



COSLA Response to the MAC Call for Evidence on the Review of Migrant Employment in Low-skilled Work

Introduction

1. Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) is the representative voice of Scottish local government and we represent the interests of all 32 Scottish Local Authorities. COSLA also acts as the employers' organisation on behalf of Scottish Local Authorities.
2. COSLA Migration, Population and Diversity (MPD) Team works specifically on migration issues. We work with a range of key partners including the Home Office, the Scottish Government and stakeholders from the public, private and voluntary sector to ensure that migrants are welcomed and integrated into Scotland and that the demographic needs of the country are met.
3. This response has been prepared by COSLA in consultation with our member councils and has been endorsed by the COSLA Strategic Migration Partnership Board. We requested feedback from all 32 local authorities on their views and experiences of the degree of impacts of migrant workers in their areas. The request was sent out to Chief Executives, Chief Housing Officers, Directors of Corporate Policy, Directors of Personnel, Directors of Social Work, Heads of Education, and the Equalities Officer Network. We received 7 responses from the following local authorities: East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Perth & Kinross, Aberdeenshire and West Dunbartonshire.
4. As might be expected, these local authorities reflect a diverse picture in terms of numbers of migrant workers in their area. The 2011 Scottish census results provide the latest area profiles and give some idea of the diversity of each local authority. The question on country of birth is of particular interest in this regard, as illustrated in Table 1, below.

Table 1: Country of Birth

	Scotland	Perth & Kinross	Glasgow City	North Lanarkshire	North Ayrshire	East Renfrewshire	West Dunbartonshire	Aberdeenshire
All people	5,295,403	146,652	593,245	337,727	138,146	90,574	90,720	252,973
% other EU countries (not UK or Rep Ireland)	2.6	3.4	3.0	1.3	0.9	0.9	0.9	3.0
% other countries (outside the EU)	4.0	3.2	8.5	1.5	1.4	3.5	1.7	2.8

Source: Scottish Census 2011

5. Also, if we are to look at the impact of migration from the EU accession states in these local areas through the total Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) registrations from May 2004 – April 2011, Glasgow City Council has received the second largest proportion of WRS registrations (behind Edinburgh) in Scotland with 10,905 registrations, Perth & Kinross Council is third with 10,300 registrations and Aberdeenshire has the fifth largest proportion of WRS with 7,450 registrations. North Lanarkshire received 3,080 WRS registrations. At the other end, North Ayrshire received 380, East Renfrewshire 330 and West Dunbartonshire 135 WRS registrations. However, when analysing registrations as a proportion of workforce jobs, Perth & Kinross registrations constitute 23.4% of their workforce, Aberdeenshire 14.1 %, Glasgow 3.9% and North Lanarkshire 3.5%¹. Of course the WRS data has limitations. For instance, it does not account for non-registration; it does not record outflows; and, does not record longer-term residency trends.
6. Some of the local authorities commented on the lack of statistical evidence to answer the questions in the Call for Evidence. However, they have drawn upon the available data and also informed anecdotal evidence. East Renfrewshire asked us to share a report they published in 2007 on A8 Nationals in East Renfrewshire – it is made clear when this response has drawn on that research. North Lanarkshire also shared their 2007 research on A8 migrant workers in the local area and it is clearly identified when this response is referring to the 2007 research.

Have migrants doing low-skilled jobs had an impact on local economy – local employers and businesses?

7. Perth & Kinross have highlighted the significant impact that migrant workers (primarily from A8 nation states) have had on the local workforce, predominantly serving the needs of agricultural seasonal sector and, to a somewhat lesser degree, the hospitality sector. Some of the key employers employing migrant workers in the Perth & Kinross area include:
 - Fishers Ltd;
 - 2 Sisters Food Group;
 - Crieff Hydro Hotel;
 - The Cooperative Farms;
 - ABP Ltd; and,
 - Taypack.
8. According to Glasgow, under-employment is evident amongst migrant workers, with common barriers such as access to employment services;

¹ McCollum, D., Cook, L., Platta, A., MacLeod, F. and Findlay, A. (2012) Spatial, sectoral and temporal trends in A8 migration to the UK 2004-2011 Evidence from the Worker Registration Scheme CPC Working Paper 17, ESRC Centre for Population Change, UK.

transference and recognition of overseas qualifications; a lack of understanding regarding application processes and English language proficiency highlighted. Whether this has a direct negative (or positive) impact upon the economy is difficult to quantify, as data at this level is either not available or collected. However, in terms of the economic contributions migrant workers make, it is clear that migrant workers have the capacity to make higher contributions, yet are unable to do so due to the aforementioned structural and practical issues. Please note, under employment isn't purely restricted to migrant workers, as many of the settled population experience the same difficulties in finding suitable employment.

9. According to North Lanarkshire Council, many local employers depend on migrant labour particularly at the low skilled end of the market. This has allowed business and companies to grow successfully. A local example is Albert Bartlett & Sons Airdrie Ltd – around a third of their workforce is made up of a stable group of migrant workers. The company has expanded and grown successfully and part of this has been facilitated by the availability of this workforce. There are many similar companies based in North Lanarkshire but the council does not hold the data to assess what the overall impact on the economy has been.
10. As stated in the introductory section, proportionate to the Scottish levels of migrants, North Ayrshire has a relatively lower level of migrant population. Within North Ayrshire, there are 2,700 white and ethnic minority (not UK born) residents who account for 3.2% of the area's working age population. 2,100 of this group are in employment which is the equivalent to a 77.8% employment rate. This is compared to an overall employment rate for North Ayrshire which is 62.2% and the Scottish average of 70.7%. This grouping therefore has a higher employment rate than the general North Ayrshire population.
11. East Renfrewshire Council state that anecdotal evidence suggests that the main countries of origin of recent migrant labour locally are Poland and Lithuania and the numbers are so few that they won't have an impact either positively or negatively on their local economy.
12. In 2007, East Renfrewshire carried out a small survey of A8 migrants (21 respondent) and results from the research suggests that employment amongst A8 migrant workers in East Renfrewshire is concentrated in manufacturing (over a quarter), food processing and health sectors compared with A8 workers in Scotland and the UK as a whole. Anecdotal evidence also showed a concentration of A8 migrant workers in the hospitality sector – this is not reflected in the survey results perhaps due to the small sample size.
13. From a West Dunbartonshire Council perspective there is no evidence to suggest that migrant workers doing low paid jobs have had an impact on the local economy.

Have migrants doing low-skilled jobs had a social impact?

14. Glasgow cites there is some evidence suggesting certain areas of the city experience substantial pressure in delivering services to their respective communities. Although increased demand has been highlighted by the services, quantifiable data regarding the characteristics of service users isn't available, nor are the exact services experiencing such demand. There is anecdotal evidence that advice and information services, directly provided and funded by the Council are under pressure. There will however be a variety of contributing factors (including unemployment), and the impact of migration alone cannot be separated.
15. According to Perth & Kinross, there is a very direct link between low skilled jobs, English language competency and impact on services. Regardless of the educational status and skills acquired in the home country, once in Perth & Kinross migrants cannot participate in the economy at the same level and often find themselves in low-skilled jobs if their English is of not good enough standard. Likewise, the language barrier exaggerates the impact particular individuals might have on services as it proves more difficult and more resource-heavy to achieve the same outcomes. At the same time, it has been observed that that same barrier keeps individuals away from reaching out to service providers. This has been highlighted by the work undertaken by MEAD Project in particular.
16. The MEAD (Minority Ethnic Access Development) Project provides support services and has dealt with 774 individual clients (defined as individuals requiring support with two or more separate issues) in three target ethnic community groups in the last year alone: Chinese (126 clients), East European (546 clients), and South Asian (102 clients). Over the same time frame, the number of ad hoc enquiries relating to single queries received by MEAD was 3,440. 95% of Chinese, 93% of Eastern European and 26% of South Asian individuals using the service required language support from the MEAD team to communicate with a target service provider. This has led to the development of Language Base which is a start-up Interpreting Service social enterprise addressing specifically the local interpreting and translation needs within the public sector, the wider public and the business community. With MEAD Project now well established in the Perth & Kinross area, they have been providing on-going regular support to individuals and other services, including Housing, Community Care and Welfare Rights.

Housing and homelessness

17. According to Perth & Kinross, there is currently a large demand for and under-supply of affordable housing in the area. The WRS information held previously and market intelligence clearly indicates migrants often find themselves at lowest wage levels, which has led to an increase in demand for

social rented housing. However, anecdotal evidence suggests migrant workers by and large live in privately rented accommodation.

18. The North Ayrshire Housing Register (NAHR) records demand for social housing in North Ayrshire. The NAHR is the common housing register supported by North Ayrshire Council and the three largest Housing Associations in the area. The NAHR does not collect nationality information from applicants, only ethnicity. Anecdotally, there have been a number of migrant workers living on the Isle of Arran. However, when Irvine Housing Association (IHA) reviewed the NAHR to let 16 new supply social rented properties earlier this year they found that only a small number of the applicants were migrant workers. One property was let to a Polish migrant worker who has been living and working on Arran for six years. IHA are of the opinion that there may be a proportionately higher level of migrant workers looking for social housing on the Isle of Arran compared to other parts of North Ayrshire but that these numbers are not significant.
19. According to North Ayrshire, the impact from a homeless perspective has also been minimal. In the financial year 2012/13 there was only one approach from a migrant worker who sought assistance when their accommodation arrangements broke down. In this instance the Homeless Assessment team were able to negotiate with their landlord for their return to their private rented flat. There have been no approaches from migrant workers to the Homeless Assessment team in this current financial year. North Ayrshire conclude that there is very little social impact on the demand for housing or the delivery of housing services in North Ayrshire from migrant workers.
20. Results from the East Renfrewshire 2007 survey indicates nearly two-thirds of respondents (thirteen people) stated that they rented accommodation from a private landlord. Four respondents rented their accommodation from a housing association or from the council. This is consistent with anecdotal evidence that A8 migrants tend to live in private rented accommodation which in East Renfrewshire is particularly pertinent because of the existing pressure on the supply of affordable housing and the pressure on housing costs.
21. According to North Lanarkshire's 2007 research on A8 migrant workers, most migrant workers were living in the private rented sector. Rents appeared to be quite high and some properties relatively poorly furnished. North Lanarkshire did not find evidence of overcrowding although some workers have experienced this on a temporary basis, when they first arrived in the UK. Workers have tended to find employment first and housing later, so many have been forced into unsatisfactory conditions for a short period on arrival.
22. According to North Lanarkshire 2007 research, increasingly migrant workers are turning to the social rented sector for accommodation and there is a growing awareness of how to apply for housing. Generally speaking, the

housing which has been offered and accepted has been in low demand areas of council housing, but migrant workers appear willing to take on tenancies in such areas. Partly this may be because they believe it will be for a finite period, after which they will return to their home country. Partly it has been suggested that the properties are still relatively desirable, in comparison with some social rented housing in Eastern Europe.

23. The 2007 survey of A8 nationals in East Renfrewshire found that over half of respondents (thirteen) had experienced some form of homelessness. This was mainly in the form of living temporarily with friends and family (nine) upon arrival in Scotland, while four respondents had stayed in a bed and breakfast or a hostel. A quarter (five respondents) reported having experienced homelessness for at least three weeks, and two respondents had experienced this for more than a month.
24. Within West Dunbartonshire Council migrants doing low paid jobs have not had an impact on the demand for or delivery of health services, education, housing, social care and policing. There has been no evidenced impact on the well being of existing residents.

Education – schools

25. From an education perspective, the provision of education services has had to adapt to the increasing number of languages (and associated cultures) within Glasgow schools. For example Shawlands Academy in the Southside of Glasgow now has over 50 languages spoken by its pupils, whilst Annette Street Primary is nearly completely bilingual. Obviously, this presents challenges in ensuring adequate support is provided for teachers and pupils alike, however, it must also be noted that the positive impact of exposing young children to a cross-section of cultures and languages cannot be underestimated. The Education Inspectorate has commended Glasgow's approach to integration in Education in the past.
26. According to Perth & Kinross, there has been an on-going year-on-year increase in the numbers of bilingual pupils in schools. Around 45% of bilingual pupils in Perth & Kinross schools have been Polish speakers in recent years. Perth & Kinross Council currently employs, among the wider pool of Community Link Workers, 2 bilingual workers specifically supporting the Polish families in pursuing education. This is required due to communication issues and lack of integration of pupils and families with the wider community and the school environment.
27. For Aberdeenshire, the significant increase in migrant population has had an impact on schools – some classes have 70% of children from migrant families. This means the curriculum and support given has had to be adjusted. Aberdeenshire has also stated that parents may not engage as easily in school life and ways have to be found to accommodate them. There is a

need for additional resources in the early stages of children’s life at school. However, there are many positive aspects, e.g. a good educational ethos.

28. North Lanarkshire has also seen a gradual rise in both primary and secondary school pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) support needs as a percentage of school rolls (see table 2).

Table 2: North Lanarkshire Schools

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
EAL primary	1292	1337	1447	1492
EAL secondary	733	782	832	996
Total EAL pupils	2025	2119	2279	2488
Total pupil roll	48076	48016	48012	47736
% of roll	4.2%	4.4%	4.7%	5.2%

Adult education and ESOL

29. In Glasgow, provision of English language services is perhaps the most widely cited example of a service experiencing increased demand due to migration. The over-subscription of this service, in conjunction with budget restrictions has contributed to a situation whereby demand substantially outstrips the provision. In turn, restrictions on the ability to access and acquire the necessary level of English language skills undoubtedly restrict an individual’s ability both to access employment, and to progress when in employment.

30. Last year, Perth & Kinross Adult Literacy and Numeracy Partnership provided English language education to 308 ESOL Learners aged 16+. The demand for English classes regularly outstrips supply.

Health

31. In Perth & Kinross, health services have been impacted with increasing numbers of migrants in need of care where the language barrier makes it difficult to provide it effectively. There is now an additional concern coming to light with increasing numbers of migrants that are in need of mental health support and therapy which can be extremely difficult to provide due to language barriers.

Police

32. According to Perth & Kinross, the cases brought to court by local law enforcement involving migrants have shown a considerable proportion of offenders from within the migrant worker population breaking bail conditions. It is thought that there is a lack of awareness and understanding of the implications of certain legal procedures. Typical charges involve alcohol-related incidents and domestic violence. Additional interpreting services are required regularly to deal with cases involving the migrant population.

What would you do if you were not able to recruit migrants for low-skilled jobs?

33. According to North Lanarkshire, for companies in their area with the resources they would likely move production abroad or recruit less productive local people and this would have a negative impact on the local economy.

What are advantages and disadvantages of employing migrant workers/UK born workers?

34. According to North Lanarkshire, migrant workers are likely to be more employable with positive traits including higher levels of education, previous work experience, being mobile and flexible to respond to employers needs, and a stronger work ethic. On the other hand, local people applying for low skilled jobs are more likely to have poorer or no educational qualifications, as well as other barriers associated with childcare costs, worklessness, health and wellbeing. The council was unable to assess whether or not migrant employees are over qualified for the jobs they are doing.
35. According to Perth & Kinross, work ethic is a commonly quoted characteristic of the migrant workforce that employers seem to find distinguishes them from UK-born workers. This, and the migrants' wider willingness to work, seems to be the reason for employers' preference to employ migrant workers.
36. Perth & Kinross state that migrant workers continue to make a considerable contribution to the agricultural industry. The Gangmasters Licensing Authority has confirmed word of mouth and personal networks is a very strong recruitment channel for the migrant workforce in this sector in Perth & Kinross. There is a mix of direct employment and agency-sourced labour with both agencies and farms also widely utilising online recruitment and marketing channels, including targeting workforce audiences in select countries abroad. It is clear, with recruitment agencies supplying workforce from targeted countries, that there is a preference for migrant labour.
37. It is also recognised that the care sector provides employment to migrant workers in Perth & Kinross, predominantly of Pilipino, Indian and Polish origin. 88.2% of employees in this sector are employed directly by their employer – a marked increase from 67.6% 3 years before. Several employers declared some of their staff had been recruited from other care establishments. These observations signify a move of employers towards direct employment and word of mouth in the care sector.
38. In Aberdeenshire, the social care sector is aware of migrant workers operating in lower skilled posts. There are small numbers working for the Council but there are more migrant workers working in the private care

sector. They are valued employees given the pressures on recruitment and it is not straightforward to identify an alternative source of employees. Aberdeenshire are not aware that there are other residents who have not been able to take up posts as a result of migrant workers holding these posts. There are some examples of language or cultural issues but this has not been picked up in any significant nature.

39. There would be no impact within West Dunbartonshire if they were not able to recruit migrants for low skilled jobs.

Conclusion

40. The responding local authorities reflected a diverse picture in terms of numbers of migrant workers in their areas and the evidence we received reflected this diversity. The majority of local authorities commented on the lack of statistical evidence to answer MAC's questions. Glasgow cites the difficulty in providing quantifiable data as partly due to the available data not differentiating between migrant workers and those from the settled community and/or the difficulties in accessing detailed breakdowns of service use. The responding local authorities have therefore drawn on the available data, informed anecdotal evidence and local area research. The overwhelming majority of evidence we received, Glasgow apart, related to migrant workers from A8 countries.
41. In general, those local authorities that have a significant migrant workforce in their local area emphasised the positive benefits of migrant workers on the local economy. In terms of impact on services, the evidence clearly suggests that migrant workers primarily live in private rented accommodation. There was evidence of impact on school services and the three local authorities that mentioned schools noted an on going year-on-year increase in children requiring English as an Additional Language (EAL) services. Perth & Kinross, which has a significant migrant workforce, also noted an impact on health and interpreting service costs. And both Glasgow and Perth & Kinross cited a significant impact on adult English language education
42. The evidence relating to the advantages and disadvantages of employing migrant workers was overwhelming focused on the positive attributes of migrant workers and the contribution they make to local businesses and the local economy.

Lorraine Cook

COSLA Migration, Population and Diversity (MPD) Team

T: 0131 474 9243

E: Lorraine@cosla.gov.uk