

NYSP Executive

26 June 2008

Strategic review of the impact of inward migration from the EU Accession States into North Yorkshire

Purpose of report

- 1 The report summarises the work undertaken to date on the impact of inward migration from the EU Accession States into North Yorkshire.

Background

- 2 The NYSP Equalities Task Group established two Action Learning Sets (ALS) in January 2008 to:
 - Develop a shared strategic approach towards addressing the challenges from inward migration and community cohesion
 - Produce an outline strategy for community cohesion linked to inward migration
 - Engage and involve key stakeholders in agreeing where the priorities lie and how best to respond to them
- 3 The ALS are funded through the North Yorkshire Improvement Partnership as part of a successful bid for capacity building funding to Local Government Yorkshire and Humber (LGYH). ALS are essentially a developmental activity with external facilitators, intended to provide key individuals working on a cross cutting theme with updated partnership and problem solving skills and knowledge. Similar ALS activity, covering different themes, is also taking place within each LSP in North Yorkshire.
- 4 Participants in the ALS include people from a wide range of public and voluntary sector organisations, together with representatives of relevant employers and migrant workers from Poland.
- 5 The ALS are nearing completion and have produced a “Strategic Review of the impact of Inward Migration from the EU Accession States in North Yorkshire” (copy attached). The development of a countywide “Welcome Pack” has also been agreed. The next step is to engage stakeholders in a dialogue about priorities and action plans to address these, leading to a revised document by the end of 2008.

Inward migration

- 6 The expansion of the European Union on 1 May 2004 to include eight Eastern European and Baltic States (A8), followed by Bulgaria and

Romania (A2) on 1 January 2007, significantly increased the number of people having the legitimate right to live and work in the UK.

- 7 Since 2004 increasing numbers of EU migrant workers have arrived in the County. The scale of arrival has been unprecedented and although the economic benefits are real there is a growing impact on our services, housing availability and the potential for impact on the employment of low skilled white indigenous and more long standing BME people.
- 8 The exact number of migrant workers is not known. The main source of information is the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS). However the WRS has a number of weaknesses, most significantly the system does not record those who declare themselves to be self-employed and there is no process for de-registration. The UK Borders Agency estimate that there may be up to twice the number registered under the scheme actually working in the UK (the rest being self employed or in breach of regulations).
- 9 Worker Registrations for North Yorkshire are currently running at around 500 per quarter. Migrant workers are distributed countywide, with the largest number to be found in Selby and Harrogate Districts. The greater number of migrant workers are:
 - Aged 18 - 24 (46.19%), with 83% aged below 35;
 - From Poland (63%) and Latvia (11%), Slovakia (11%), Lithuania (10%); and
 - Employed in hospitality and catering (26%), agriculture (16%), factory production lines (14%) and social care (12%).
- 10 Migrant workers from Poland participating in the Action Learning Sets report that numbers of new arrivals are now falling and those returning to their home countries or other EU countries are increasing. The main driver appears to be falling levels of unemployment, in particular in the Polish construction sector. The opening up of other labour markets is having an impact, including in Italy where the climate is seen to be an attraction.

Key issues

- 11 Drawing on the available evidence base on inward migration and community cohesion in North Yorkshire and to an extent how this relates to national developments, the Action Learning Sets undertook a rapid appraisal of the issues. This identified significant impact on a number of key areas:
 - Community safety
 - Education and training
 - Employment
 - Housing and accommodation
 - Health
 - Access to information and advice

- Community cohesion
- 12 North Yorkshire Police report that less than 1% of crimes are alleged to have been committed by people born elsewhere in the EU. However, there are problems associated with migrant workers sometimes not understanding the law in the UK with regard to the Highway Code, driving documentation, vehicle tax and insurance, or carrying weapons. There have also been issues in some communities about alcohol consumption by young migrants and associated anti-social behaviour, sometimes involving confrontations between young migrants and local residents.
 - 13 The numbers of migrant children in North Yorkshire schools requiring English as an Additional Language (EAL) has grown rapidly, as have the number of involved schools. Schools are reporting that migrant children have a very positive effect, helping to raise standards of performance and attitudes to learning. Many adult migrants work long hours, making access to courses difficult for them. Funding for adult English language courses is limited and charges have to be made, and this creates a barrier. Working with employers to provide work placed training is helping in both regards but some employers have failed to honour learning agreements for their workers. Lack of technical English is a major barrier to access to employment at higher levels. Some migrant workers are only here for a short duration making it impractical for them to complete courses.
 - 14 Many employers are pleased to be able to recruit migrant workers, as the A8 workers have a reputation for hard work and flexibility. In rural areas it is often the case that there are labour shortages, low wages and an aging population - in this context migrant workers can be seen as a valuable asset. Research has shown that migrant workers can expect to be less well paid than any other group. In some workplaces (especially those that illegally employ migrant workers) health and safety can be a major concern. Migrant workers tend to work longer hours compared to UK born residents (46 as against 42 hours per week). Employment opportunities which might benefit both skilled migrant workers and local employers are often overlooked, with skilled workers taking on unskilled work. Employment problems are being created by "short-termism" where migrants are only staying for a short time before returning home or moving to better paid jobs elsewhere in Europe. This could result in labour market shortages for employers who are reliant on migrant workers, who then have little option but to downsize.
 - 15 Only a small proportion of social housing is allocated to foreign nationals. Around 90% of people who arrived in the UK in the last two years are in the private rented sector, particularly at the 'bottom end' of the market. For some migrant workers, especially those in the UK temporarily, a key motivation may be to minimise their housing costs, even at the cost of accepting very poor conditions, given that they are

often already on very low pay levels or sending money home. Three main themes will be explored by housing authorities as part of the North Yorkshire Migrant Worker Accommodation needs research project (due to be completed autumn 2008): information and data, access to housing, and specific impacts on the private rented sector.

- 16 Data on the health issues of migrant workers in North Yorkshire is limited; however there is a growing bank of research from elsewhere in the UK suggesting some common themes. Stress and suicide rates, a proxy for mental health status, are high in men in several A8 countries, though this may be attributed to their socio-economic circumstances in their own country. Up to 50% of the migrant worker population may not be registered with a GP and access healthcare through Accident and Emergency Units. Interpretation services are a key issue in accessing services with migrant workers having concerns about confidentiality and their ability to relate their illness and understand the diagnosis without interpretation. Smoking prevalence is particularly high in Eastern Europe, reaching 70% among 35-49 year old men. Lack of physical inactivity may be related to long working hours and lack of awareness of leisure opportunities.
- 17 All Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) in North Yorkshire report that they are receiving increasing numbers of enquiries from A8 and A2 migrant workers. For example, combined data from Harrogate CAB and Ripon CAB shows some 850 migrant workers seeking advice in the last year people, around 12% of their total clients. Most migrant workers are seeking advice on employment issues (eg non-payment of wages and holiday pay), housing and tax credits and other benefits; and many of the enquiries cover more than one advice area. The advice is always complex because of the need to check immigration status and the impact of this on people's rights and responsibilities relating to the specific enquiry. A significant proportion need help with interpretation.
- 18 National research suggests that the relationship between diversity and community cohesion is complex. Having a community with a broad range of ethnic groups has been found to be broadly beneficial - but where communities are receiving increasing levels of inward-migrants born outside of the UK, this has been found to be a negative factor in terms of community cohesion. A North Yorkshire Impact Assessment was carried out in April 2007 (at the request of GOYH). A further impact assessment is planned, which will provide information on trends.

Current work in progress

- 19 In parallel with the strategic review, the ALS have been working on a number of projects. A countywide "Welcome Pack" is being developed. A small number of migrant workers have become volunteers within voluntary and public services. Options for developed a countywide tension monitoring system are being explored.

The impact of further changes in migration

- 20 Given that the economic incentives to remain in the UK are likely to decline, only those migrants whose ties to the UK extend beyond the purely financial are most likely to stay in the long term. As a result, it is likely that the socio-economic profile of A8 and A2 nationals who do remain in the UK will start to resemble the UK-born pattern (for example, average wages will start to rise and over-representation in sectors such as agriculture will reduce).
- 21 If the number of new migrants reduces and the migrants who do stay behind tend to be the better qualified and more aspirational, employers in North Yorkshire may not be able to continue to rely on a ready supply of young, skilled workers willing to work for low wages. Resulting labour shortages could have a negative impact on the economy of North Yorkshire.

Next steps

- 22 The next step in developing and implementing a common strategic approach towards migration and community cohesion in North Yorkshire is a dialogue about priorities and an action plan to address these. The “Strategic Review” is intended as a starter for that the discussion. Public services and other agencies, strategic and community partnerships, business interests and third sector organisations will have important perspectives to input to this discussion and to help to shape an agreed approach to tackling the challenges.
- 23 It will also be vital to engage and involve migrant communities themselves and those who work most closely with them. This will help to validate the preliminary analysis of the main issues but also to ‘market test’ the draft welcome pack as well as explore the appropriateness of arrangements to support volunteering and tension monitoring.
- 24 The consultation plan includes:
- Sending the draft strategy document out to all LSPs and NYSP partners and inviting comments;
 - A presentation offered by the ALS to each LSP as a basis for discussion and agreement of key issues and priorities;
 - A series of local consultation meetings involving representatives from migrant communities and organisations and groups that work with them.
- 25 Following the consultation process, the NYSP Equalities Task Group expects by the end of 2008 to have revised and updated the analysis and action plans to reflect the input from all parties.

Recommendation

- 26 The NYSP Executive is recommended to comment on the report and work in progress.

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