

MSIO: Migrant Worker Research

Recent research findings and emerging research topics

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MSIO's migrant research: the story so far...

Main areas of research to date:-

- 1. 'Supporting Migrant Workers in the North West of England' (2006)**
 - focus on housing and employment options / availability, community cohesion and use of services
- 2. 'Economic Migration to Housing Market Renewal Areas in North West England - Opportunity or Threat? Case studies of NewHeartlands (Merseyside) and Oldham and Rochdale HMR Pathfinder' (2007) –**
 - a further in-depth focus on these issues within specific HMR areas targeted for regeneration

What our research has told us...(1)

- North West coping reasonably well with A8 migration to date but picture varies at district and neighbourhood level – some of the best practice is happening in areas not traditionally associated with migration or diversity – leaving some larger cities behind in terms of local knowledge and co-ordination
- A8 migrants overwhelmingly young, well educated and highly motivated although many report problems with employers recognising their qualifications OR are reluctant to reveal the extent of their skills – whilst often more likely to be educated to degree level than the local population they are usually employed in low-skilled jobs and fear de-skilling if they cannot progress into skilled employment
- An increasing number appear to be bringing dependants to the UK or starting families in the region – for many this involves plans to stay long-term although some wish to return when children reach secondary school age
- Little pressure on social housing. Private-rented sector has absorbed the additional demand (with varying levels of ‘decency’). A small minority of A8 migrants have invested in property – however, available housing does not always meet migrant aspirations

What our research has told us...(2)

- Despite significant numbers of GP registrations in cities such as Liverpool, pressures on the NHS have been minimal although there has been an uptake of 'Walk-In' and A&E services and increasing use of pre and post-natal services – **anecdotally migrants attribute poor take up of health services to lack of trust, conflicting advice and a belief that standards of care are better 'back home'**.
- (Primary) Schools in areas with a high-density of A8 migrants have seen increased enrolment of A8 pupils who are also evident to some extent in secondary and higher education in the region – **as with health care, migrants (parents) are often critical of educational, disciplinary and behavioural standards.**
- The biggest pressure on education services is within adult education – **time will tell if changes to ESOL funding and course content will have a negative impact on take-up, integration and career progression.**

What our research has told us...(3)

- The police and fire services have made some of the most innovative and positive responses to A8 migration. (Catholic) churches have also responded well in some areas.
- Advice services have seen an increase in A8 clients – issues include housing rights, employment rights, debt and benefit entitlement. A8 uptake of benefits has increased as more become eligible and aware of eligibility – Child Benefit in particular.
- Statistical recording in all sectors has been slow to respond to data collection by ‘nationality’ as well as ‘ethnicity’ but this is beginning to change.

Questions of continuing relevance include...

- Extent of under-utilisation of A8 migrant skills and impact on local and regional economic performance?
- Service provision / community cohesion implications of increasing number of dependants?
- RSL response to A8 migrants' housing needs, choices and aspirations?
- NHS response to A8 health needs (including pre and post-natal care and mental health, 'trust' issues and relative lack of uptake of services?)
- Extent of benefit take-up by A8 migrants (inc. Child Benefit) in context of overall economic contribution made by migrant workers?
- How might the untapped entrepreneurial potential of A8 migrants be utilised to help meet regional and sub-regional business start-up targets?
- How might the longer-term settlement of A8 migrants continue to relate to the economic situation within the A8 countries?

Social Housing: Preliminary work...

- CORE (COntinuous REcording) is a data source co-funded by the Housing Corporation and Communities and Local Government (CLG)
- Information is obtained from Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in over 80% of districts in the country
- Nationally, over three quarters of all 'stock holding' local authorities (LAs) also submit CORE data via the LA CORE project
- A8 specific data recorded since April 2006
- In 06/07 just 1.3% of NW social housing was allocated to A8 nationals – in Q1 of 07/08 this rose slightly to 1.8%
- Major anomaly in Trafford where A8 nationals (mostly Czech and Estonian) were allocated 18.5% of social housing in 06/07 and 22% in Q1 of 07/08

CORE data – Greater Manchester

District	Total Allocations 06/07	A8 Allocations 06/07	A8 % 06/07	Total Allocations Q1 07/08	A8 Allocations Q1 07/08	A8 % Q1 07/08
Bolton	1,957	29	1.5	528	13	2.5
Bury	1,028	13	1.3	340	2	1
Manchester	4,227	35	0.8	824	6	1
Oldham	1,390	7	0.5	457	1	0.2
Rochdale	1,886	4	0.2	76	0	0
Salford	454	4	0.9	145	0	0
Stockport	339	0	0	198	0	0
Tameside	1,774	14	0.8	521	6	1
Trafford	1,155	214	18.5	302	67	22
Wigan	267	1	0.4	49	0	0
Greater Manchester	14,477	321	2.2	3,440	95	3

Economic considerations: Preliminary work...

- A study of average earnings for 34 occupations in Poland and the UK shows that **average Polish earnings are 22.5% of the UK equivalent** although the variation is great (e.g. GPs in Poland earn 9% of UK GPs whilst Farm Supervisors in Poland earn 52% of their UK equivalents)
- A study of the cost of 16 basic food items (including bread, ham, eggs, butter, bananas, potatoes, coffee etc) shows that, **on average, items in Poland cost 47% of UK price**
- Therefore, basic foodstuffs are cheaper (approx half of UK cost) in Poland **BUT** the purchasing power of the average wage (approx a fifth of UK wage) remains lower