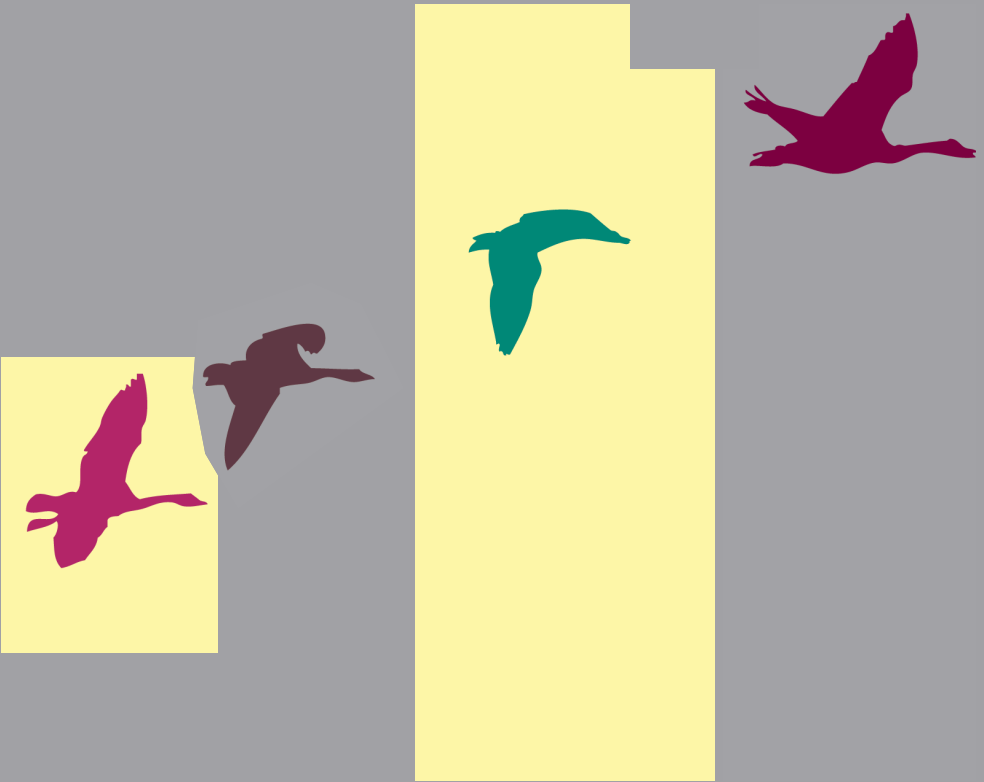




# new migration, changing dynamics, local responses

learning from the migration  
excellence programme





## **Improvement and Development Agency for local government (IDeA)**

The IDeA works for local government improvement so councils can serve people and places better. We use experienced councillors and senior officers, known as peers, who support and challenge councils to improve themselves.

We enable councils to share good practice through the national Beacons scheme and regional local government networks. The best ideas are put on the IDeA Knowledge website.

Our Leadership Academy programmes help councillors become better leaders so they can balance the diverse demands of people living in the same community.

The IDeA also promotes the development of local government's management and workforce. We advise councils on improving customer service and value for money. We help councils work through local partnerships to tackle local priorities such as health, children's services and economic development.

The IDeA is owned by the Local Government Association and belongs to local government. Together we lead local government improvement.

[www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk)

## **The Migration Excellence Programme**

The Migration Excellence Programme ran from early 2007 to October 2008. It was delivered by the IDeA and funded by the Department for Communities & Local Government.

Its aim has been to help local authorities manage effectively the local impacts of migration, with a particular focus on migrant workers arriving from EU Accession States since 2004.

It has promoted learning and good practice across the local government sector and has provided direct support to councils in eleven areas, in order to build their leadership capacity and operational capability for managing migration issues.

# learning from the migration excellence programme

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## 1. introduction

The movement of migrant workers to the UK from the eastern European countries that have become part of the enlarged EU has presented councils with a set of new challenges. Significant numbers of migrant workers have arrived in the UK, many in localities with little recent experience of such migration. The implications for local services and, potentially, for community cohesion have been considerable. Councils have found themselves stepping up their focus on migration as an issue and responding in ways that have contributed greatly to minimising problems and maximising the advantages of this new source of labour.

Nonetheless, the challenges for councils have been considerable – not least in terms of resource strains and the need for rapid learning on the best way to plan for and respond to this new migration. During 2007 and 2008, councils in 11 areas, in each one of the English regions, participated in projects supported by the IDeA's Migration Excellence Programme. All had experienced significant recent east European migration. Many are rural areas where migration was a relatively new issue. The councils were selected to participate in the programme on the basis that they had identified worthwhile initiatives that were needed in their local areas to respond to migration but which could benefit from outside support. The programme provided IDeA peer and consultant support, with between £10,000 and £17,000 of funding for each area.

This report presents the learning and experience that has been gained from the Migration Excellence Programme. It examines the overall context of council work on migration before looking at the specific learning that has arisen in the programme. A series of 'snapshot' and 'talking point' panels throughout the report look at the experience of councils in the programme and key issues such as provision of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). A set of full case studies from the programme are available as separate publications and on the IDeA website. The report concludes by looking ahead. It observes that, while migration numbers will vary from year to year, the era of more dynamic worker movement within the EU is here to stay and it will be important for councils to continue to take a lead in their local areas.

# learning from the migration excellence programme

## 2. executive summary

The rapidity, extent and churn of recent migration from eastern European countries have presented challenges for councils. At an overall level, the arrival of migrant workers has benefited the economy and estimates show that migrant workers add to the public finances (1). At a local level, though, the impact can place strains on public services. Councils up and down the country have reported that official calculations of population, and hence funding, are out of step with their 'on the ground' experience.

The Migration Excellence Programme has highlighted the vital role that migrant workers play in the local economies of many areas. The body of local authority experience on migration is growing fast and, with it, the confidence of local councils to take an effective and positive lead. Many of the initiatives carried out by councils in the Migration Excellence Programme have focused on getting the best data and intelligence on the extent of migration in their local area and ensuring that exact needs are identified.

This report highlights a number of ways in which councils are building on the 'baseline' data provided by national insurance and worker registrations to develop a more complete quantitative and qualitative picture of migration in their area. It shows how many

councils have found that, while good quantitative data is an essential starting point, it is the more 'qualitative' insight they are able to gather from actual discussion with communities that is most useful in informing priorities.

There has been a very strong emphasis in the Migration Excellence Programme on councils learning from each other. In many cases, this has been instrumental in raising awareness among members and officers of the importance of migration issues and the role that their council and partners can play. The report highlights the key learning from the programme. In particular, the ways in which councils on the programme have:

- built awareness and gained greater buy-in to migration work
- judged the best types of interventions and activity
- engaged effectively with communities
- improved cross-departmental and partnership work
- ensured migration work is sustained or enhanced.

The report also illustrates initiatives covering specific issues such as tension monitoring, provision of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and inspection of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). Gaining the trust of migrant workers is a key factor underpinning the success of such work. West Wiltshire District



Council, for example, used its relations with migrant workers and community groups to conduct a survey that immediately resulted in 75 additional properties being added to the HMO database and inspected to ensure they meet legislative requirements.

Close collaboration with the voluntary and community services sector is playing an essential part in establishing trust and ensuring that migration work is rooted in local needs. As well as working with the third sector to engage with migrant workers, some councils and their partners in the programme are exploring ways to involve the sector in joint commissioning. Information provision to migrant workers about living and working in this country also plays a part in establishing trust. Many councils are making this a foundation of interaction with migrant workers, with some drawing on the recent guidance available at [www.idea.gov.uk/migrantpacks](http://www.idea.gov.uk/migrantpacks)

Looking ahead, there are indications that, with changing economic conditions, the availability of migrant labour may be decreasing. Just as councils need to plan for rises in inward migration, so too they need to take account of outward migration and its impact on the local economy and service provision. Scenario planning by Wychavon Council in Worcestershire, for example, found that any significant drop in migrant labour availability would have serious consequences for local employers and the local economy as a whole. Such impacts may be greater as a result of the new quota system restricting wider non-EU migration. Finally, while some migrant workers will stay only for temporary periods, a proportion will settle and

become permanent users of services such as healthcare and education. Councils and their partners will need to judge and plan for this long-term impact on local services.

# learning from the migration excellence programme



## snapshot

### East Lindsey: getting the right foundations in place

#### **why?**

Until recently, East Lindsey in Lincolnshire had relatively few migrants in its community. This changed as employment patterns altered in the coastal leisure and hospitality sectors. However, members and staff in the council did not have evidence of the full implications and impact of the new migration. The district council wanted to take steps to establish the extent of new migrants and ensure that members and staff were better informed, so they could respond in the best manner.

#### **what?**

As part of its participation in the Migration Excellence Programme, the council used a mix of qualitative and quantitative information to build a picture of migration into the area. A peer councillor from another rural council that had responded positively to migration led a workshop and training session for councillors. The peer also led a visit of councillors and senior managers to Butlins at Skegness, a local major employer of migrant labour, to talk directly to migrant workers and their managers. A report compiling available migration data was produced and a survey of migrants was undertaken. More than four-fifths of registered migrants were found to be from EU Accession States, with a predominance of short-term migrants working in low pay sectors.

#### **outcomes?**

Having hard evidence on migration patterns and gaining insight into the experience of a similar rural council have been key building blocks for raising awareness within the council and informing work. The council is now able to be more pro-active. It is exploring, with the county council, a shared approach to information provision for migrant workers, including developing an information point in Skegness. One councillor has taken up the vice-chairmanship of the Strategic Migration Partnership of Local Government East Midlands and discussions are taking place with the Lincolnshire Community Foundation about the provision of language support for migrant workers.



### 3. migration: the changing context for councils

#### new EU migration – the context

The enlargement of the European Union (EU) eastward with the accession of eight new eastern European states (the so-called A8 countries) in May 2004 and the addition of Bulgaria and Romania (the A2 countries) in January 2007 has changed the dynamics of migration in and out of the UK. Workers from the new EU states have migrated within the EU in significant numbers. Many of them have come to the UK, often to areas that have not been used to inward population movements from abroad, at least in recent history.

Between 1 May 2004 and 10 June 2008 a cumulative total of 854,000 applications were approved in England under the worker registration scheme for workers from the A8 countries. More than two thirds (67%) of registrations were from Polish workers (2). Indeed, during 2005/06, Poland overtook India to become the most common foreign citizenship of people coming into Britain (3).

This new migration is proving much more dynamic than other migration phases. Many migrants do not stay. During the same 2005 and 2006 period, the number of Polish citizens emigrating from the UK rose to the extent that Polish citizens were in the top ten citizenships for emigration for the first time (4). The new migrants appear much more likely to move back to their countries of origin or to other EU states if economic conditions change. Back in 1991, 33 per cent of all immigrants intended to stay for one or two years but this had increased to 45

per cent by 2006 (ibid.). Moreover, one estimate suggests that around half of the A8 migrants that came to the UK since 2004 had already left the UK by 2008 (5).

The more dynamic nature of the new European migration has also been reflected recently in falling numbers of worker registrations by eastern and central Europeans coinciding with changing economic conditions – the fall in sterling, improved job prospects in migrants' home countries, and an uncertain economic outlook in the UK. Between April and June 2008 registrations fell to their lowest level since their countries joined the EU with 40,000 applications to the Worker Registration Scheme from A8 countries – a drop of 14,000 from the same period in 2007 and a fall of 9,000 from the first three months of 2008 (op. cit. 2). National Insurance data indicates some increase in the number of Bulgarians and Romanians arriving in the UK, with registrations for 2007/08 being some 30,000 higher than in the previous year (7).

Nonetheless, the numbers of eastern European migrant workers arriving remain high and their impact on local areas can be significant, especially where large numbers arrive in one area. Indeed, while two thirds of local authorities, saw new national insurance number registrations in the year to 2007/8 fall or remain unchanged, 7% of councils saw registrations increase by more than 20%, partly as a result of increases in Bulgarian and Romanian nationals (op. cit. 7).



# learning from the migration excellence programme



## snapshot

### Newcastle: gaining and retaining migrant skills

#### **why?**

Newcastle City Council is acutely aware that current demographic trends will reduce the numbers of young and skilled people, so one issue for the local economy is its ability to attract and retain skilled migrants. Although migrants often work in unskilled or low skilled work, many have been in higher skilled occupations in their home country. The council wanted to develop a programme that could discover and tap this resource.

#### **what?**

As part of its participation in the Migration Excellence Programme, the council tapped into some specialist training support to pilot the delivery of employment information courses for migrant workers from the Polish and Chinese communities. The courses comprised three sessions of three hours and were designed to give information and advice on matters such as making the most of existing qualifications, application and CV writing and interview skills.

#### **outcomes?**

Thirty people attended and the courses gave them greater confidence to use their skills, as well as an awareness that such skills are sought after by employers in the area. The project has reinforced relations with the migrant communities and added to the council's knowledge about how best to work with different groups.



## new EU migration – the challenges

The greater dynamism of the new European migration has posed new challenges for local authorities. The speed with which migration occurred following the 2004 extension of the EU resulted in significant population changes in some local areas. At the same time, the medium to long-term impact on councils has been much less certain compared to other migrations owing to the degree of churn among the new migrants, with a significant proportion coming to the UK to work for relatively short periods of time and then returning. Finally, the geographic spread of the migrants has been very diverse. While the largest absolute numbers have arrived in London and other large cities, many have gone to small town and rural areas with little history of international migration. Herefordshire, for example, experienced a tenfold increase in registered migrant workers over a three year period.

However, despite worries about cohesion and occasions where the migration issue has been exploited and migrants themselves have been scapegoated, community tensions have, in large part, been manageable. Nonetheless, the challenges in areas unaccustomed to migration can be quite fundamental, because local institutions lack experience of managing such issues and because the existing populations are relatively homogenous. In such areas, the potential impact on community cohesion has perhaps been greater than in areas used to diverse populations. Some councils have had to develop roles and responsibilities around migration that

were relatively new to them. Moreover, such councils, while certainly able to learn from peers in parts of the country, have often had to respond to circumstances that have been unique to their areas.

The importance of rooting strategies and responses in the specific circumstances and characteristics of each local area, while recognising the potential of common learning and solutions, has been key to the part that councils have played in managing and optimising the effect of migration on their localities. Such an approach has characterised local authority action and underpinned the main issues that councils have sought support for in the Migration Excellence Programme.

These main issues have been:

- developing leadership capacity and partnering arrangements, especially with the voluntary sector
- developing understanding of migrant numbers and characteristics, by improving local data and intelligence
- improving standards in housing and employment, and building links with landlords and employers of migrant workers
- engaging with new migrant communities, to provide them with local information and understand their service needs
- encouraging integration, by supporting opportunities for migrant and existing communities to meet and mix
- reducing community tensions, including work with local media and myth busting

# learning from the migration excellence programme

- developing the economic potential of migrant workers and assessing the economic risks if the supply of migrant labour were to dry up.



## snapshot

### Humber: nipping tension in the bud

#### why?

The Humber sub-region has not had a history of serious community tensions as a result of migrants, but some council staff, police and fire service officers became aware of low levels of abuse and intimidation in town centres at night. They were also conscious that dialogue with new migrant communities was patchy.

#### what?

The Migration Excellence Programme worked with the Humber Improvement Partnership (HIP). A multi-agency workshop was convened to hear about community tension monitoring systems established in other areas and to consider how such an approach could be used. A second workshop was convened with representatives of the voluntary and community sector to explore gaps in support for and relations with migrants.

#### outcomes?

Forty five staff from all the partnership organisations participated in the community tension monitoring workshop. The four councils in the HIP area agreed to develop tension monitoring systems, working with the police and fire services. Two of the councils are also now discussing joint commissioning of migrant support from community groups. The focus on the value and practicalities of tension monitoring for both councils and police authorities proved a spur to action.



## **new EU migration – new roles and responsibilities**

The range of issues where support has been provided as part of the Migration Excellence Programme illustrate both the challenges that councils have faced and the new roles and responsibilities and more pro-active profile on migration that councils have taken on. Dealing with migration has pitched some local councils, particularly in smaller towns and rural areas, into new territory. Many have re-examined their responsibilities and worked in ways that they have not worked before. Whether it has been in areas relatively unaccustomed to dealing with local inward migration or in areas with experience of migration, councils have found that a positive and pro-active approach has been beneficial. More councils have a clearer view about the overall role of migration in their local areas and economies and more are responding effectively to the impact of migration in relation to community cohesion, housing, education and the delivery of many local services.

# learning from the migration excellence programme



## snapshot

### King's Lynn and West Norfolk: developing an appreciation of community cohesion work

#### **why?**

The members of the local strategic partnership felt that they were insufficiently well equipped to understand and respond to migrant issues in the area. Migration had been a 'politically charged' topic in the 2007 elections with a lot of discussion about new migrants and, at times, a negative impact on community cohesion.

#### **what?**

As part of the Migration Excellence Programme, the council initiated a mix of initiatives to bring councillors and officers up to speed. Members attended two sessions about migration and cohesion. Councillors also gained first hand experience of the work of a neighbouring council, South Holland, which demonstrated the benefits of a more pro-active approach to community cohesion. Building on these two initiatives, senior managers in the Local Strategic Partnership used peer support for a visioning session to develop practical action to improve community cohesion in relation to new migration. In addition, two workshops were held with front line staff from the district council, the county council and other service providers. These focused on understanding the difficulties faced in responding to new migrants, the solutions that some had which could be shared with others, and the training and support needs.

#### **outcomes?**

Around 20 councillors attended at least one of the sessions or the visit to South Holland. The visit to South Holland, in particular, has increased the awareness of some councillors and senior managers of the need to build community cohesion and the importance of the council taking a lead. There is now greater awareness and use of a myth busting document produced by Churches Together in the area. The council has successfully bid for funding from GO-East to produce a spoken MP3 welcome pack in various languages. As a result of the workshops with front line staff, an online training module about migrants is being developed.



## talking point

### the provision of ESOL services

A big rise in demand for courses of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) is frequently reported by councils. Many EU accession state migrants arrive with a reasonable grasp of the English language, but this is not universal. Given evidence about the importance of learning the language quickly and the preference for learning English over providing translated material, ESOL provision is an important component in the response to migration.

ESOL courses vary widely in quality and provision is fragmented. The actual ESOL landscape is complex. There are few obvious pathways or signposting between providers and levels of training. Links are not often made to employers' needs.

Few employers are willing to fund provision and funding remains an issue.

The Migration Excellence Programme's support project with the London Borough of Ealing has focused on ESOL (see below). A report commissioned by the council as part of the programme found a strong drive to create a more strategic approach to the functioning of the employment and skills sector within Ealing, to target funding on areas of highest need and to improve partnership working in order to support residents by linking language learning to work skills.

# learning from the migration excellence programme



## snapshot

### Ealing: a clearer ESOL landscape

#### **why?**

The provision of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) services play a vital role in helping migrants participate in the labour market and in their local community. In Ealing in west London, ESOL demand significantly outstrips supply and does not always meet the needs of learners. The council's integration and community cohesion strategy recognised that organisations funding and providing ESOL could improve its quality, provision and coordination.

#### **what?**

Consultancy and peer support from the Migration Excellence Programme helped focus effort on examining the strategic context, extent and funding of ESOL provision. A kite mark proposal for ESOL was ruled out and instead priority was given to understanding the views of stakeholders and ESOL providers. The work identified a willingness among local providers to develop a more strategic approach.

#### **outcomes?**

With the help of a report from the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), the council has been able to pave the way for a better strategic vision for ESOL by gaining a clearer overview of provision, funding and gaps in relation to needs. In turn, this has provided a basis for more joined-up commissioning. The process itself has engaged some providers and stakeholder groups with the key officer leads in the council.



## practice on the ground: experiences and learning

The Audit Commission has identified six themes of central significance to the role of councils and migration: housing and employment, understanding data, communications, local leadership, service modifications, and monitoring tensions (8). The issues covered by the 11 projects within the Migration Excellence Programme touch on all of these themes, but with a considerable focus on ways in which councils can base strategies and responses on a solid foundation of evidence and information.

The 'snapshot panels' throughout this publication describe various initiatives undertaken by the councils taking part in the programme. More detailed case studies covering each area have also been published by the IDeA and are available on the migration pages of its website. Here, we pull together the overarching issues and learning that came to the fore in the programme:

### **gaining greater buy-in to work on migration issues**

The importance and relevance of migration issues for councils is not always readily evident to councillors and officers. In some instances, this is the case with partner organisations as well. Thus, support for work in response to migration is not always present. The absence or weakness of authoritative data on migration into the local area can compound this situation. Migrant workers can be quite 'hidden', especially where their accommodation is tied to

their employment. Sometimes, buy-in to work on migration issues is made more complex by the way in which the issue has itself become a political or media hot potato. Discussion can then become more fraught because of misinformation or rigid policy stances that can create community tension.

**'the programme has genuinely changed the way members see migrant workers'**

### **key learning**

The following activities in the programme areas have proved to be of benefit in cases where there has been a need to build greater recognition and support for council work on migration issues:

- developing a clear picture of migration into the local area, using data such as national insurance and worker registrations, information from employers, GP registrations and school roll data
- direct dialogue with migrant workers or organisations representing migrant workers as well as people in the settled community. This is particularly useful in 'humanising' the issues and rooting discussion in practical 'on the ground' needs
- in one area, a visit to an employer proved beneficial for councillors and officers. This may be especially useful where migrant workers are less visible because they are employed and accommodated on site, such as is sometimes the case with holiday camp, tourism and agricultural employment



# learning from the migration excellence programme

- visits to see good practice initiatives in councils facing comparable circumstances
- facilitation of discussion by peers from other councils with relevant experience but who are not entangled in the local debate and discussion.



## snapshot

### Southampton: improving data-sharing across agencies

#### why?

Southampton City Council and its partner bodies had got on the front foot in responding to migrant needs with the development of a New Communities Interagency Integration Strategy and Action Plan. The council and partner bodies recognised the value of good data, but encountered a range of challenges when it came to pooling data. Stumbling blocks included the lack of a common classification of new migrants, some partners not recognising the value of or sharing data that they had, and limited use of qualitative information and intelligence. There was also a desire for migration data at a more local level.

#### what?

In the Migration Excellence Programme, the council's new communities team were supported in two multi-agency workshops to make 'small but significant' steps forward in the way the council, the PCT, JobCentre Plus, police, fire services and others manage data. Following this, a councillor peer assisted political understanding and support for the steps needed to share and use data. Alongside these initiatives, research was commissioned from Southampton University about trends, skills and needs of migrants in the local economy.

#### outcomes?

More than 20 participants came together from different organisations in the workshops. There is now much greater commitment to increase data-sharing, in order to improve service and community cohesion planning. Work is being taken forward on a data partnership and data sharing protocol. Use is now being made of post-coded data about the first language of parents of school pupils and additional analysis of JobCentre Plus national insurance registration data is being sought.



## understanding the role that councils and partners can play

Even where there is 'buy in' to engage with the issue, the best types of interventions and activity are not always clear to a council and its partners. This is not altogether surprising in areas unused to working on migration issues or where clear data and intelligence on the nature of migration patterns is only just emerging. However, experience from the programme areas indicates that even councils who are accustomed to responding to migration sometimes find themselves at an impasse.

**'We now have a much better understanding of what needs to be improved'**

## key learning

Ways in which councils in the Migration Excellence Programme have gained greater clarity on the role they can play, and the best activities to deliver, include:

- rooting responses in local needs based on data and dialogue with migrant and other local communities, employers, education institutes and other stakeholders
- using the scrutiny mechanism to conduct dialogue with stakeholders and map priorities
- looking at 'what works' in comparable areas where councils are encountering similar migration and arranging peer or exchange visits.

# learning from the migration excellence programme



## snapshot

### Allerdale: delivering renewed momentum behind a partnership response

#### **why?**

Allerdale Borough Council in Cumbria had experienced a modest but noticeable increase in migrant workers accompanied by concerns about housing and anti-social behaviour. Some mapping of migrant workers had been undertaken by the council and the West Cumbria Equality and Diversity Partnership, but the initiative had ended there.

#### **what?**

With support from the Migration Excellence Programme, migrant issues are now being informed much more by dialogue with migrants themselves. A local community group, the multi-cultural service in Maryport, which had links with migrant workers ran focus groups to identify their concerns. The main issues were about housing, access to information and limited opportunities to learn English. Following these the IDeA facilitated workshop sessions with the equality and diversity partnership to review their role and agree priorities.

#### **outcomes?**

The West Cumbria Equality and Diversity Partnership is drawing up an action plan for the area's response to new migrants. In addition the council is clearer about the work of groups in the area addressing issues for migrant workers and the partners have made links with migrant workers through the community group. By listening to migrants, partner members were able to find out directly about needs.



## engaging effectively with communities

One of the vital building blocks for council work on migration issues is to combine clear data and intelligence on the nature of local migration with strong engagement with communities, both migrant communities and settled communities. The two things – intelligence gathering and engagement – go hand in hand and are necessary for councils to understand how best they can contribute. Many councils in the programme report that, while the raw data on numbers provides an overall indication of the extent of migration, it is the more ‘qualitative’ insights they are able to gather from actual discussion with communities that is most useful in informing priorities.

**‘it’s changed our views about the service issues of importance to migrant workers in the area’**

## key learning

Councils and their partners in the Migration Excellence Programme have found the following things useful in their dialogue with communities:

- focus groups can provide a quick and inexpensive way of gaining insight into the issues arising from migration
- establishing trust is important. One way of doing this is involving a respected individual or group from within the migrant community in the initiative
- involving migrant workers in planning the design of such groups and/or using a community group to run the groups can make the process even more productive
- visiting employers is useful and dialogue with migrant workers can add to the picture, reaching migrants outside of the workplace
- making contact with shops, cafes and other places used by migrant workers can be an effective way of reaching migrant workers.

# learning from the migration excellence programme



## snapshot

### **Wychavon: the future importance of migrant workers to the local economy**

#### **why?**

Wychavon District Council in Worcestershire had a reasonably good understanding of the numbers of new migrants in the local area, but it needed to know more about possible future trends and their impact on the local economy. It also wanted to know more about the needs of migrant workers themselves.

#### **what?**

As part of the Migration Excellence Programme, the council took steps to fill these intelligence gaps. It conducted qualitative research with employers and business representatives to update existing information and held focus groups with Polish migrants to better understand their information and service needs. A series of 'mini scenarios' were modelled as part of a horizon-scanning report to assist long-term planning and identify policy implications. The results of this exercise have been presented to a policy panel concerned with the agriculture and food industries in the area and have been raised with the Worcestershire Partnership.

#### **outcomes?**

The report has provided insight into the local area's likely future dependence on migrant workers and how any significant drop in availability could have serious consequences for local employers and the local economy as a whole. The report observes that 'current quotas emphasising higher skilled workers are beginning to place constraints on the local economy.' The focus groups were well attended by over 30 Polish workers and their families. The discussion informed and changed officers' views about the priority concerns of new migrants, in particular alerting them to high charges by employers and estate agents for rented housing.



## improving cross-departmental and partnership work

Much of the intelligence-gathering or activity that councils need to undertake as a result of migration cuts across different departments in the council or is multi-agency in nature. A number of councils participating in the programme found that this presented an additional hurdle in delivering momentum behind migration work. Different departmental or partner priorities and already busy partnership agendas are common. In some cases, the programme itself was the first time that particular partners had come together to tackle an issue. Some councils on the programme found that migration was still regarded as quite a low-level priority despite the potential impact on community cohesion.

### **‘it has brought council staff working closer together’**

## key learning

Ways in which Migration Excellence Programme activities have been able to improve cross-departmental and partnership work include:

- ensuring leadership is given to migration issues
- ensuring that migration becomes part of mainstream processes within strategic partnerships, local area agreements and other relevant decision-making processes
- using the scrutiny procedure to provide a stock-take and provide impetus for further policy and activity
- gaining shared insight into the nature and effect of migration and the potential for different departments and partners to have a positive impact. This was most effectively done by direct evidence-gathering, often meeting migrant workers, and visiting or hearing from councils elsewhere that have undertaken positive work
- focusing on the removal of specific barriers, such as lack of shared protocols or methodology for data pooling.

# learning from the migration excellence programme



## snapshot

### Carlisle: using the scrutiny mechanism to bring a focus on migration

#### why?

There has been a significant recent increase in migrant workers coming to Cumbria, many of them living and working in Carlisle. The city council had evidence from its analysis of GP registrations, worker registrations and new national insurance numbers. However, other information on new migrants was scanty and did not systematically draw on data from employers or partner bodies. There was concern about the impact of migration on council services, health and GP services, and demand for ESOL provision.

#### what?

The council's scrutiny committee set up a task and finish group to examine the council's response to migrants. The group gained peer advice and guidance from the Migration Excellence Programme to help develop processes and tools for the scrutiny review. This was supplemented by training from the Centre for Public Scrutiny for the councillors and officers involved. There were visits from two other local authorities – Hyndburn in Lancashire and South Holland in Lincolnshire – who had good practical experience of responding to migrant workers.

#### outcomes?

Twelve councillors and scrutiny support officers have improved their skills and confidence in relation to questioning skills and research tools as a result of the training, which can now be transferred and used while undertaking other scrutiny reviews. The scrutiny review has produced recommendations for action by partner organisations, local service providers and the city council on housing, research, employment, information, communications and leadership. The status of a scrutiny inquiry is an effective way of heightening awareness of and focus on migration. It provided an impetus for engagement with a range of partner organisations and stakeholders, including employers, education institutes, other statutory bodies, and the voluntary and community sector.



## ensuring migration work is sustained

Sustaining work on migration issues is important. The intelligence and data-gathering aspects of such work are vital if councils are to ensure that they are in the best possible position to plan ahead for changes in migration patterns and not be caught by surprise. Positive engagement with communities is important if councils are to be successful in preventing tensions and avoiding problems. Maintaining specific activities, such as in housing, is central to a council's responsibility as a standard setter. Finally, the provision of information and advice is essential for all communities to play their part in the local community and access services.

**'we're only at the start of the journey to get this bedded into our work'**

### key learning

The experience of councils and their partners in the Migration Excellence Programme indicates that the following steps will be important in ensuring work is sustained:

- agreeing shared methodologies and mechanisms for continuing to gather and share intelligence and data on local migration across different council departments and between partners
- establishing clear leadership and ensuring that the implications of migration feed into mainstream decision-taking, strategic partnerships and local area agreements

- assessing the implications of migration for council resources and taking steps to ensure adequate resources are earmarked to respond appropriately.

## checklist of main council roles arising from migration

- developing leadership capacity and partnering arrangements, especially with the voluntary sector
- developing understanding of migrant numbers and characteristics, by improving local data and intelligence
- ensuring public services meet the needs of a changing population
- improving standards in housing and employment, and building links with landlords and employers of migrant workers
- engaging with new migrant communities, to provide them with local information and understand their service needs
- ensuring that the council's own staff are informed about and well-equipped to respond to migration
- encouraging integration, by supporting opportunities for migrant and existing communities to meet and mix
- reducing community tensions, including work with local media, myth busting and tackling emerging community concerns
- developing the economic potential of migrant workers and assessing the local risks if the supply of migrant labour were to dry up.





## talking point

### The rise in numbers of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)

Many councils report an increase of houses in multiple occupations (HMOs) stemming from the growth of migrant workers in their area. Often these are properties that fall outside the standard three-storey classification of HMOs for which local authorities have automatic licensing and inspection powers. Instead, private landlords are using two-storey houses for multiple occupation of migrant workers. Slough Borough Council, for example, reported that over 1,050 two-storey HMOs had been notified to it in a recent 18-month period (10). This can also be a particular issue in rural areas, where taller buildings are uncommon.

A number of councils are now looking to make use of their discretionary powers to extend

licensing in neighbourhoods that are particularly affected. LACORS, the national local government organisation dealing with regulation and enforcement, has taken a particular interest in this issue and has been liaising with the Gangmaster Licensing Authority (GLA) to ensure migrant workers are not mistreated. Information about how local authorities can work with GLA compliance officers on sub-standard accommodation for migrant workers is available at [www.lacors.gov.uk](http://www.lacors.gov.uk)



## snapshot

### West Wiltshire: getting newly converted HMOs on the radar screen

#### why?

With the extent of new migrants in West Wiltshire, the district council was increasingly aware of pressure on the local rented housing stock and the conversion of rented properties to houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). Anecdotal reports and complaints had been received from residents about overcrowding, noise and rubbish, but these newly converted properties were not necessarily becoming registered and, therefore, inspected by the council's housing officers.

#### what?

Migration Excellence Programme peer and consultancy support enabled the council to focus on ways of improving and maintaining intelligence on new HMOs. A survey was developed, with advice from the local Migrant Worker Forum, and distributed through local schools, GP surgeries, leisure facilities and voluntary and community groups.

#### outcomes?

The survey immediately resulted in 75 properties being inspected to ensure they meet legislative requirements. The initiative has improved the HMO database enabling the housing team to be more pro-active. The approach helped council staff to plan how they could best reach migrant workers and what information they were looking for. Results from the survey are informing the council's housing renewal strategy. The survey has been designed in a way that means it can be repeated in the future, to monitor progress.



## 5. looking ahead

As we move towards the end of the first decade of the new millennium, changing economic conditions are testing the pattern of migration from the A8 and A2 countries that followed the respective EU enlargements in 2004 and 2007. Worker registration levels from these countries have fallen and there is evidence that significant numbers of east European migrants are choosing to leave the UK.

However, despite a fall, the number of workers arriving from eastern Europe remain historically high. The fluctuation in numbers is another indication of the dynamism that has come with a larger open labour market within the EU. It is also, perhaps, an indication that, just as councils need to plan for rises in inward migration, so too they need to take account of outward migration and its impact on the local economy and service provision. The scenario planning, for example, undertaken by Wychavon Council as part of the Migration Excellence Programme alerted the council that any significant drop in migrant labour availability could have serious consequences for local employers and the local economy as a whole. Such impacts may be greater as a result of the new quota system restricting wider non-EU migration.

It is clear that the importance of councils taking a pro-active role in migration in and out of their localities is not a short- or medium-term phenomenon. Looking ahead, EU enlargement remains an ongoing process. Croatia, Macedonia and Turkey are all candidate states and

there are active discussions in many other countries in the Balkans and surrounding areas about EU membership.

The challenge for councils will be to build on the steps they have been taken to strengthen their ability to plan for and respond to migrant labour movements that affect their localities. It will be important that the issue is given strong leadership and strategic focus, enabling councils to fulfil the key roles and responsibilities that arise (see checklist on p 16). For many, resource flows that adequately reflect the changing burdens on local services remain an issue. This highlights why many councils and service providers have asked for improvements to the data about migration and why many would like to see more sensitive 'real time' funding mechanisms for migration activity. Moreover, notwithstanding the transient nature of many migrant workers, a proportion will settle in this country and so become permanent users of services such as healthcare and education.

The Migration Excellence Programme shows the many initiatives that local authorities are taking in response to migration. It also illustrates the challenges faced by councils on matters such as gaining buy-in to work on migration issues, sharing data and intelligence, and bringing different agencies together to deliver a coordinated approach. The body of local authority experience on migration has grown fast and, with it, the confidence of local councils to take an effective and positive lead. Such leadership will continue to be important in an era in which international labour movements may ebb and flow, but are likely to continue to be highly dynamic.

## references

1. **The Economic and Fiscal Impact of Migration**, Home Office in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions, October 2007
2. **Accession Monitoring Report**, May 2004-June 2008, Home Office, August 2008
3. **International Migration**, 2006 Series MN no. 33, National Statistics, May 2008
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5. Pollard N, Latorre M and Srisikandarajah D, **Floodgates or turnstiles? Post-EU enlargement migration flows to (and from) the UK**, IPPR, April 2008
6. op. cit. ref. 2
7. **National Insurance Number Allocations to Adult Overseas Nationals Entering the UK**, Department for Work and Pensions, 2007/8
8. **Crossing Borders**, Audit Commission, 2007
9. House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee, **Community Cohesion and Migration, Tenth Report of Session 2007–08, Volume II oral and written evidence**

## IDEA contacts and resources

Resources from the Migration Excellence Programme, including the full case studies, can be accessed at [www.idea.gov.uk/migration](http://www.idea.gov.uk/migration)

These include:

- the good practice guide and self-assessment checklist at [www.idea.gov.uk/migrationguide](http://www.idea.gov.uk/migrationguide)
- guidance for those producing migrant information packs and resources at [www.idea.gov.uk/migrantpacks](http://www.idea.gov.uk/migrantpacks)

### case studies and other resources are

#### Allerdale Borough Council

- case study – developing a partnership approach to new migration

#### Carlisle City Council

- case study – using a scrutiny review of migration work

- resource – Equalities and Diversity Partnership review survey

#### Ealing (London borough)

- case study – English as a second language (ESOL) coordination
- resource – ESOL review advice note

#### East Lindsey District Council

- case study – informing a response to new migration
- resource – presentation material for a members workshop

#### Humber Improvement Partnership

- case study – minimising community tensions
- resource – online legal guidance for frontline staff
- resource – leaflet for HMO landlords and tenants
- resource – leaflet for migrant employees

#### Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk

- case study – community leadership
- case study – supporting frontline staff
- resource – online staff training resource

#### Newcastle City Council

- case study – training to utilise migrants' skills
- resource – good employer case studies

#### Southampton City Council

- case study – developing data and intelligence
- resource – see upcoming LGAR resource on migration data

#### Suffolk County Council and districts

- case study – improving housing and employment standards
- resource – advice note on developing a responsible employer scheme

#### West Wiltshire District Council

- case study – migrant workers and houses in multiple occupation
- resource – HMO and migrants survey report

#### Wychavon District Council

- case study – planning for change – engaging with migrants and building scenarios
- resource – migration scenarios report



**Local Government Association**

The Local Government Association is the national voice for more than 450 local authorities in England and Wales. The LGA group comprises the LGA and five partner organisations which work together to support, promote and improve local government.

