

Migration

Driver – Social

Related Drivers – Equality, Diversity & Human Rights, Forced Marriage & ‘Honour’-Based Violence, Neighbourhood Policing, Organised Crime, Victim & Witnesses, Violent Crime – domestic violence, Border, Security & Immigration, ID Cards, Information Sharing, Drugs – Cocaine, Drugs – Cannabis, Human Trafficking, Prostitution, Race & Crime, Public Perceptions of Crime, Public Perceptions of Crime, Stop & Search, Jean Charles de Menzes Shooting

Background

The active management of government migration policy has opened up a number of legal entry routes into the UK for many workers. In addition to the established work permit scheme and recent accession of new EU member states there is support for the Highly Skilled Migrants Programme and Innovators Scheme. Alongside managing legal migration police and law enforcement agencies also work to combat illegal immigration and countering criminal organisations that exploit it.

The utilisation of migrant workers has been targeted to combat skill shortages in certain sectors. Demographic changes and, until recent times, the tighter labour market have already meant that many employers are now recruiting international workers.

It is not necessarily those forces that service major ports of entry to the UK that have the most issues with migration rather the areas where asylum seekers, immigrants and illegal migrant workers can find work and therefore are more likely to settle.

In some force areas this has caused community tensions as asylum seekers and immigrants are perceived to attract a priority over local services.¹ Police forces also find the newer communities in particular difficult to communicate with as they are generally ‘closed’ communities with an absence of community leaders.

Where the police come into contact with asylum seekers and immigrants (illegal or otherwise) the demand for interpretation currently exceeds the availability of approved interpreters. There has been a lot of media coverage in respect of rising costs to police forces in dealing with growing and diverse populations, in particular in relation to the influx of migrant workers from the EU.² One particular area this appears to be impacting on is the money being spent on interpreters. As an example Thames Valley Police Authority spends more than £1 million per year on interpreters compared with spending £80,000 ten years ago. In addition in 2007, Cambridgeshire police also spent close to £1 million on interpreters.²

‘Migrants lives beyond the workplace: the experiences of Central and East European in the UK’ explores the experiences of migrants in four low-wage occupations in the UK. The research found that a lack of practical information on arrival left many migrants ignorant of how to access health care, UK laws, and where to obtain advice. Additionally English

language proficiency was a key factor in whether migrants had received the information they needed.³

It is difficult to achieve complete and accurate statistics about crime committed by and suffered by immigrants. Factors inhibiting accurate data collection include the lack of specificity in police recording of nationality; the language barriers of migrants; plus the lack of knowledge of British law amongst migrant communities. ACPO has stated that “the evidence does not support theories of a large-scale crime wave generated through migration”.⁴ Sir Simon Milton agreed that “*nationally, there has been no crime wave but there are instances of local spikes in certain types of criminal activity, much of it low level*”.⁵

Amongst the areas of criminality that have risen with increased migration, Sir Simon cited pick-pocketing by organised gangs—particularly from Romania—begging, driving offences and fraud. Cambridgeshire has experienced increases in knife-carrying amongst Iraqi Kurds, Poles and Lithuanians, a greater ‘international’ dimension to criminality in terms of cannabis factories, credit card skimming and human trafficking, as well as drink and disqualifying driving offences.^{5,6} Regional responses to the Government’s Migration Impact Forum in 2007 corroborated these accounts and also noted increases in anti-social behaviour.

A report by the Local Government Association (LGA), *Estimating the scale and impacts of immigration*, concluded that migrants are more likely to be the victims of crime than the perpetrators, particularly hate crime and exploitation by gang-masters.⁷

In examining specific costs caused by immigration, translation costs emerge as the key factor for policing. In Kent, translation costs have risen by a third in three years.⁸ Sergeant Guy Rooney stated that in Ealing alone the interpreters’ bill for the last financial year was £1 million. Cambridgeshire’s translation costs are also around £1 million per year. A report by KPMG concluded that Cambridgeshire requires an additional 100 police officers to cover the additional workload generated by policing foreign nationals.⁹

ACPO has highlighted examples of good practice employed by forces to manage the effects of immigration, including encouraging migrant membership of independent advisory groups, recruitment of migrants as police community support officers (PCSOs), special constables and volunteers, publicity campaigns and police training.¹⁰ Chief Constable Spence argued that “diversification of the workforce is absolutely needed”.⁵ Cambridgeshire has made concerted efforts to recruit applicants with language skills.

Potential Skills Needs

Customer service skills – delivering a consistent high quality service

Communication skills – dealing with language barriers

Community policing skills – engaging with new communities and explaining what is the norm in total ensuring a common understanding

Equality and diversity skills – to treat people appropriately and sensitively as well as better understand the cultural issues of the communities they serve.

Multi-agency working skills – working with other public services to aid immigrations such as securing an interpreter

Relationship building skills - within new communities and between new and existing communities

'Soft' skills – personal qualities and interpersonal skills necessary to effectively deal with the public

¹ [Hudson, M., Phillips, J., Ray, K., & Barnes, H. \(2007\) *Social Cohesion in Diverse Communities*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.](#)

² [NPIA \(October 2007\) *NPIA Digest*. p48.](#)

³ [Spencer, S., Ruhs, M., Anderson, B., & Rogaly, B. \(2007\) *Migrants lives beyond the workplace: the experiences of Central and East European in the UK*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.](#)

⁴ ACPO Press Release, 16 April 2008, '*ACPO comment on migration and policing*'.

⁵ [House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee \(2008\) *Policing in the 21st Century*. Seventh Report of the 2007-08 Session. HC 364-I, London: The Stationery Office Ltd.](#)

⁶ [The Guardian Online, 19 September 2007, '*Increased immigration boosts knife crime and drink-driving, police chief says*'.](#)

⁷ Local Government Association Press Release, 17 October 2007, '*Estimating the scale and impacts of immigration at the local level*'.

⁸ Sunday Time, 27 January 2007, '*Police chief: 'migrant tide adds to crime.'*' p2.

⁹ Cambridgeshire Constabulary, September 2007, *The changing demography of Cambridgeshire*, p2.

¹⁰ Presentation by Chief Constable Grahame Maxwell to the Home Office Migration Impacts Forum on 16 July 2008.