this morning, migration is primarily driven by the labour needs of employers - particularly agri-business, supermarkets, retail and tourism, depending where you are in the country - and the economic needs of migrants, fairly simple. The free movement of most European citizens is enshrined in EC legislation, we all know this. Most migration, apart from the individual stories of those migrants who have the courage to make the move, is unremarkable, routine and a win-win situation for employee and employers.

The challenge of the new migration is widespread, but it is particularly focused on areas which have not previously faced migration issues. Areas like Norfolk and Suffolk and Cambridgeshire and other places like the North West, where there have not been huge inputs of particularly black and ethnic minority communities. On the whole, public agencies, trade unions and the third sector have been quietly beaver away to tackle this issue, to

understand what is going on and to manage the issue. Again, it is largely routine, complicated obviously by information needs in terms of languages and the language barrier does cost, as I have said before. What I can't stress too much is that migration is very often routine.

Most of the public and third sector effort has focused on providing information on everyday issues and information which enables migrants to settle in, understand the new environment and feel welcome. Much of the demands from migrants is for basic assistance: with complicated forms; signposting to private sector housing; NI registration; qualification equivalency; trade union issues; etc. And again, up and down the country support schemes have set themselves up some by agencies like my own, some with migrant workers, like my own, others for migrant workers. Those who have set up the face-to-face services, and I can see people in this room who do it, have experienced very high demand. For instance, Mobile Europeans Taking Action, Keystone's Project, has had around 10,000 plus through the doors in a couple of years - this year about 4,000 people - but most of it is for routine stuff. I would say that those of us who are doing it, are saving the public purse quite a lot of money by intervening in that sort of way.

Now of course there are serious issues raised by migration and we have touched upon them today - exploitation, racial harassment - but these, as serious as they are, are often exceptions rather than the rule. However, if you believe the media coverage the converse would be true.

Migrant workers, as we know, is a very hot issue for politicians, the public and the media, and Hazel Blair has expressed this. The political media discourse or stories have been particularly unhelpful - xenophobic at best and in my opinion, verging on incitement to racial hatred. I think there is no other way around it, the press coverage has not helped anybody apart from perhaps their own circulation. The 'maelstrom migrants' in terms of press coverage, builds basically on the fear of others - it is reminiscent of previous panics about waves of migrants taking our jobs and our housing, creating crime and unsettling community relations - and the voices challenging these myths and misconceptions are still very rare. There are not many of us who will put our heads above the parapets and say that sort of thing, apart perhaps from people in this room.

Such an over-heated, racialised atmosphere makes it particularly hard for sensible national policy. Although I think the Minister did start to come halfway on this - even though some of her colleagues have exacerbated it and the famous Margaret Hodge article in The

Independent springs to mind. It is hard for practice to emerge which supports European migrants to make decisions about working in the UK, getting the right people to the right jobs and supported settling in. Frankly, we may live to regret our inhospitality and 'unwelcomeness', if there is such a word!. When other emerging economies or other big projects in other countries pull migrants away, when we've got the Olympic stadium to build and frankly, we want our salads in our supermarkets on time and our social care, we should be a little more welcoming. I think as a nation we tend to be very rude to our migrant labour force.

So, why do we need a national portal? We need it to coordinate what's out there rather than a plethora of practice and information sources. We need it because we need to be user focused, and sensitive to the actual information needs of migrants. We need it to be a trusted one step resource for information and a trusted sign posting to other resources. We need it to avoid duplication - frankly when you have two or three police forces producing the same basic information, paying three lots of interpreters to do it, it is a waste of resource. And we need it to stop re-inventing the wheel and learning myopia. We all find it very hard to learn from others occasionally, we all think we know what's best locally and that should be translated into recreating project after project. We also need it to reduce costs for all of us.

What would it look like? Well it exists already on a regional basis. For those of you interested, out there on the laptop [in the foyer] there is the Migrant Gateway being displayed - which is being launched at a conference on Monday. It should be user friendly, an accessible database organised by issues as well as location and also potentially a know before you go section so people can look to see what they are coming to. There should be a helpline for employers and practitioners - which there is already. It should be resourced for policy makers and academics. And, I would hope, a migrant helpline – first contact, signposting and triage system which is already there and we run on behalf of EEDA

What isn't it, and this is equally important. It isn't a solution to everyone's local needs. If I had the resource I would spend a huge amount of money in providing support services like New Link and META and others, in the key areas where migrant workers can come in to be serviced and to talk and discuss their issues with other migrant workers who they trust and get good information. But that gets quite costly if you start replicating that.

A national portal does not take us away from localised responses, but it does provide a top tier of key information that we all need to get across and migrant workers could use.

How do we get there? I think it is time, and again Hazel indicated that her department was trying, to take a strategic view, but perhaps not taking the next step which is a government department taking leadership of this issue and/or saying to EEDA, thank you very much for what you have done over the last two or three years. We want more of it, please continue.

Number two, and I would say this with a degree of caution, I think there is the need for a National Working Group at some stage to oversee the development. Not lots more hot air, not rehearsing all the issues we have all been through before but to get it going.

Now we could either build from EEDA's pilot, which would seem sensible, and other organisations up and down the country actually buying in until the critical mass is reached; or we could urge government for national seed corn resources to extend the pilot nationally and work through future income streams because that's what it comes down to as always - hard cash to get this thing going.

So in summary, I would urge you all, in all your different roles, to think seriously about the benefits and the cost effectiveness, if not the politeness, of having good welcoming information to help migrants settle in and work well with our local communities. I would urge you to talk to EEDA and pool your resources to do so. If we don't, we will muddle along, there will be pockets of good practice and there will be pockets with nothing much going on up and down the country. If we really want to hit this agenda hard, if we want to put positive messages across to the wider public who are hearing the other messages about migration, we do have a collective responsibility to move this forward.

Panel discussion

Speakers

Richard Ellis (RE)	Moderator
Roma Chappell (RC)	ONS Centre for Demography
Sean Bamford (SB)	Trades Union Congress
Neil Stott (NS)	Keystone Development Trust
Richard Howitt (RH)	MEP - East of England
Leonie McCarthy (LM)	New Link
Anne Fairweather (AF)	Recruitment and Employment Confederation
Greg Thomson (GT)	UNISON
Teresa Perchard (TP)	Citizens Advice
David Sillifant (DS)	Cornwall Strategic Partnership Migrant Worker Task Group
Brian Wilson (BW)	Improvement and Development Agency
Sarah Holland (SH)	Tesco Stores Ltd
John Price (JP)	South-West LGA

RE What I would like to do now is to invite our various speakers to come up on stage and we will have a question and answer session which may, if it goes well, translate into a bit of an interactive discussion with the audience, and I hope you will help facilitate that. So Neil, Roma, Sean, if you would like to come back to the platform. Also on the platform, who you have not heard from yet but I know you will hear from very shortly is Richard Howitt, who is *the*, in the sense of the only, Labour member of European Parliament for the East of England. I shall not try and recite all his jobs that he does in Europe, but he is Vice-Chair of the Human Rights Sub-Committee and a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy. And he has worked very closely with EEDA on our migrant worker project. And he has been, I have to say, very supportive and very helpful. So I think we will also be able to get a bit of a European view into the discussion which would be very helpful. Okay, so welcome, Richard. If we could take the first question. There is someone who has said she would like to start off the questioning, so it is always good to have somebody who gets in early. I have to explain, I carefully indicated that I had run out of time with Hazel Blears, but I did promise her she could have the first question. If you could please say who you are and where you are from.

LM My name is Leonie McCarthy, I work for Peterborough City Council at a project called New Link. I was also very fortunate to have been on the Commission for Integration and Cohesion that Hazel Blears was talking about earlier. We were saying there were

85% of people who are in private sector housing in the UK, and in Peterborough we have had a massive, massive issue around private sector housing and unscrupulous landlords. The reason it has been a big issue, it has been terrible for the migrant population, absolutely appalling, but it has been a massive, massive problem for the settled community living in the city in terms of cohesion and their feelings about foreign people not being able to live like English people because they are like animals because they do not use the bins properly etc. So much so that yesterday we held a conference on the subject and there are some people on the audience that I know met some of their residents who have formed an association, about a hundred of them, in the city, in the view that they think that if they have got a big association they can actually get the migrants moved out. We are trying to give them the understanding it does not work like that.

When I was on the Commission we put a recommendation in that said the government must draw down housing legislation so that we can start identifying landlords much easier. At the moment you have to do it through anti-social behaviour orders and stuff. But we are saying on the grounds of cohesion and integration, that councils can have special legislation to identify who these landlords are. And I just wondered what your thoughts were on that and if you can, especially the gentleman from the TUC, feed that back in, because you didn't have that on your slide about housing and I think it is absolutely massive. BNP have already started targeting in the last month in Peterborough, and we had never had a BNP candidate there before.

RE Okay, thanks very much, housing and a slightly more general cohesion issue really. I quite liked earlier some of Hazel's examples about primary school children learning Polish poetry and people helping migrants coming in understanding which day their bins have got to go out. Some of these quite basic issues. Can I start down that end? Neil?

NS Yes, obviously housing in multiple occupation (HMOs) is becoming an issue. I think a lot of councils thought it was a dead issue for many years, it has just gone like that. And yes, it does need challenging. Again, EEDA have taken a degree of leadership here and will be publishing I hope in January a report on migrants and housing needs in the eastern region, looking at HMOs, looking at some of the myths, but also looking at things people are paying, issues that they are having, and proposing some

solutions to find affordable, accessible, safe accommodation for migrants. It does worry me, I get very twitchy around this whole issue about community cohesion and residents, the whole bin arguments about residents. I get twitchy because being an ex local officer who managed racial harassment and race equality, I think local authorities have got a duty of care to the indigenous population but to the migrant population to take firm action. It is all about behaviour, and saying which behaviour is acceptable and which is not for both communities. There is too much attention on it is the migrant's fault, which I do not think it is in many, many cases. And it does worry me. And what you are saying filters through to government and one of the DCLG's priorities is at the moment working with white communities to look at that sort of issue. But if we go too far down that line, I think there are unpleasant implications, in my view.

RE Sean, a challenge that it was not on your slide and a request you take the message back?

SB I will give you a copy of my slides and it is on there. It might well have been when my microphone kept going off. Certainly during the migration impact forum, the evidence that went to it flagged up accommodation as being a very important issue and the TUC comes at it from two directions: one of which is the fact that migrant workers are being ripped off, and often deductions have been made which are unlawful. We are concerned about that, and that that is tackled. But we are also concerned about the position of migrant workers within our wider community and that we do not have situations developing which feed xenophobia. I think one of the ways we tackle this is to tackle some of the myths, "This 23 year old Pole has just come over from Warsaw and he has been given a council house" - no, he hasn't! We need to tackle those myths in relationship to social housing. I think what we do recognise is that there are real issues around access to private sector housing and it does not help if a landlord is actually charging ten Poles £50 a week to share a three-bedroom house. I totally agree with you in terms of agencies and local authorities, there are regulations, they need to be enforced, and we need to ensure that people are living in decent circumstances and these outrageous profits that are being made by employers are actually tackled - both locally but also through the courts in relationship to unlawful deductions.

RE Thanks very much. I do not know whether this is one you want to come in on?

RC From a very, very different point of view, I think it might be just worth saying that ONS are also interested in housing data, so there is another angle. And I didn't mention it in my slides either, but that is not because we are not interested in ever looking at housing data, it is because our primary focus is on people level data, because it is actually people that we are interested in, and from a housing data source you have got to have a way of estimating average household size and how many people that means. So there is an extra stage. But it is on our work-plan to see whether we can make better use of housing data and of course it's action you take on the ground to improve these other things might end up in better data at some point.

RE Richard, does this reach the rarefied atmosphere of Brussels as an issue?

RH Housing is not a European competence but it reaches an MEP certainly. Firstly, very proud of the work that EEDA has done in contributing to this as a national debate, not just a regional debate, proud to be associated with it and to support you, but also very much wanting to support you in inviting other regions and other partners in the audience to join us. This is not about the information portal, we have created it, we want to share it with you, it is very much we want you to work with us to build it up into a new national portal. And I hope several of you will do that.

On this issue she is a friend of mine so I can say this, but I am sorry for what Margaret Hodge says. As Sean says, there is no evidence whatsoever that migrant labour is jumping the queue for council houses and it is one of these terrible myths that certainly is very damaging on social cohesion. Other people do it but people on my side of the fence should not, and for a marvellous politician I am afraid she made a mistake on that. The real issue of course is that most migrants are in the private rented sector, and this is where the information portal does come in because it will give us an opportunity to enable migrant labour to understand more what their rights are in terms of the private rented sector. But you are asking also about cohesion issues, which is about what the other people in housing need to know about all of this. And frankly, the only conclusion I come to as a politician is we need to build more social and affordable housing. The problem is not that people are so overtly racist that they are just trying to scapegoat migrant labour. The problem is that there is a hell of a lot of people in housing need in our region and around the country and we just have not met their needs through social housing. I think that is something the

government is now recognising. It is a big political issue within our region as well, but it is one that I am determined to support.

RE Okay, thanks. We can either continue the discussion on this or move on. We have got one down here and then some up here.

AF My name is Anne Fairweather from the Recruitment and Employment Confederation, we represent 8,000 recruitment agencies. Just picking up on the housing point, I think a really big problem is that very ethical landlords will not take people who are new to the country because they do not have any references. So whilst in some situations recruitment agencies can do a very valuable job in helping to underpin housing for new workers, obviously that can sometimes result in abuse as well. So I think the answer to this problem is actually quite complicated. And just as a little aside, I used to work in Brussels and there I was accused of being one of these migrants jammed into a house and someone reported to my landlady that there were 13 people living in my house, in fact there were two of us. So it is always worth bearing in mind, I just had some friends to visit, that sometimes the perception and the reality of foreigners is interesting.

Moving on to employment rights issues, one of the challenges we've had in the recruitment sector is to get down to regional and local level an explanation of the very substantial legislation there is around our industry and around the way recruitment agencies and employment agencies should operate. I do not know if you have got any pointers from the Panel about how best to get that information out beyond national level, I have certainly tried my best over the last couple of years, but I would just like to draw people's attention there to the rules that are there and how to filter them through.

RE Okay, thanks very much, Anne, it is actually something that just popped into my head then, Neil, whilst that question was being asked, is that it is possible, people are highlighted on the portal to be aware that a translation of their qualifications is required if they are going to have a hope of getting recognised over here. Is there something there, should there be something there about actually getting translated references of a more general nature for people? So in terms of getting housing,

getting jobs, that they are prepped for that before they come. Because that is part of this portal idea.

NS That is a very fair point. These people in the audience know better about what 'know before you go' means, but I think it means the basic information you need to make an informed decision, like the streets of Peterborough are not paved with gold. What do you need to do, references, what happens in case of emergency is really important. One thing that really pushed my buttons on Friday is when the police dropped off four young Poles on our doorstep who had been homeless for two nights, and it took us a day, about 12 hours, to get a solution to their problem. We nearly had to go into our own pockets to get them sorted out. They probably made a bad choice, they got involved in gang-masters, they may not have made good life choices, if you like, but in an emergency they had nowhere to go. That really worried me, that is a different issue. But coming back to your sector - we all have basic information we need to pass to various audiences. The idea of the portal is very simple, in that we would help you get it to the places that you need it to go. I think that is the basic essence of it. It is one place a migrant worker knows that - because most of it happens by word of mouth anyway - the first place they go is 'click' or 'ring', whatever it may be, and they will get the first contact support, which is missing in many cases.

RE Sean?

SB Okay. About getting information out there, this is the one slide which I did not present, I ran out of time. It is obviously a very important issue, not just in relationship to employment but to many other services that people need to access within our community when they come here. Certainly we have been doing quite a lot of things that lots of other people have been doing in terms of producing information in the respective languages. We have got basic information on employment rights in seven of the A8 languages, the only one we have not got is Slovenian because it was only three Slovenians who registered on the workers' registration scheme in the first year. But what we are also doing, and this is at the heart really of this conference, is about working together. So for instance, we broadened that information out in association with Citizens Advice Services. I have had migrants come to see me, and they haven't only had an employment issue, they have had a housing issue, they had one round their health because they had had an accident and they had ongoing problems, and

in some of these areas it is not just about not having time, it is about not having expertise. And one way or another we have to pull things together so at least we can signpost the people to where they can go to access information. And it is no good saying go along there and they will tell you, if you know that they have got no facilities for interpretation, they have got no way of telling them in Polish what they need to know. So we have to be smart about it but we need to work together. And obviously we take an interest in Neil's portal as well.

RE Okay. There are some questions up in the middle here. Shall we take both questions and then we will get the Panel to respond.

GT Greg Thomson from UNISON - I am the national manager for migrant development work. I wanted to broaden it and take on board a couple of the issues that I think the Secretary of State raised. Clearly what is happening at the moment is a major change in terms of our society, just the level of migration. And it poses very real challenges which a number of speakers have touched on. The Secretary of State raised the issue of whether we should not be looking forward and saying what is going to happen into the future, and I would quite like to hear people's views on that, because it seems to me that one of the problems with the current debate around migration is that there was a complete underestimate of the number of people who come from A8 countries. There has been a lot of confusion around the figures. Looking forward, if we are going to tackle cohesion and integration, then I think we need to be a bit smarter about how we deal with these issues going into the future. That really leads me on to the second point that I wanted to raise, which is really this issue about what it is we mean by producing social cohesion and integration. I welcome the work that has been done by the Commission that was referred to earlier on. But I would also be interested to hear from members of the Panel what areas they think we ought to be tackling in terms of cohesion and integration.

RE Okay, thank you, we have got two for the price of one there, and we will bring in another one.

TP Teresa Perchard from Citizens Advice. We have been following this issue for about six or seven years and contributing our evidence. We very much welcome EEDA's leadership in this area and the innovation that you have shown in really finding out

what was going on in the region. I think the information portal proposition makes absolute sense and is a bit of a no-brainer really, there is so much duplication of effort around information production and translation, it is a melee of different leaflets all over the place including our own. So I think that probably does not need a lot of discussion except how to make it happen.

But my question really is for Sean. You talked about the employers and joining up enforcement, and you highlighted minimum wage, Gangmasters' Licensing Authority and Employment Agencies Inspectorate. What we have seen, right from the early days on, this is really not just about food production. Care workers, construction workers - I have got bureaus in Hampshire saying "we are a bit worried about those guys who are building that by-pass at the moment". We are seeing a lot of bad treatment of workers in other sectors. We know from our advice work on employment generally there are a lot of employers out there who would like to take advantage and can, because there is no effective enforcement except the individual going to an employment tribunal. I wondered what people thought could be done about that, as a general issue, because it is not just one sector, it is across the economy and it is affecting migrant workers particularly but also other workers. Thank you.

RE Okay, thanks. We have got three issues, looking forward, more general social cohesion discussion and also an issue about employers and enforcement. I suppose we should kick off with you, Roma, on the looking forward issue. Does the government actually provide you with crystal balls as well as calculators? Because we need some guidance about what is coming down the pipe, because everyone is guessing.

RC I think from that question that came there were two things I wanted to pick up on. If I could say a little bit about looking forward and if I can say a little bit about confusion over the figures as well.

In terms of looking forward, in a way that is what the population statistics development work project is about, trying to anticipate people's needs, and we look at the relevance of our statistics and are they going to be meeting needs, and that is why we started working out if we could produce estimates of short-term migrants. In terms of the figures we produce, for instance our projections are not forecasts and

they do not take account of policy, they are just projecting past trends. I did listen to what was said this morning about looking forward with interest because I agree, from the point of view of making figures relevant and making the definitions we use relevant and so on. But if you are going to do that successfully you still have to build on what you know from the past. For instance, if in the past an area had migrants arriving from Asia and Africa and they now still have those people but they also have people coming from Poland, then you are bound to look at what you know about Polish migrants to try and work out what that might mean for them in the future. You have to build on past knowledge.

In terms of confusion over figures, I touched on that in my presentation when I was saying you have to be clear about what it is you are interested in. Confusion can arise because one statistic that is published is about foreign nationals - nationality based on nationality - and another one is about where people were born, but actually quite a few UK people were born overseas and they are not foreign nationals. That can lead to what looks like two different figures but it is actually two slightly different cuts of the same thing. Similarly, you can get slightly different figures if you look at people who are in work as opposed to everybody over the age of 16 who maybe could be in work.

RE Okay. Can I just drill you a little bit on the first half of your response? What you are saying is, you are not really mandated to help with projections, or beyond projections of the history. In a sense you do not try to forecast, you are not mandated to forecast?

RC We don't try to forecast but on the other hand we do produce variant projections. So we publish what the assumptions are that we have made about fertility and mortality and migration and then we will produce a low fertility variant and a high fertility variant and so on, so people can get an idea of what the figures will look like across a range.

RE It almost seems that there is just that very thin layer missing on top of all your good work which is about taking into account policy and what is known on what is happening elsewhere in Europe. It seems that you are 98% of the way there but you are not mandated to do that, and that is maybe an issue for people in this room to take forward – maybe it is Office of National Statistics crystal ball gazing, I do not know what you would call it. It seems to me you have got a lot of good, useful history

there, you can do all the technical projections, and it does not take very much to layer on top of that to give local authorities, providers, etc, preferably at a regional level, some sort of indication. One guaranteed thing about a forecast, it will not be right, but at least you have got something on which to base some local regional decision making.

RC There is an initiative at the moment which the Welsh Assembly are taking forward where they are looking at whether we can produce population projections, using a bottom up type of approach which might then be a little bit more policy-based, or take account of some policies. And they are leading that work and we are keeping a close eye on that.

RE Okay, that I think helps, one that actually everyone should just keep a watch on. If I can jump quickly, there was a very specific question to Sean, the third question, about employers and enforcement, and perhaps I will see who else on the Panel wants to pick up on other aspects of more general social cohesion question.

SB I am glad you directed that one to me rather than my colleague from UNISON's questions. If I understood it correctly there are problems out there in that workers' rights are not just being abused in areas like food production and processing, but across many sectors of the economy, particularly when you are looking at the use of migrant workers in what one could call low-skilled jobs. That is certainly the case, and indeed we are on record, not just us but the GLA itself is on record of saying the GLA's remit should be extended. And indeed, we are concerned that in some areas that if the GLA really bites, and they are doing the best they can with the resources they have got, then it is going to displace some of these unscrupulous employers to offer agency workers in unregulated, or relatively unregulated areas. So we want to see an extension of the role of the GLA into other areas of the economy. But just to go back on the point of enforcement, it is fine to have rights and it is fine to have an enforcement agency, but that agency both has to have the powers and resources to be able to do their job properly. So it is no good just saying to the GLA government has now given you powers to go across the whole of the economy and there is one more person to enforce them. Resources and extension of remit have to go together.

RE Okay. Neil?

NS Just the one thing on numbers. Now I do understand why colleagues up and down the country, especially in local authorities, are worried about numbers. Numbers bring resources. But again, there is a great danger that we get obsessed about numbers and migration. And it is politicised, we have seen it in the press recently. Again I think we all, particularly local authorities, have a duty of care to be responsible about how they discuss migration and numbers. And when agencies like Cambridgeshire Police go into press about certain issues around migration where the subtext is, we need more cash to do X, Y and Z, it has not helped anybody, including themselves.

Cohesion is a word that really again pushes my button. A, what does it mean? Words get a life of their own, they are uttered in political circles and they peter out and we get community cohesion officers and we get all sorts of things happening. It does not mean a great deal. I even heard the Burnley and other riots described recently as anti-cohesion riots. What is going on? Basically you cannot legislate, you cannot force anyone to integrate. People have to want to integrate. I do not particularly want to integrate with anybody after half past five on a Friday unless I really have to. Why do we want certain communities, which tend to be white working class, and incomers to integrate? What we should be doing is providing clear boundaries about what is acceptable and what is unacceptable. We provide the resources to help people to help themselves - community development, basic stuff, not very exciting, costs money again - and we encourage people to come together when they wish to. So again, words like cohesion really, really worry me.

RE Interesting. Richard, incidentally, I had never thought of you as an economic migrant. Do you think of yourself as an economic migrant? Are you a political migrant?

RH Can I just say, it is a great question, because you know these figures that appear in the Daily Express and the Daily Mail, they are based on counting heads through airports. I go through airports or Eurostar two or four times a week, so I am personally a very large proportion of those figures! That is the danger, I could not agree more with Neil about the problem with figures. I think economists have to plan ahead, so you have to do the work, but it is such a political minefield at the moment, it is very, very difficult to go forward.

Couple of quick comments. Firstly, I welcome the comment from the Recruitment and Employment Confederation, as you know - but I just table it for everyone - if we are talking about employment protection, a big problem we have is unscrupulous employment agencies in other member states saying that Peterborough is paved with gold and misleading people. It is why we are in discussion with you about regulating temporary agencies Europe-wide. Now as you know, your confederation has some problems about the draft proposals on the table that we are talking about. But I wanted to say to this conference that MEPs, our British government in principle - if we can get the detail right - want to see that legislation, because agencies in other countries, and I will give examples of agricultural workers coming to Norfolk from Portugal that I directly deal with, and so does Neil, are at the heart of some of the worst abuses. Secondly, the UNISON points, I will be the one that answers it because no-one else will. Hazel in her speech talked about the proud history of migration as part of its benefits, and I tell you folks, it is going to have a proud future too. United Nations - forget Britain, forget Europe - the United Nations shows that the number of people working in a different country from the country in which they were born and brought up has more than doubled over the last 20 years from 75 million to nearly 200 million. If you look at the ONS statistics, which I do, we read what you say, e.g. to the House of Lords Select Committee, the dependency ratio at the moment is 40% of us in work to 60% not in work in Britain. Add on 50 years, only 25% in work to 75% not in work. We are not going to be able to do it without migrant workers coming in. And where have I been this week? I have been doing the next round of talks with Turkey about their future EU entry where actually, we are desperate, when all the other things are sorted out - leave the politics for that for a different place - we are desperate for the Turkish economy to be part of the European economy and all the young people of Turkey to be joining Europe's workforce. And we have been dealing with that this week. EU enlargement is actually a huge success story. When we think of migrant workers as being a problem we are missing the great success for business, for trade, for peace and security, for Europe's place in the world that enlargement means, and it is going to continue in the future. So definitely more migration in the future.

I think the point about numbers has been followed, so I will just do my own take about the point about cohesion. I am a big fan of Neil, actually, but I do not absolutely 100% agree with him. You have been on the Commission so you know better than me, but if

you want my take on it I think English language is important, I have been really persuaded of that. And some of the issues at the moment about not really having enough resources to do enough English language teaching, but also employers being able to do more frankly, I think is a very, very important issue. I think in our own region, my experience is helping communities to organise themselves, the Portuguese communities, the Polish communities, giving them the capacity to represent themselves, to develop a community identity and confidence and representation is a very, very important part of it. I compare us with France where they had riots last year, where I think we have learned lessons about integration in this country 20 years ago that they are only beginning to learn today in France. I think there is assimilation, which is wholly unacceptable, there is segregation which is wholly unacceptable, but I think there is integration, if done right, based on mutual respect, mutual responsibility, that actually is a proper goal to aim for. I think political leadership, challenging the myths, making the case for migration being a good thing, making sure that things that are unacceptable are labelled as unacceptable, is very, very important in trying to change the debate in this country away from a very negative, politically charged, in my view too racist debate, to one which actually enables us to discuss these issues in a de-racialised, de-politicised way.

RE Okay. Shall we take a couple more questions and then come back to the Panel?

DS David Sillifant, Cornwall Strategic Partnership's Migrant Worker Task Group. Coming back to the point that was being made about the coordination of enforcement action, housing, accommodation and issues relating to employment. It is a fact that statutory bodies have the power to share information between themselves, including confidential information, for the purpose of preventing or detecting crime. And in west Cornwall, the district councils, the police, the fire brigade, probation service, customs and excise, the GLA and the health and safety executive, have signed a legal information sharing agreement that has allowed them to create an online database where they all put any information they have about migrant workers, and it is accessible to all those authorities. They meet every six weeks roughly, as a group, and they prioritise the top sites, whether it be an employer or an accommodation provider on the database, and on the basis of that they have carried out a number of joint raids or inspections or whatever you want to call them.

For example, in January a team of about ten people inspected about 50 sites in a week, as a result of which one gangmaster's licence was withdrawn on the spot, Health and Safety Executive issued an enforcement notice, and Environmental Health issued two abatement notices on accommodation. It has been very, very successful because it has proved to the migrant worker community that the statutory bodies actually have an interest in their welfare, because it is not only about enforcement, it is about encouragement of good employers, about spreading good practice, about raising standards.

Many migrant workers have come to this country under the belief that statutory authorities are not interested, and it is quite a rude awakening when they find that people do care about their employment rights, about their living conditions and so on. It has also done a lot to reassure the local community that people are putting things on a level playing field and abuses will not be permitted. The very, very sad thing from our point of view is that as successful as that has been, we have not seen it replicated elsewhere in Cornwall and in the South West, let alone the rest of the country. And what I am really saying to the Panel is, what can be done on a national level, or from your good selves, to make the leaders and the decision-makers in those statutory bodies actually take an interest and begin coordinating with each other, because there is so much lack of willingness sometimes from the people who run these organisations to sit down with their neighbours and work together. All it requires is people to sit together and work together and share information. What can be done to encourage the spread of such practice?

RE Okay, thanks very much. A useful contribution as well as a question.

BW I am Brian Wilson from the Improvement and Development Agency (I&DeA) for Local Government. If I might, just one quick comment and then one question. The comment is really to add to the conversation about trying to build policy into forecast rather than projections in terms of the data. And I have a lot of sympathy I have to say with the statisticians, it is actually very difficult to take a set of figures and to predict that in five years' time the direction of the line will suddenly change on the graph. So I think rather than trying to be clever in terms of forecast, what is quite interesting perhaps is to think in terms of scenarios. And one of the support projects that we are hoping to run with a local council next year, will at least have a go at doing that. It will pilot

some work just saying, what actually are some of the main unknowns here, what are some of the directions that migration could go in, and then to think about the policy implications or possible policy implications for the local authority and its partners. And it seems to me that that is potentially quite a useful way of thinking about the future rather than trying to be clever with forecasts.

My question though is on rather a different topic. A lot of the discussion here today has been about if you like, trying to shift the tenor of the debate about migration, or at least trying to have a more balanced debate about it, I think was the phrase that the minister used. I am conscious that we have had quite an airing of the importance of politicians at a national and local level in that, and quite right too. We have also discussed the role of trade unions and I am conscious that they have done a lot. But my question really is about the role of employers. They are without any shadow of doubt some of the main beneficiaries of migrant workers. Could employers and socially responsible employers, be doing more, and their representative organisations be doing considerably more to put their head above the parapet and actually talk about the importance of migration to their businesses and to try and shift that debate, that public debate.

RE Thanks very much, we have got a case study and a question following on from it; an issue about whether it is scenarios to plan around as opposed to particular forecasts as a comment, which perhaps I might get Roma to pick up on; and then the issue about hearing the voice of employers more, should we and how might that happen? Can I just get you to pick up on the scenarios one first, because that's quite specific, Roma. That is not something at the moment you are mandated to do, although it might be an area of work.

RC I think we are interested in how our projections should develop in the future to make sure we are meeting people's needs. So I was very interested in your suggestion – I made a note because I thought I will follow you up at lunchtime and perhaps be in contact with you. A chap called Jonathan Swan, who some people might have come across, has moved into our sub-national projections area, and he probably would be quite interested to know more about that work.

- RE Okay, thanks. On the caring, sharing, enforcement agencies, it can be done, quite clearly it has been done very effectively, how could that be rolled out more? Neil, do you have a view?
- NS Yes, couple of things. One is with notable exceptions, I think your part of Cornwall is one of them, local government has been a little slow on this agenda - with notable exceptions. It has been often the third sector, the faiths sector, who have picked up the slack, basically. That is not to give that sector special privilege, it is just fact. I think, number one, the LGA who – I think someone from the LGA is here today – has got a responsibility to show leadership again, not just about the numbers debate and hard cash in our pockets, but in emphasising good or emerging practice. I think your organisation [I&DeA] actually does this already, does it not? You have got a website, which we are on and other people in this room are on, which shows good practice. Again, a plug for the portal, one would hope that information could be shared even better. It comes back again to duty of care and I think for local politicians, especially in rural areas where I think we have to accept it has been a bit of a shock to them and has challenged some of their beliefs shall we say. It is different with people who are coming through very quickly and going on, but those who are settling, get them registered as electors. That soon sharpens the political mind when they realise they have got 8,000 Portuguese voting in local elections.
- RE Richard?
- RH I agree the politics point, we have been trying to get some Italians elected in Bedford for some while, it is only going to be a matter of time before we get Portuguese elected. And of course the great thing is, I made my maiden speech in the European Parliament on this issue, that in local and European elections, any EU citizen is fully able to participate and we should encourage people to come forward and to do that in all the political parties.
- I lost my point there because I got so excited by the mention of the word politics! But I just want to add something in response to the European level because that is my job, and also you do not think about it unless people like me put that as part of the discussion. So the Migrant Information Needs project that EEDA and Community Action Dacorum have led with European funding has been about sharing information

with our European partners in Spain and Poland and Bulgaria and so on. I am sure that has been discussed earlier, but that will come to a head at a conference that we are having in Brussels next year. I hope some of you will join us for that. And that is about disseminating what we are doing Europe-wide and not just working across Britain to share some of these working methods. The bit that we never talk about is what happens to migrants when they return home and the project is specifically looking at that of course.

The other thing that we can build in at the European level is the labour inspectorates and the agency inspectorates in Britain talking with their counterparts and cooperating and us helping them to cooperate. Not inventing some new agency or bureaucracy for vast amounts of money, but taking the people that are there at the moment and getting them to work more effectively together so that again, the unscrupulous people involved in all of this do not manage to exploit the differences that there are between different countries' regimes, and that we make sure that we work together to try and find them out.

NS The point on employers. I think the EEDA experience is that yes, lots of employers have benefited but they have been very quiet and they are very hard to engage apart from perhaps some at the spokespersons' level. I was having this discussion with colleagues from Tesco's earlier on. I think it is important that employers are encouraged to make positive noises and put their heads a bit above the parapet. I think that is what the issue is, as I said earlier, people are very scared of standing up in public and being counted on this issue because of the wrath of the media at the moment. Employers I do think have a duty, or perhaps employer organisations collectively, to say more positive things.

RH I spend a lot of time trying to influence organisations. I hope Tesco's will say something, perhaps to all of us, because they have very good corporate social responsibility policies that I work on with them and they are one of the companies that are more likely to speak out - they are here today and that is an example of that. One of the reasons, when I talk with employers, for why they do not speak out is that they are too damned busy and they only speak out about things when they see it as an immediate problem. So when the opposition party, I do not want to be party political today, but when the opposition party in the last election came out with its idea of a

fixed quota on migrant workers irrespective of the economy's needs, Digby Jones in his then role in the CBI spoke up about it because he wanted to say on behalf of British business, this is a crazy idea, it is going to be very anti-business if we do it. But it was because there was an immediate threat of it happening that it pushed him to say that. There is no immediate threat in the same way, and I suppose what I would say to EEDA and to the other business organisations and regional development agencies in the room, is to try in your dialogues with business to impress upon them that public policy in this area is under threat. And their economic needs may be threatened in the future unless we change the terms of this debate and to try and entice more companies like Tesco's to come out and put their heads over the parapet.

RE Sean?

SB It does happen, thankfully. I think one does have to remember the history of the Gangmasters' Licensing Authority that that went through with the support of significant groups of employers, in fact I think your organisation as well. Indeed, right at the very last, the government I think took fright and wanted to water it down further, and it was only because the employers stood solid with us that it was not so diluted. Unfortunately that is far too infrequent, within our society. Like Richard but not as often, I go to Brussels to attend various advisory committees on workers' rights, and I get there and there is the Irish government's representative, there is the employer's representative, and there is the trade union and I could go through Danish, Dutch, you name it. We turn up time and time again, there is the British government's representative, there is the trade union representative, empty chair where the employers are. So often British employers, certainly on a European level - and let us face it, a lot of our employment legislation is emanating from there - just do not get involved in a debate. I think that is a great shame, we have lots of common interests and we need to work together more – that is the trade unions and the government and the employers.

RE Okay. Is there anyone from Tesco who wants to – ?

SH Go on, then.

RE You have an opportunity, you have just had a plug for the great work you are doing. If you want to build on that, and whether you have got a more general view of why perhaps businesses do keep quiet on this.

SH My name is Sarah Holland. I am head of resourcing for Tesco's UK. Part of that is recruiting from Poland initially - we have recruited from there for three or four years now - and this year we moved into Slovakia, so there are two countries in Europe that we recruit from. The debate around employers - I think you have covered the comment really around the press, and Neil, we were talking outside, that there is that putting your head above the parapet, there is always the debate around 'if you recruit from overseas you are stopping people from the UK finding a job, people who want to work' and there is a real stigma attached to that. We really do make a point of working very closely with the Job Centre Plus in the UK so that we are very targeted with who we recruit. I think that is an important link that we make. I think it is important because we want to assure the public that we do not actually go out and recruit from Poland, Slovakia, at the expense of people in the UK. That is important - and we need to publicise that properly, because then the debate changes from you are not giving people in the UK an opportunity, you are just giving people from overseas an opportunity. It is a balance and it is very important that we, as employers, manage that balance, work very closely and make sure that everybody has an equal opportunity, because that is what we are all about, really.

Just to talk about some of the stuff we have spoken about with English lessons and taking that point. It is something that we are very interested in looking at. It is something that I think we will go away with from today, certainly as an issue raised, and have a look at how we can work and what we can do to move that issue. We cannot promise that we are going to change the world but actually it is something we certainly want to have a look at. Overall that is the reason, but we are delighted to be here, and thank you very much for inviting us. We do not want to start putting our head way above the parapet but I do think there is a voice and we would like to have that.

RE Thanks very much and thanks for being willing to come temporarily above the parapet, at least in a small audience. I certainly know that the work which EEDA has done, and the research which we have done, has not just thrown up Tesco, but there

have been other employers, such as Bernard Matthews who have been held up as beacons of good practice in some of their work. I think there is more of an issue with the smaller employers, (a) about getting them, because they are very busy, to get their heads above the parapet, and (b) actually having that sort of confidence. Within the portal there is a helpline for employers as well and I think that is particularly helpful for smaller businesses, because quite frankly, they do not have a head of resourcing. There was also a challenge laid down as to whether there was anyone from the LGA here who wanted to perhaps come in, or maybe even the IDEA might want to come back on the issue of – I think it was spreading good practice - a bit of a challenge laid down there. Is anyone willing to come in?

BW I think it [spreading good practice] is an eminently sensible idea. We have a specific product of our own but it is rather a different one and rather a targeted one, which is our own community of practice. But that is aimed very much at the policy practitioner market, if you like, it is a discussion board for them really with good practice and documents attached. I think this idea of something that either migrant workers or employers or policy practitioners can go to and either find on that portal or find links to other portals in one place seems like a good idea. And I am conscious of the fact that although it has been produced for the East of England, the answers are going to be probably 90% the same wherever you are.

RE I think that is a point. Did you want to come in on that one, sir?

JP I am John Price from the South West LGA. It is worth mentioning in relation to the role of the national LGA that there is in fact a members' task group on migration that meets on a quarterly basis, that originally started looking at asylum seeker refugee issues but now has expanded its remit to look at migration. And that does bring together the chairs of the regional strategic migration boards, elected members and various support officers. So I think that is something that the LGA have taken forward firmly and have entered into various dialogues with the ministers about.

RE Does anyone else want to make a comment on any of those last couple of points? Or I will offer the opportunity to the Panel, did you want to come back at all? You want to, Richard?

RH Couple of things. One is on the information portal, there is a lot of local government in the room, you heard what Hazel said about local government this morning. It is quite a daring thing that EEDA is trying to do here, which is to build a national resource - not because somebody in government thought it was a good idea, announced it, and then everyone trots along and makes it happen, but really to build it from bottom up and so to get national government buy-in is very, very important. I think if the local LGA people who are here, including the LGA members in councils, together with Tesco's and perhaps a few other big companies could, together with the RDA networks, really put pressure on government, I will do my bit with other political colleagues, then hopefully we can get the sort of buy-in that can make this information portal really work at a national level. And I think we should not lose that as we approach the end of the conference.

The other thing that I just wanted to say to our Tesco's colleague, clearly as we all know, the government has decided that really bridging the skills gap, the 7.5 million new skills training places, is a very important way of offering to low-skilled, sometimes poorly paid, sometimes poorly protected workers, the message that you are very much in the economy, your jobs are not being taken away. It is a big conclusion that has been come to, people may have their own views about it. But again for the RDA networks that are represented in this room, with European Social funding by the way - Europe has got its part to play in all this - delivering on those pledges, so that unskilled or low-skilled workers really see that they are being helped, that they are being included, that their part of cohesion is also part of this debate.

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Working together: coordinating strategies for migrant workers

Better coordination: A union perspective

Presentation by Sean Bamford TUC



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Scope

- Benefits of migrant workers
- Profile of A8 migrants
- Migrants problems and those of the host community
- Working together

Benefits of Migration

- Fills skill shortages and jobs existing workforce does not want to do
- Provides greater economic growth- migrant workers contributed £6 billion to output in 2006
- Migrant workers are net contributors to the Exchequer

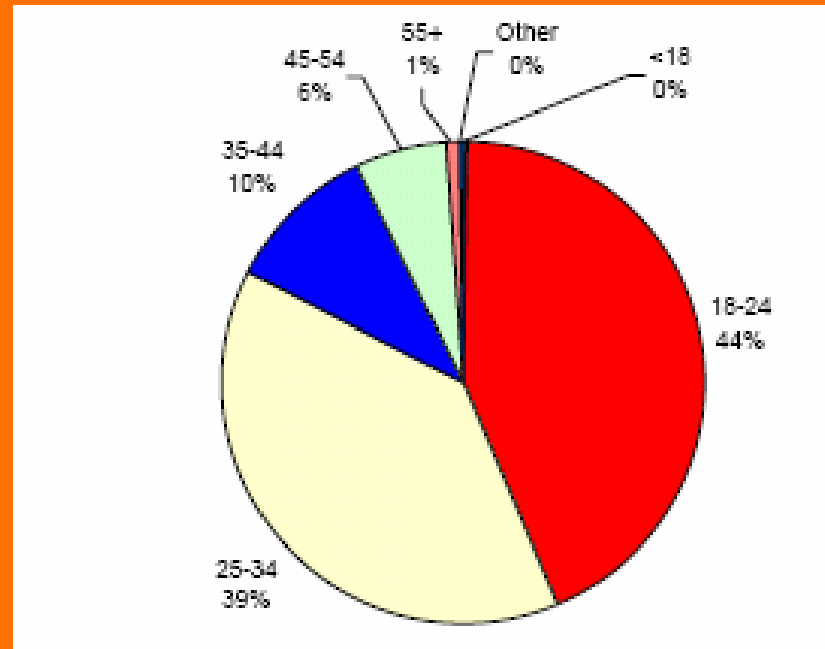


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Intended Length of Stay

- Less than 12 months 55%
- 3 – 6 months 2%
- 6 – 11 months 3%
- 1 to 2 years 5%
- More than 2 years 9%
- Do not know 26%

Age of Registered Workers



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Dependants of Registered Workers

- 7% registered May 2004 – March 2007 declared dependants living in UK
- Number of dependants as proportion of the number of registered workers was 17% in Q1 2007 as opposed to 12% in Q1 2006



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Migration Impact Forum (MIF)

Earlier in the summer, RSCGs were written to and asked to consider five areas that A8 and A2 migration could impact on:

Health

Education

Housing

Crime

Cohesion

Within these areas, key things to focus on were **local experiences, information gaps, and local best practice**

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MIF - Numbers

All areas have reported an increase in economic migration due to A8 migrants. Some places were not expecting them.

Most areas made use of WRS data to analyse the number and characteristics of A8 migrants.



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MIF - Housing

Impact is varied. Some areas (including the South West) emphasised little impact, and London observed that migrants form fewer households.

Four areas noted increased pressure on affordable private housing and rent levels.

Some areas presented a picture of A8 migrants living in overcrowded and poor quality housing.

Many of the areas noted migrants being accommodated in poor quality housing was due to unscrupulous landlords. It was also suggested that migrants were less likely to complain if their accommodation was tied to their work.

Social housing was not an issue in relation to A8 migrants (they have restricted access) – although there was the suggestion that it could be in the future.



MIF – Health

Many regions pointed to the young demographic and implicit good health of recent arrivals.

The North West emphasised that 13 per cent of NHS staff were migrants.

Sheffield and the East Midlands have noted an increase in the caseloads of GPs and the need for interpreters. There were some instances of confusion over entitlements.

The East of England, North Lincolnshire and Southampton have all noted instances of A&E being used in place of a GP surgery.

HIV and TB were singled out as specific diseases related to migration (but these do not necessarily relate to A8 migrants).



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MIF - Crime and disorder

Areas noted that there had been reports of increases in certain low level crimes, such as driving offences (e.g. uninsured vehicles, driving without a seatbelt) and anti-social behaviour.

Most areas noted the increase in translation costs.

Some areas mentioned barriers to reporting crimes including language and unawareness of British law.

There are concerns of migrants as victims of unscrupulous gangmasters and landlords, often due to the migrants' poor English and lack of knowledge about their rights. The difficulty of prosecuting migrants' landlords due to the transiency of migrants was noted.



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MIF - Employment was also mentioned in responses

All regions noted the economic benefits of recent migration, both directly and indirectly. They cited good attitudes to the work of migrants who were filling important skill gaps.

None of the regions noted robust evidence of wage depression caused by migration. But some emphasised that recently arrived migrant workers are paid low wages, and that some are unaware of the minimum wage.

Most regions reported exploitation of migrant workers that unfairly reduced their wages through deductions.

A8 migrants are disproportionately employed in certain sectors (e.g. agriculture, tourism, care). Areas suggested that these areas are now reliant on these people.

Most areas noted that A8 workers were overqualified for the jobs that they were doing, and there was the suggestion that these skills should be used more effectively.

Migrant Exploitation

- Unlawful deduction for accommodation
- Deductions for travel
- Deductions for tax not passed on to Inland Revenue etc
- Overtime not paid (both in terms of time and rates)
- Non – payment of wages
- No paid holidays
- Agencies obscure employment relations
- Unsafe working



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Action

- Enforce rights
- Provide information
- Improve planning to ensure a better allocation of central resources



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Enforce Rights (1)

- Need for Government, Unions and employers to work together
- The law must be upheld
 - Workers rights respected
 - The unscrupulous driven out of the supply chain



Enforce Rights (2)

Need to get various enforcement Agencies need to work together e.g. HSI, GLA, Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate, LA, NMW

- Need to remove barriers to sharing information
- Put an obligation on them to share information

Need for greater resources



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Provision of Information

Not just important as a step in a process to ensure workers employment rights are respected

MIF shows a lack of knowledge can impact in other areas e.g. crime, medical services

There is a need to share resources and expertise e.g. TUC & Citizens Advice service





**The need for data sharing in population statistics
development
Roma Chappell
ONS Centre for Demography**

The importance of migration

- Population statistics widely used:
 - Resource allocation, planning and monitoring, reporting
- They require high quality estimates of the components of population change
- Migration is one of the major drivers of change
- Migration statistics that feed into population change are based on the UN definition of a long-term migrant:
 - Someone who comes to the UK (or leaves), for any reason including work or study, for a period of at least a year

Method used to estimate population

Cohort Component Method

Estimated resident population at time T



Natural Change - add births, subtract deaths



International Migration - add inflows, subtract outflows



Internal Migration - add inflows, subtract outflows

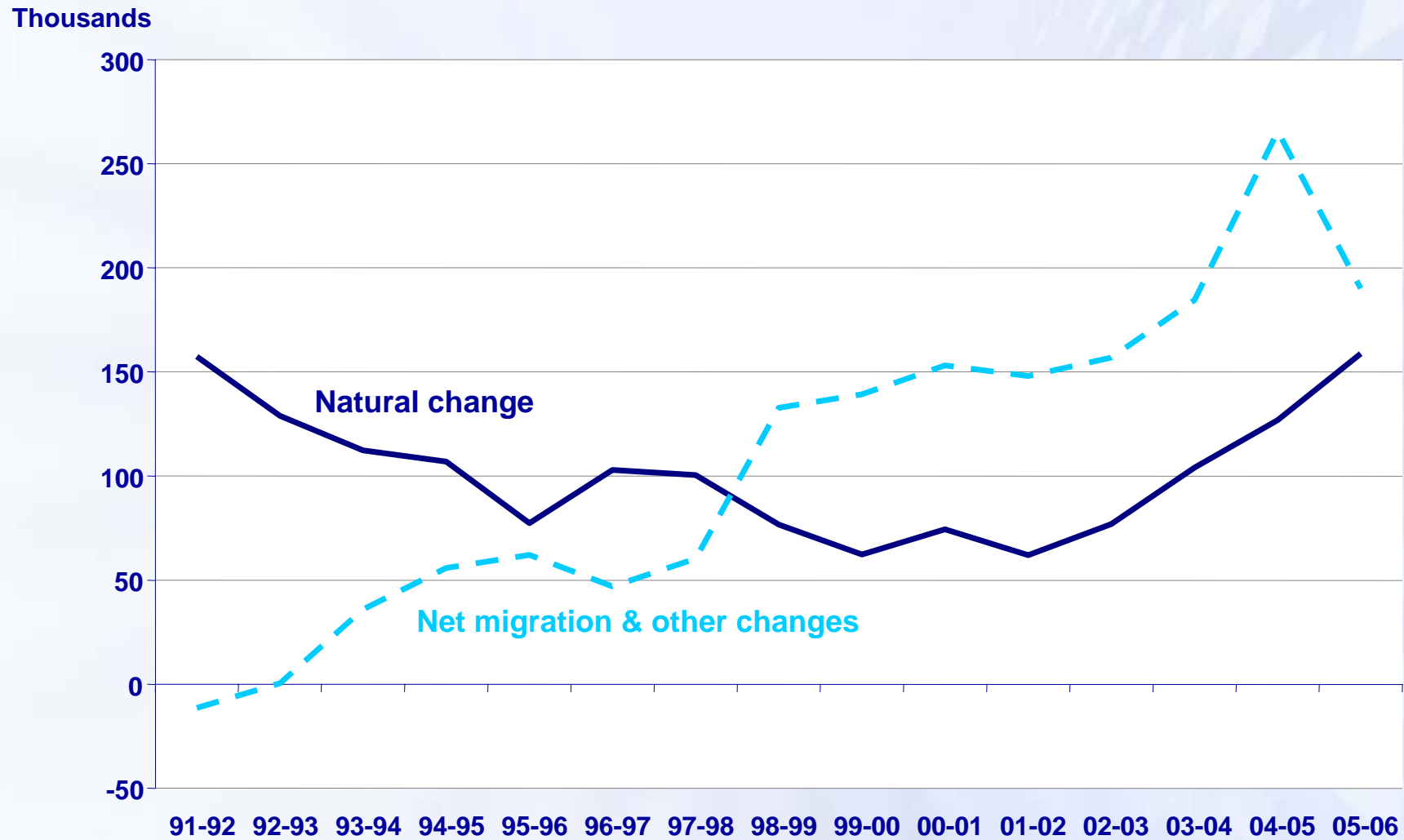


Special Populations - UK armed forces, foreign armed forces and dependants, prisoners, school boarders

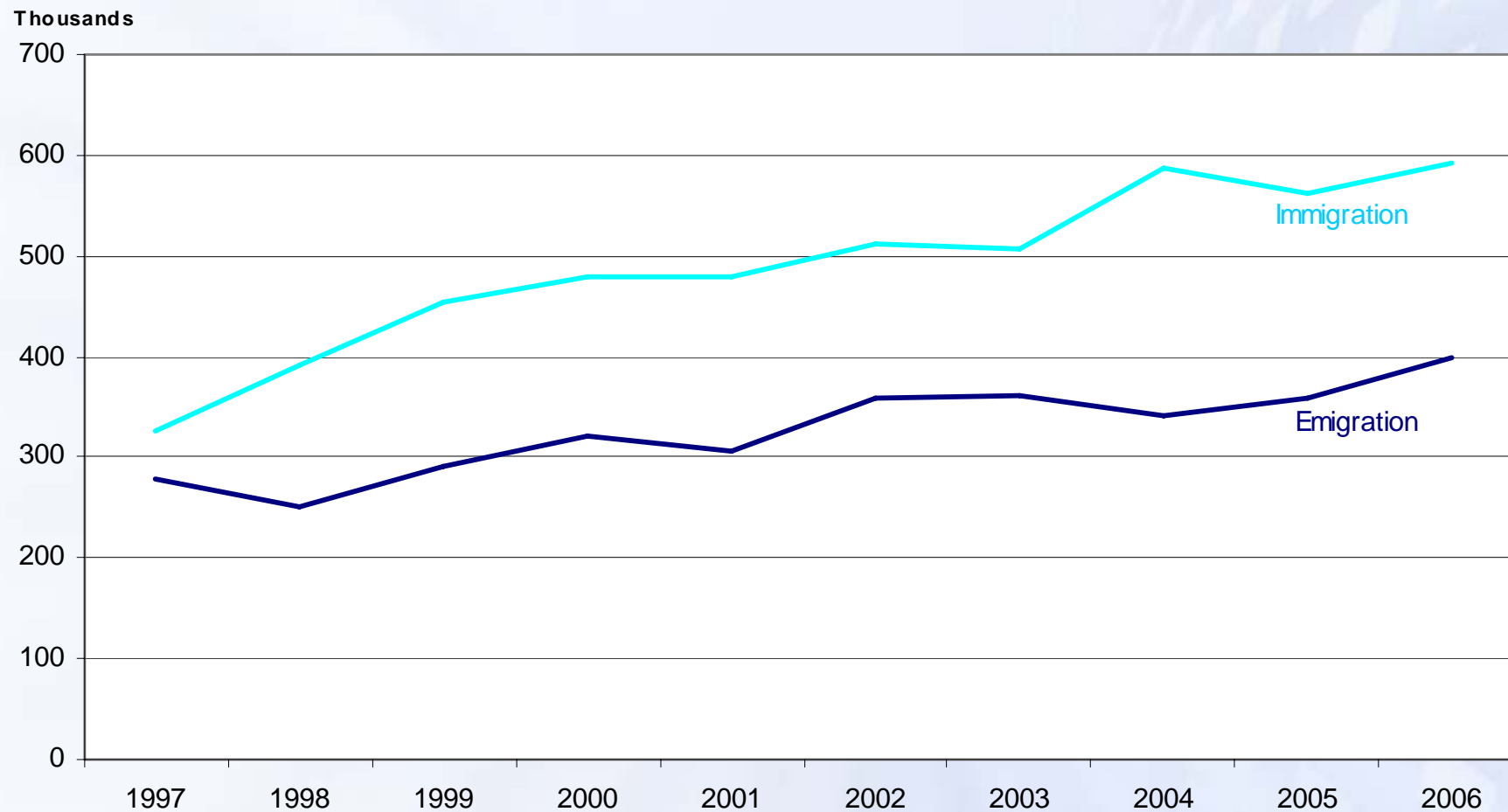


Estimated resident population at time T+1

Components of population change



Estimates of Total International Migration



Improving migration and population statistics

- No single, comprehensive source of migration data exists
- New sources will help for national estimates or for some groups of migrants
 - E.g. E-Borders; Points Based System
- Improvement strategy requires
 - making better use of surveys
 - making better use of administrative information that is or may become available
 - and improving information from different types of sources through combining them using statistical techniques
 - triangulation of sources

Looking towards 2011

- 2011 Census benchmark:
 - Prepare for rebasing of population estimates
- How?
 - Improve mid-year estimates
 - Input to development of Census population estimates
 - Improvements via new and enhanced alternative sources
 - Make more use of statistical techniques
 - Work collaboratively with other data owners across government
- Revisions Policy

Task Force recommendations

- **Obtain more information about migrants as they enter or leave the country**
- **Obtain more comprehensive and timely information about migrants living in this country**
- **Use linkage to obtain better information relating migrants' intentions at entry to the UK to subsequent events, such as employment, having a child and when they leave the country**
- **Provision of more timely, robust key indicators of migrant numbers**
- **Bring together all the statistics collected across Government on migration and migrants in a single UK-wide report, as there is currently no single official source**

Progress in 2007

- Changes implemented:
 - New methods for improved distribution of international migrants in local population estimates
 - revisions to population statistics based on these methods
 - Short-term migration feasibility report and estimates (experimental national, London/non-London)
- Improvements to data collection at ports:
 - IPS out-migrants sample size increased
 - Port Survey Review
- Coherent Reporting:
 - Planning forthcoming consultation
 - Quarterly information on NiNos issued (from April)
 - Worker Registration Scheme data made available at local level
 - Report comparing some key administrative sources in terms of their potential use for estimating population/migration
- Working with external experts:
 - Local Authority Case Study reports

2008 Deliverables

- Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007
 - includes new data sharing powers
- Initial port survey review recommendations:
 - Optimise sampling at regional airports that attract migrants
- E-borders programme initiated
- Improving surveys to identify migrants better:
 - New continuous household survey
 - Feasibility study on a communal establishment survey
 - Enhanced set of migration questions on surveys
- New health source of migration data flows replace existing sources
- Initial migration models developed to support enhanced statistical methods
- Introducing coherent reporting

2009

- Continue work on better use of administrative sources:
 - Making better use of aggregate sources in existing methods
 - Short-term migration estimates at local levels
 - Piloting record linkage subject to legal gateways
- Initial data from new sources:
 - e-Borders, Point Based System and new health source
 - Improved data on students from Higher Education data
- Possible revisions to local population and migration estimates in advance of local government finance settlement
- Continue survey enhancements:
 - Routine migration module on IHS
 - Piloting communal establishments survey

Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 – Key Provisions

- Creation of a new body – the Statistics Board, a non-Ministerial Department reporting directly to Parliament.
- Remit covers the whole UK statistical system.
- Overall objective: *“To promote and safeguard the quality of official statistics that serve the public good”*.
- ONS to become the ‘executive office’ of the Board.

Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 - Data Sharing Provisions

Act will allow two-way sharing of data between Statistics Board and public authorities/Devolved Administrations for statistical purposes, subject to the following safeguards:-

- (i) only possible where otherwise prohibited by law or public authority/DA has no power;
- (ii) subject to bilateral Ministerial agreement;
- (iii) sharing only for specific purposes and subject to public interest test; and,
- (iv) Parliamentary approval.

Data Sharing – Making better use of Administrative Data

- To improve population and migration statistics.
- To facilitate work on 2011 Census.
- To reduce respondent burden.
- To support validation and quality assurance.
- To meet efficiency targets.
- To respond to increasing demands for more sophisticated statistics/analysis.

Information

Website

www.statistics.gov.uk/imps (then select 'Updates')

Contact

imps@ons.gov.uk