Mapping the Deployment of Migrant Labour in Northern Ireland
April 2013
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary ................................................................................................................................. 2

Chapter 1 – Purposes and Uses........................................................................................................... 5

Chapter 2 – Policy Context.................................................................................................................. 7

Chapter 3 – Economic Summary for Northern Ireland................................................................. 11

Chapter 4 – Economic Migration Data for Northern Ireland...................................................... 15

Chapter 5 – Geographic Location....................................................................................................... 37

Chapter 6 - Key Industries for Economic Growth..................................................................... 40

Chapter 7 – Conclusions and Recommendations............................................................................. 59

References ............................................................................................................................................ 62
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Large scale economic migration to Northern Ireland is a relatively recent phenomenon and one that to date has not been sufficiently monitored with regards to numbers of migrants coming to work and live in the region, patterns of employment nor economic impact. Although numbers are small in comparison to other UK regions, migration does contribute to the Northern Irish economy and in-depth research and analysis is essential in order to understand its significance to both the labour market and to the impact migrants will have on local service provision.

There is no single method of recording migration to and particularly from the UK, and so a number of data sources are drawn on in order to estimate numbers. These include work-based schemes such as the Points Based System, the Workers Registration Scheme, A2 registration schemes, National Insurance Number statistics and broader spectrum data such as GP registrations, school ‘newcomer’ status figures and most significantly the recent 2011 Census. Unfortunately, all these sources of data only show us the specific detail they record and cannot therefore provide an overall picture of migration in Northern Ireland. Furthermore, there are no hard statistics on occupational or sectoral trends relating to migrant workers, merely anecdotal evidence which suggests the industries for which migrant labour is an important element. It is important that these gaps in data are addressed in order that the current contributions and future requirements of migrant labour can be properly ascertained and aligned with the pattern of economic growth anticipated by the Northern Ireland Executive1.

Within the current Northern Ireland Economic Strategy, DETI has identified high skilled industries such as Financial Services, Telecommunications & ICT, Life and Health Sciences and Agri-food as key to economic growth. In order for this growth to occur, key skill gaps and shortages existing within these industries need to be identified and addressed. Some of this work has already been done through research commissioned by DEL and by the relevant Sector Skill Councils. For example, in the Financial Sector, a shift towards a more international orientated market is being promoted which, as research carried out by the Financial Services Skills Council reveals, is facilitated by a culturally diverse workforce. However, while London, one of the top financial districts in the world, has a concentration of internationally orientated financial activities with almost half of employers recruiting

non-EEA personnel, only 5% of the financial industry workforce employed in Northern Ireland are from non-EEA origins\(^2\).

Current policy is set to limit the number of skilled non-EEA migrants allowed into the UK under the Points Based System to 20,700\(^3\). In addition, workers coming in under Intra-Company Transfers, are limited to those earning £40,000 or more. As Northern Irish wage levels tend to be lower than the UK average, research needs to be conducted into how this may affect companies’ willingness to invest in Northern Ireland. Restrictions have also been placed on international students entering the labour market post-study. This has had a severe impact on the numbers of international students choosing the UK as a place to study which would in turn impact on the economy through direct contributions (non-EEA students contribute £5bn a year to the UK economy\(^4\)), and impact upon employers’ access to migrant graduates in the labour market.

On the lower-paid end of the scale, it is widely acknowledged that EU-migrants in Northern Ireland from the Accession States are essential to lower-skilled operations in Northern Ireland, namely the agri-food and hospitality industries. With A8 workers leaving Northern Ireland due to better economic conditions elsewhere and A2 citizens to have free access to the European labour market from 31\(^{st}\) December 2013, there is no guarantee that a pool of migrant workers will continue to be available to fill the essential roles they currently occupy in these industries. These are roles that indigenous workers traditionally do not want to fill due to the difficult employment conditions and low wages. This may have significant consequences as both sectors are planning to rapidly expand in the near future\(^5\).

There are concerns regarding the levels of basic literacy, numeracy and communication skills and of higher skills such as management skills among the residents of Northern Ireland. Management skills are essential for the future survival and competitiveness of a business and as Northern Ireland is host to a large number of small businesses, a large number of managers is required to run these businesses. For those businesses working in the technology, science or the environmental sectors the quality and relevance of the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) courses on offer locally will impact on their recruitment policies. These skills are a particularly important aspect in industry as in order to compete internationally, Northern Ireland will need to keep up with technological progress with a particular focus on ‘green’ energy and environmental protection. While

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local training and education initiatives may certainly help develop the required skills within the local population, in the short term at least it may be necessary to avail of the skills and experience of a migrant labour force.

There is still a large amount of work that needs to be conducted in order to gain a full understanding of how migrant workers currently contribute to the Northern Irish economy and how they may contribute in the future. It is important that Northern Ireland has clear information regarding the migrant workforce from EU and non-EEA countries, and particularly their role in filling vacancies and skill shortages in the region. Once further data has been collected regarding migrant workers in Northern Ireland, there may prove to be a need for a more regionalised approach to immigration legislation regarding employment, not just in relation to Northern Ireland but with regard to regional needs across the UK.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Immigration policy should reflect the requirements of the Northern Irish economy which are different to those of other regions. In order to fully inform such work, further research is required regarding deployment and impact of migrant workers in Northern Ireland and trends in migration patterns to and from the region. It is recommended that NISMP approach the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) to carry out this initial work.
- Policy makers and employers must take into account the implications of the findings of any MAC research, the effects this will have on the economy and strategies for economic growth, and plan accordingly.
- Employers and employer representatives, in association with relevant government departments, should develop appropriate strategies to address non-skills related barriers to work such as low pay for difficult manual labour and shift work, which deter indigenous Northern Irish workers.
- Employers, in association with their representative Sector Skills Councils and relevant government departments, should develop appropriate strategies for attracting, recruiting and retaining appropriately skilled workers from both the indigenous population and, where necessary, the migrant labour pool.
- Skill shortages with regards to employability, including literacy and numeracy, must be factored into education planning so that the education system contributes effectively towards economic growth.
- NISMP should support any changes in immigration policies which facilitate the economic growth as planned for by the Executive if such changes are demonstrated as necessary.
CHAPTER 1: PURPOSES AND USES

Commissioned by the Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership in May 2012, this report aims to contribute to assist policy makers, business leaders and elected members:

- Understand the scale and professional qualities of both EU and non-European Economic Area (EEA) migrants securing employment in the region in so far as the available data allows;
- Identify the industries and occupations likely to be most affected by forthcoming changes in immigration policy;
- Assess compiled data sets to determine if and where skills shortages exist in NI as they relate to migrant labour;
- Identify the need to assess the adequacy of existing local learning provision and shape the future curriculum offers in order to reduce reliance on non-EEA migrant workers.

Inward-migration to Northern Ireland, for employment purposes on any substantial scale, is a relatively recent phenomenon. Consequently there has been little research on the topic, and neither have data systems been designed to include the capture of information on migration or migrant workers.

Research into migrant occupational trends will be necessary in order to understand the importance of migration to the Northern Irish labour market in general, and to individual sectors specifically.

Data on the numbers of economic migrants is primarily sourced from:

- Data from Approved Points Based System (PBS) applications as provided by the United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA);
- Registrations from National Insurance Numbers as provided by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP);
- Registration for the Workers Registration Scheme as provided by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA);
- Approved Applications for Accession Worker Cards as supplied by UKBA.

Data on the population of migrants in Northern Ireland can be estimated from the recent release of the 2011 Census statistics and from current GP registration numbers. General trends in migration flows can be ascertained from the above data alongside the likes of birth statistics and the School Census.
It should also be noted that, when applicable, data has been adjusted to conform to the Eleven Districts of Northern Ireland that will be established by April 2015. The Review of Public Administration (or ‘Local Government Reform’ as it is now known) will result in the reduction in the number of councils within Northern Ireland from 26 to 11 by April 2015. The 11 new councils will be larger with additional responsibilities, powers and delivering high quality services that are more efficient and effective. These adjusted figures will be estimates based on the merging of councils.

The new Council Districts are as follows:

i. **Belfast City**;
ii. **North Down and Ards District**;
iii. **Antrim and Newtownabbey District**;
iv. **Lisburn City and Castlereagh Council**;
v. **Newry City, Mourne and Down District**;
vi. **Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon District**;

vii. **Mid and East Antrim District** – Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne Districts;
viii. **Causeway Coast and Glens District** – Ballymoney, Coleraine, Limavady and Moyle;
ix. **Mid-Ulster District** – Cookstown, Dungannon and South Tyrone and Magherafelt;
x. **Derry and Strabane District**;
xii. **Fermanagh and Omagh District**.

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Established in 2008, the Points Based System (PBS) is the means by which migration from non-EEA countries is regulated in the UK. The PBS allocates points based on a worker’s skills, qualifications and salary and, if the tallied points equal the minimum threshold, the migrant is classified under one of five tiers\(^9\).

The coalition Government announced that an annual cap of 20,700 skilled non-EEA migrant workers under the Tier II (general) category would be allowed entry to the UK with a skilled job offer, exempt from which were workers that filled a position on the Shortage Occupations List, Intra-Company Transfers (ICTs) and those with salaries exceeding £150,000\(^{10}\). The minimum wage requirements for ICTs (£40,000\(^{11}\)) could prove troublesome within Northern Ireland as earnings are among the lowest within the UK (behind Wales and the North East\(^{12}\)), and the restrictions as they stand do not take this into consideration. This annual limit was

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\(^{9}\) For further detail on the PBS tiers see the section on the Points Based System under Migrant Volumes in Northern Ireland, page 35.


\(^{11}\) UKBA, *How do I Sponsor a Migrant Worker?*: [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/business-sponsors/points/sponsoringmigrants/eligibility/tier2ict/](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/business-sponsors/points/sponsoringmigrants/eligibility/tier2ict/)

\(^{12}\) ONS, *2012 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings; 2012 Provisional Results Release*, November 2012. It should be noted that the earnings for London and the South East boost the UK average as they have substantially higher wages. Further, while Public sector earnings in Northern Ireland match, if not exceed, UK public sector rates, private sector earnings in Northern Ireland are lower than the UK average. As the Public Sector is among NI’s main employers, earning averages are once again boosted.
enforced on the 6th April 2011 and will be kept at the same level until 201413.

A number of changes were made to the Points Based System in April 2011. Firstly, with regard to those on a study visa, the previous category of the Tier I Post Study Work Route (PSWR), which allowed non-EEA migrant students two years to seek employment in the UK after their graduation, was closed. Non-EEA migrant graduates are now able to switch from Tier IV to Tier II subject to meeting certain requirements. They need a job offer but the employer is not required to demonstrate that the Resident Labour Market Test (RLMT) has been met, nor will they be subject to the annual limit on Tier II (general). However, the job offer must still be in an occupation skilled to the requisite level, or a job on the shortage occupation list14. In 2012 it was also announced that international students could no longer bring their dependants with them unless they were taking a post-graduate course lasting at least 12 months.

On the 12th December 2012, the Home Secretary Theresa May made a statement regarding the intention of government to tighten the rules on students from non-EEA countries in order to prevent ‘overstayers’ who use studying as an excuse to remain and work in the country. It is being argued that the proposed changes – including interviews for more than 100,000 student visa applicants – would make it harder to attract bright applicants who opt to go elsewhere15.

Non-EEA students contribute £5bn a year to the UK economy rising to £8bn when EU students are included. Creating an unwelcoming atmosphere in Britain for international students could severely decrease these earnings as well as create redundancies in the higher education sector.16

Further changes were made in relation to the Tier II work visa. Before an employer is allowed to sponsor a foreign worker on a Tier II visa they must complete a Resident Labour Market Test in order to confirm that there are no suitable UK citizens or permanent residents that can fill the position. In order to do this they must advertise the vacancy in

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13 ‘MAC, Call for Evidence by the Migration Advisory Committee on the Review of the Tier II Codes of Practice and Updating the Tier II NQF6+ Occupations List to SOC 2010, May 2012.
14 ‘MAC, Call for Evidence by the Migration Advisory Committee on the Review of the Tier II Codes of Practice and Updating the Tier II NQF6+ Occupations List to SOC 2010, May 2012.
15 BBC News, Theresa May says UK plans more visa interviews for students, 12 December 2012: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-20692893
16 ‘Immigration Policies will Damage Higher Education, says Education Experts: British Universities may no longer be able to attract foreign students unless restrictive rules are lifted.’, Cass Jones, The Guardian 30th May 2012.
Jobcentre Plus and elsewhere\(^1\). From the 14\(^{th}\) June 2012 there were relaxations in the Resident Labour Market Test\(^2\):

- Jobs with pay exceeding £70,000 and specified PhD-level occupations no longer have to be advertised in the Jobcentre Plus;
- Sponsors can now select the best candidate for the job regardless of nationality for vacancies in PhD-level occupations (previously a suitably skilled settled worker had to be selected);
- For PhD-level jobs only, employers can begin recruitment up to 12 months in advance of the start date of the job rather than the previous 6 month timeline.

For some EU migrant workers, the closure of the Workers Registration Scheme on the 30\(^{th}\) April 2011 means that A8 member state residents no longer have to seek permission to work in the UK\(^3\). However, the restrictions on members of the A2 states, Bulgaria and Romania, will continue until the end of 2013. A2 nationals are restricted to skilled employment except where they come under quota-based arrangements for the Agricultural and Food Processing sector\(^4\). The UK government has recently been discussing how to discourage A2 nationals from coming to the UK after 1 January 2014.

Northern Ireland employers have been actively recruiting migrant labour to fill vacancies which local citizens have been unwilling or unable to take up in a variety of sectors, namely agriculture, hospitality, construction and the health sector. Employers in some sectors, e.g. meat processing, have stated explicitly that if they could not fill these vacancies they would have to give serious consideration to relocating their business to where the required workforce can be found\(^5\). With the economy currently in recession and the rest of Europe now open to A8 migrant workers, we may find EU workers migrating elsewhere with better economic prospects.

These policy changes may impact upon areas and industries which have become reliant on both EU and non-EEA migrant labour to bridge key labour gaps and skills shortages. It is

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18 MAC, Call for Evidence by the Migration Advisory Committee on the Review of the Tier II Codes of Practice and Updating the Tier II NQF6+ Occupations List to SOC 2010, May 2012.

19 The A8 Accession States are the eight Eastern European countries who joined the European Union in May 2004. Per capita they earned approximately 40% of the European average and so there were fears of mass migration. Only the UK, Sweden and Ireland allowed the A8 States access to their labour markets, albeit with restrictions – in the UK they had to register with the Workers Registration Scheme (WRS). Since May 2011 the retractions on the A8 States were lifted and they now have access to the EU labour market. The countries involved are: the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

20 MAC, Review of Transitional Restrictions on Access of Bulgarian and Romanian Nationals to the UK Labour Market, November 2011.

21 Migrant Workers Thematic Sub Group (2009), A Migrant Workers Strategy for Northern Ireland.
therefore important that Northern Ireland has clear information regarding this migrant workforce from EU and non-EEA Countries, and particularly their role in filling vacancies and skill shortages in the region.
3.1 Population Demographics

Northern Ireland has a population of 1,810,900 people\(^{22}\) of which approximately 1,157,000 are working age\(^{23}\). Of those that are working age, there is a 72.7% economic activity rate\(^{24}\) across the region, 4.7% lower than is seen across the UK at 77.4%. However, at 6.9% the unemployment rate in Northern Ireland is also lower than the UK average (8.2%)\(^{25}\). These contradictory statistics are due to a disproportionately larger number of people of working age claiming ill-health and disability benefits in Northern Ireland. DLA entitlement in February 2011 stood at 52.8 claimants per 1,000 population in Great Britain; and 103.1 claimants per 1,000 population in Northern Ireland, almost double the rate in Great Britain\(^{26}\).

\(^{22}\) NISRA, Census 2011: Population and Household Results for Northern Ireland, July 2012.
\(^{23}\) DETI, Northern Ireland Labour Market Structure, Seasonally Adjusted, March-May 2012.
\(^{24}\) DETI, Northern Ireland Labour Market Structure, Seasonally Adjusted, March-May 2012.
Of the resident population, 15% (263,700) are aged 65 and over, an 18% (40,400) increase since the 2001 Census, within which the most elderly has seen the greatest proportional increase – an increase of 35% in those aged 85 and over. Furthermore, with absolute numbers, the greatest population increase has occurred among the elder working-age group aged 40-64 (93,400/19% since 2001). In contrast, the total working-age population aged 16-64 has increased by 10% and within that the working-age population of people aged 16-39 has only increased by 2%. Additionally the number of children aged 16 and under has declined from 398,100 to 379,000, although pre-school children aged 0-3 has increased by 10% showing an increase in fertility, while the population as a whole has increased by 7%27.

The data shown in Figure 1 indicates that Northern Ireland is playing host to an ageing population, a phenomenon that can have a significant effect on the labour market, especially for the health and social care industry which, due to the increasing numbers of elderly people should be growing. Instead, this sector faces public budget cuts and a decreased accessibility to what is considered by some employers a more productive and oft times higher skilled migrant workforce with the upcoming migration policy changes.

3.2 Qualification Levels

The skills profile in Northern Ireland remains weaker than the UK average – a smaller proportion of the population have Level 4+ qualifications and proportionately more have no or low qualifications. Data from the 2011 Census\(^{28}\) provides statistics for qualification levels for the population aged 16 and above\(^{29}\). In Northern Ireland 24% of all people aged 16 and over hold a Level 4 or higher qualification (compared to 27.2% in England and Wales). However there is a larger gap between the proportion of those with no qualifications with 29.1% of the population in Northern Ireland holding no qualifications compared with 22.7% in England and Wales\(^{30}\).

Highly qualified/skilled people from Northern Ireland have a strong tendency to emigrate to locations where high-end work and salaries are more common, e.g. London and the South East. While the academic sector in Northern Ireland has a reputation of producing high grades and qualifications, Sector Skill Assessment evidence would suggest that vocational and job-relevant skills are lacking.

3.3 Business Base

The region has a business base of approximately 114,000 private sector enterprises. Although Northern Ireland had the lowest number of enterprises within the UK regions, it comes fifth with 798 private sector enterprises per 10,000 adults compared with the UK average of 935. Northern Ireland (9.4%) had the lowest proportion out of the UK regions of enterprises in the Professional, Scientific and Technical sector. However, Northern Ireland (at 22.9%) had the highest proportion of enterprises in the Construction sector\(^{31}\). The agri-food industry is more significant in Northern Ireland than elsewhere in the UK. In 2010 the agri-food industry in Northern Ireland held an estimated 20% of all Northern Irish private sector employment, up to 92,000 people when including primary production, food processing and the supply chain of local transport, packaging and engineering\(^{32}\).


\(^{29}\) A comparison cannot be made with the UK as a whole as the statistics for Scotland have not yet been released.

\(^{30}\) It should be noted that the Census data reflects the qualifications of people who currently live in Northern Ireland and therefore cannot be taken to reflect the local academic sector.

\(^{31}\) Department for Business Innovation and Skills, Business Population Estimates for the UK and Regions 2012, October 2012. Includes private sector enterprises but excludes the non-profit sector; includes public corporations and nationalised bodies.

\(^{32}\) Lantra, Northern Ireland Skills Assessment, 2010/11.
Northern Ireland is among the UK’s most disadvantaged regions based on a range of measures including having among lowest wages (behind Wales and the North East\textsuperscript{33}) and the lowest labour productivity rates – productivity by job is 85.3% of the UK average, lower than all other regions but Wales\textsuperscript{34}. The region has a service-based economy with a weak private sector and a strong reliance on the public sector – the Northern Ireland private sector is more concentrated on low value-added sectors than other parts of the UK, for instance in having a traditional reliance on agriculture and food processing rather than high productivity sectors such as finance and business services. The largest private sectors in Northern Ireland are wholesale and retail, manufacturing and business and professional services. However there are significant opportunities for Northern Ireland in sectors such as information and communication technologies and financial services\textsuperscript{35}. Northern Ireland does have a number of strengths – a relatively young population, competitive labour costs, a successful track record in attracting inward investment through Invest NI and a strong tourism environment, boosted by projects such as ‘Our Time, Our Place’ and the Titanic Centre\textsuperscript{36}.

\textsuperscript{33} ONS, 2012 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings; 2012 Provisional Results Release, November 2012. It should be noted that the earnings for London and the South East boost the UK average as they have substantially higher wages. Further, while Public sector earnings in Northern Ireland match, if not exceed, UK public sector rates, private sector earnings in Northern Ireland are lower than the UK average. As the Public Sector is among NI’s main employers, earning averages are once again boosted.

\textsuperscript{34} Department for Business Innovation and Skills, Business Population Estimates for the UK and Regions 2012, October 2012.

\textsuperscript{35} c.f. Review of Tax Policy in Northern Ireland, Sir David Varney, October 2007.

\textsuperscript{36} HM Treasury, Rebalancing the NI Economy, March 2011.
CHAPTER 4 ECONOMIC MIGRATION DATA FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Migrant population:
- Data from the 2011 Census describes 4.5% of the usually resident population as being born in the EU (2.5%) or Non-EEA countries (2%);
- 3.4% of the usually resident population held an EU or non-EEA passport;
- English was not the main language for 3.1% of the resident population;
- 3.4% of the population did not consider their national identity to be British, Northern Irish or Irish;
- 3.4% of GP registrants were from the EU (2.7%) or non-EEA countries (0.7%);
- In 2010, 10% of all births were to mothers born outside the UK and Northern Ireland;
- In 2011/12, 2.7% of the NI school populations were considered as ‘newcomers’, i.e. as having English as a second language.

Migrant worker population:
- PBS applicants in Northern Ireland make up 0.5% of the UK total of Non-EEA workers;
- Between 2008 and 2012 there were 2,597 main applicants (with 1,296 dependants) entering NI under the Points Based System;
- NI Nino figures show a gradual decrease in migrant workers coming to NI since 2006/07;
- NI Nino figures show that 67% of migrant workers who came to NI between 2005 and 2011 were from A8 Accession Countries compared to the 38% entering the UK to work. WRS figures back up the fact that the majority of migrant entrants to NI were from Poland;
- The Sector Based Scheme which allows A2 migrants to be employed in food processing shows NI as receiving a high proportion of UK applicants which reflects the importance of the agricultural and food processing sectors to NI. Unfortunately the figures for the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme do not break down regionally.

There are huge gaps in migrant data for Northern Ireland, most notably in regards to labour market statistics. There is little to no data verifying how many migrant workers are currently resident in Northern Ireland, and even less regarding the occupational or sectoral employment of migrants.
Trying to establish migration figures within the UK is not a task that can be accomplished with full accuracy. Some key reasons that these figures are difficult to obtain are as follows:

- Most figures are estimates compiled by a combination of samples and statistics from different sources including GP registrations and the school census;
- There is no legal requirement for people to indicate when they leave the country;
- The numbers of unauthorised or undocumented migrants are impossible to assess accurately.

Recently published data from the 2011 Census can however provide a snapshot of migrant numbers within Northern Ireland.

Inclusive data on migrant figures can be read from:

- 2011 Census data including statistics on country of birth, passports held, main language spoken and national identity;
- GP registration numbers;
- National Insurance Number data;
- School census data; and
- Births to mothers born outside the UK or Ireland.

A8 migrant figures can be estimated from:

- DFP data on A8 migrant stock; and
- Statistics from the Workers Registration Scheme (WRS) up until its abolition on 1 May 2011.

A2 migrant figures can be estimated from statistics on:

- Accession Worker Cards;
- Registration Certificates;
- The Sectors Based Scheme (SBS); and
- The Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS).

Non-EEA migrant figures in Northern Ireland can be measured from statistics on:

- The Points Based System (PBS).
4.1 Inclusive Data on Migrant Figures in Northern Ireland

4.1.1 2011 Census
On the 11th December 2012 the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency released results from the 2011 Census\textsuperscript{37}, held on 27th March 2012, including data on Identity and Migration. There are four sets of statistics that can be used to estimate migrant numbers in NI. These statistics come from mainly new questions to the 2011 Census and they are regarding:

- Country of Birth;
- Passports held;
- Main language; and
- National Identity.

**Country of Birth**
The statistics on the Country of Birth may be the best indicator for migrants living in Northern Ireland. Between April 2001 and March 2011 there was an increase of 2% (from 9-11%) in the usually resident population born outside Northern Ireland. This change has been largely attributed to inward migration from the EU since 2004 – In 2011, 2% of the resident population consisted of the 10 EU accession countries who joined in 2004 as compared with 0.1% in 2001. Half of one percent of the population were born in countries that were part of the EU pre-2004, and 2% were born in non-EEA countries.

On Census day 2011, 4.5% of the usually resident population in Northern Ireland was born in EU and non-EEA countries.

**Passports Held**
Statistics on passports held by the usually resident population, a new question for 2011, can also give an indication towards nationality. Due to instances of people holding more than one passport and each passport being recorded individually, the total exceeds 100%. It should further be noted that 18.9% held no passport, although these residents should be from the indigenous population. Alongside the 79.9% that held a UK or Irish passport, EU countries accounted for 2.2% of passports, the Middle East and Asia 0.5%, North American and the Caribbean 0.3% and Africa 0.01%. It should be noted that some settled migrants may have taken up UK or Irish citizenship and thus could have a UK or Irish passport.

On Census day, of the resident population of Northern Ireland who did not hold British or Irish passports, 2.2% held passports from Europe and 1.1% from non-EEA countries.

Main Language
A further new question revealed that English was not the main language for 3.1% of residents aged three and over.
At 1% Polish was the next most common main language to English. Rates for other languages included 0.4% for Lithuanian, 0.2% Irish and 0.1% each for Portuguese, Slovak, Chinese, Tagalog/Filipino, Latvian, Russian, Malayam and Hungarian.

Nationality Identity
The question on nationality was another new question for the 2011 Census, introduced with the aim of minority ethnic residents being able to be more fully articulate their identity. It should be noted that this data cannot be used as a fully accurate source for migrant residents as the likes of settled migrant families may identify themselves as British or Irish. Furthermore, the only non-UK or Irish classification was for ‘Other’ and so no in-depth analysis can be made.
The proportion of the resident population who identified themselves as ‘Other’ accounted for 3.4%.

4.1.2 GP Registrations
The next best estimate of total migrant population to Census data within Northern Ireland comes from registrations with General Practitioners of which there are 1,904,251. Allowing for discrepancies, data on GP registrations proves a beneficial method of measuring the total number of migrants in Northern Ireland as patients will generally de-register so as to register elsewhere. Thus, unlike our other sources of information, some measure of out-migration is considered.

There is a total of 65,108 migrants – 3.4% of registrants (51,376 from the EU [2.7%] and 13,732 from Non-EEA countries [0.7%]) - who have been registered with a Northern Ireland General Practitioner since 2006 and were still registered in July 2012 (the latest date available).

As can be seen in Figure 2, Belfast City has the largest proportion of resident migrants who have registered with a GP with 9,323 EU and 4,831 non-EEA nationals, followed by Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon (8,298 EU and 1,073 non-EEA), the Mid-Ulster District (7,561 EU

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38 The following data reports statistics for each individual national identity, regardless whether these options were chosen along with other national identities. Accordingly the sum of proportions exceeds 100%.
39 Health and Social Care Business Services Organisation.
and 1,626 non-EEA) and Newry City, Mourne and Down District (6,297 EU and 675 non-EEA nationals).

Geographical Location of GP Registered Migrants as of July 2012.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographical Location</th>
<th>EU</th>
<th>Non-EEA</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belfast City</td>
<td>9,323</td>
<td>4,831</td>
<td>14,154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Down and Ards District</td>
<td>1,712</td>
<td>739</td>
<td>2,451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antrim and Newtownabbey District</td>
<td>2,735</td>
<td>781</td>
<td>3,516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisburn City and Castlereagh District</td>
<td>2,665</td>
<td>1,043</td>
<td>3,708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newry City, Mourne and Down District</td>
<td>6,297</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>6,972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon District</td>
<td>8,298</td>
<td>1,073</td>
<td>9,371</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid and East Antrim District</td>
<td>3,174</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>3,704</td>
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<tr>
<td>Causeway Coast and Glens District</td>
<td>2,485</td>
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<td>2,981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Ulster District</td>
<td>7,561</td>
<td>1,626</td>
<td>9,187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derry City and Strabane District</td>
<td>2,259</td>
<td>702</td>
<td>2,961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fermanagh and Omagh District</td>
<td>4,009</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>4,487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown*</td>
<td>858</td>
<td>758</td>
<td>1,616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>51,376</td>
<td>13,732</td>
<td>65,108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*It is not always possible to allocate a District from the address information provided

Source: HSC BSO

Figure 2

While most families will be registered with a GP close to their home, there are exceptions. For instance, absent from the GP registration list will be members of the Armed Forces, prisoners, people who have not registered or where there is a registration lag for inward migrants and there is a margin for erroneous list clearing. Furthermore, there will be short-term migrants and those with multiple NHS numbers such as children at boarding schools providing excess numbers to the data.

As can be seen by the age band divisions in Figure 3, the greatest proportion of migrants fall under the younger age band of the working age group (16-64).
GP Registered Migrants by Age as of July 2012.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Band</th>
<th>EU</th>
<th>Non-EEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 25</td>
<td>15,292</td>
<td>4,755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>20,939</td>
<td>4,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>8,419</td>
<td>2,968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>4,210</td>
<td>987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>1,789</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>727</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51,376</td>
<td>13,732</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HSC BSO
Figure 3

While migrant registers count for 3.4% of the total population registered with a GP, it can be assumed that migrants make up a greater proportion of the working age population registered with a GP as the vast majority are banded in the younger age groups. This is backed up by *Figure 8* where National Insurance Number data shows the majority of registrants being aged between 18 and 34 (see page 24).

### 4.1.3 National Insurance Numbers (NINos)

In order to start working in the UK a person needs a National Insurance Number which must be applied for as soon as you start work. The Department for Work and Pensions produces annual reports on the working age population registered with National Insurance Numbers, including those claiming benefits. However, while the registration date is recorded, the date of application is not and there can be a large lag between these dates. Furthermore, only the inflow of legal migrant workers is recorded under the system. There is no accounting for the numbers of illegal workers or those who have moved within or emigrated out of the UK. Thus the following data cannot be used to measure the population of migrant workers in Northern Ireland or the UK. However, it can show general trends regarding nationalities and numbers.

As can be seen when comparing *Figure 4* and *Figure 5*, there is a similar trend in migration levels between Northern Ireland and the UK, although the UK as a whole experienced a sharp and sudden short-term increase in migrant National Insurance Registrations in

---

2010/11. Generally there has been a decline in registrations since 2006/2007 and so we can assume that applications for migrants seeking work fell shortly before this time.

**Total Numbers of NINo Registrations to Adult Overseas Nationals Entering the UK**

Source: DWP
Figure 4

**Total numbers of NINo Registrations to Adult Overseas Nationals Entering Northern Ireland**

Source: DWP
Figure 5
Registrations to Adult Overseas Nationals Entering Northern Ireland by World Area of Origin 2005-2012

registrations to adult overseas nationals entering the uk by world area of origin 2005-2011

Source: DWP Figure 6

Source: DWP Figure 7
As can be seen from *Figure 6* and *Figure 7*, there is a significant difference in migration habits in that Northern Ireland has a far greater proportion of workers arriving from the A8 Accession States at 67% as opposed to the 38% of A8 migrants that enter the UK as a whole.

### NI No Registrations to Adult Overseas Nationals Entering Northern Ireland by Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Northern Total</th>
<th>Ireland</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 18</td>
<td>1,450</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>36,870</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>42,420</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>14,060</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>6,850</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>1,120</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and over</td>
<td>400</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>102,870</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DWP

*Figure 8*

The trend of younger working age migrants coming to Northern Ireland can be seen in the National Insurance Number Registrations (*Figure 8*) where a substantial proportion of registrants were aged between 18 and 34.  

### 4.1.4 School Census

Information from the School Census data makes it possible to measure the numbers of pupils, both primary and post-primary, who are considered to be ‘newcomers’, i.e. a pupil who is enrolled in the school who does not have the satisfactory language skills to participate fully in the school curriculum and the wider environment, and who does not have a language in common with the teacher be it English or Irish. This category of pupils was previously referred to as ‘English as an additional language’. This data does not however confirm nationality or family background – if they come from a family of migrant workers or if they are a member of a settled family.

---


Number of Newcomer Pupils at Schools in Northern Ireland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Pupils</td>
<td>2,630</td>
<td>3,809</td>
<td>4,660</td>
<td>5,130</td>
<td>5,392</td>
<td>5,632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Primary Pupils</td>
<td>1,148</td>
<td>1,714</td>
<td>2,142</td>
<td>2,402</td>
<td>2,450</td>
<td>2,482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,911</td>
<td>5,665</td>
<td>6,995</td>
<td>7,754</td>
<td>8,093</td>
<td>8,418</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DENI, NI School Census

Figure 9

As can be seen in Figure 9, numbers of newcomer pupils in both primary and post primary have increased. In the academic year of 2011/12, newcomer primary pupils constituted 3.4% of the primary school population, and newcomer post primary pupils made up 1.7% of the total post primary school population in Northern Ireland.

Newcomer pupils totaled at 2.7% of the Northern Irish school population in 2011/12.

4.1.5 Births to Mothers born outside the UK and Ireland

The majority of births in Northern Ireland are to mothers who were born there (82% of all births in 2011). However this statistic has fallen by 4% in the last decade (86% in 2001) with the most substantial increase occurring in births by mothers from A8 countries43.

In 2001 97% of births in Northern Ireland were to mothers who were themselves born in Northern Ireland or elsewhere in the UK or Ireland. In 2010 this statistic had fallen to 90%. While there has been a large increase in births to mothers from A8 countries (from 12 in 2001 to 1,235 in 2010), numbers of births to mothers born in other countries has almost doubled (from 678 in 2001 to 1,238 in 2010).

In 2010 ten percent of all births (2,473 births) were to mothers who themselves were born outside the UK and Ireland. This is a marked rise on previous years, with just 690 such births in 2001 or 3% of all births.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registration Year</th>
<th>All Countries</th>
<th>Country of Birth of Mother</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>Rest of UK</td>
<td>Republic of Ireland</td>
<td>A8 Countries</td>
<td>All Other Countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>21,962</td>
<td>18,993</td>
<td>1,557</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>21,385</td>
<td>18,507</td>
<td>1,480</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>21,648</td>
<td>18,610</td>
<td>1,459</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>22,318</td>
<td>19,056</td>
<td>1,408</td>
<td>689</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1,131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>22,328</td>
<td>19,040</td>
<td>1,463</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>1,002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>23,272</td>
<td>19,611</td>
<td>1,477</td>
<td>736</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>1,058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>24,451</td>
<td>20,325</td>
<td>1,456</td>
<td>723</td>
<td>775</td>
<td>1,172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>25,631</td>
<td>21,095</td>
<td>1,410</td>
<td>779</td>
<td>1,080</td>
<td>1,267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>24,910</td>
<td>20,539</td>
<td>1,364</td>
<td>689</td>
<td>1,113</td>
<td>1,205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>25,315</td>
<td>20,805</td>
<td>1,323</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>1,235</td>
<td>1,238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011(^p)</td>
<td>25,273</td>
<td>20,808</td>
<td>1,296</td>
<td>692</td>
<td>1,210</td>
<td>1,267</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^p\) Provisional Data


Figure 10
4.2 A8 Migrants

4.2.1 A8 Stock Population
Regarding A8 migrant population in Northern Ireland, the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) has published A8 population by Northern Ireland District between 2007 and 2009⁴⁴. In Figure 11 one can see a gradual increase through the years.

Figure 11 clearly shows that the Districts that host a large proportion of A8 migrants are the Mid-Ulster District, Belfast City, the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon District and the Newry City, Mourne and Down District.

4.2.2 Workers Registration Scheme (WRS)

When measuring the numbers of A8 nationals working in Northern Ireland we can look to the Workers Registration Scheme (WRS) under which A8 migrants were supposed to register in order to work up until May 2011. Although the terms of working within the UK labour market required citizens from the Accession States to register themselves as workers, as EU citizens they had free ability to enter and stay in the UK as long as they could support themselves and their dependents, and this is where the difference between the WRS and the published data from the DFP regarding A8 migrant populations will differ – the WRS only recorded A8 migrants who had registered to work in the UK; it did not record A8 migrants who become self-employed. Unfortunately we once again see a case of the inflow of migrant workers being recorded without any necessity to record when a registered worker may move within the UK or emigrate abroad. Furthermore, the WRS provided little motivation to ensure that all migrant workers registered, and the figures are therefore likely to be incomplete.

![WRS Registrations by Nationality April 2005 - March 2011](image)

*Figure 12  
Source: NISRA*
As can be seen in Figure 12, in the time frame that A8 migrants were required to register with the Workers Registration Scheme, the vast majority came from Poland (57.6%), with significant numbers also coming from Lithuania (17.4%) and Slovakia (12.9%)⁴⁵.

Figure 13 shows that the majority of A8 migrants who registered under the Workers Registration Scheme, registered as living in the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon District (24.7%). Other areas with a large proportion of migrants include the Belfast City District, (16.2%), the Mid-Ulster District (15.4%) and the Newry City, Mourne and Down District (12.2%). Of course there is no guarantee the migrants remained in these areas as there was no measure of emigration or internal migration.

Source: NISRA
Figure 13

4.3 A2 Migrants

4.3.1 Accession Worker Cards

As members of the European Union, permission is not required for A2 migrants to enter and stay in the United Kingdom. However, migrants from either Bulgaria or Romania (the A2 EU Accession Countries) wishing to work in the UK will, for most categories of employment, require an Accession Worker Card. UKBA lists the categories of workers who are exempt from requiring an Accession Worker Card as follows:

- Airport-based operational ground staff of an overseas airline;
- Au Pair placements;
- Domestic Workers in a private household;
- Ministers of Religion, Missionaries or members of a Religious Order;
- Overseas Government employment;
- Postgraduate Doctors, Dentists and trainee General Practitioners;
- Private servants in a diplomatic household;
- Representatives of an overseas newspaper, news agency or broadcasting agency;
- Sole representatives;
- Teachers or Language Assistants on an approved exchange scheme;
- Overseas qualified nurses coming for a period of supervised practice.

Also exempt are those:

- Coming in under the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS) who hold a valid work card issued by a SAWS operator;
- Given permission to enter or remain in the UK before the 1st January 2007 and their passport has been endorsed with a condition restricting their employment to a particular employer or category of employment.

Highly skilled workers may be exempt from requiring an Accession Worker Card, but they will need to apply for a Registration Certificate.

---

**Approved Applications for Accession Worker Cards from A2 Nationals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Northern Ireland</th>
<th>United Kingdom</th>
<th>Northern Ireland as a % of UK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007/08</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>3,177</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>2,593</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>2,132</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2,385</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>2,357</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>678</td>
<td>12,644</td>
<td><strong>5.4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UKBA
Figure 14

Since 2009, the numbers of Bulgarian and Romanian Nationals entering Northern Ireland have been small. This may be due to the restrictions currently in place upon A2 migrants entering the European Labour Market – The UK, Ireland and Sweden were the only European countries to give free access to the labour market for A8 nationals which may go some way to explaining the large numbers of A8 nationals entering the UK prior to the recession.

Factors that influence migration include labour market access, labour demand and cultural and linguistic proximity – Sweden for instance did not see any significant increase in migration levels demonstrating the need for labour demand and that language can act as a barrier\(^{47}\).

A country that saw a spectacular increase of over 300,000 citizens from both A8 and A2 countries (the majority from Romania and Bulgaria) during the recession was Italy\(^{48}\). There was also a large number of return migrants to Poland – Polish data shows that the number of Polish residents in the UK had decreased by 135,000 between the end of 2007 and the end of 2009. At the same time the inflow of A2 migrants had grown despite the restrictions, and this resulted in a net migration increase of all A10 nationals to the UK labour market\(^ {49}\).

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\(^{49}\) Ibid
4.3.2 Registration Certificates

Bulgarian and Romanian migrant workers can apply for a Registration Certificate if they are in the UK as a self-employed person, a student or a self-sufficient person. If they are exempt from worker authorisation, they can apply for a Registration Certificate as a worker or a jobseeker\textsuperscript{50}.

Highly skilled people may apply for a Registration Certificate as such but must show that they meet certain requirements – they need to score at least 75 points across the categories of:

- The Masters in Business Administration (MBA) provision;
- Qualifications;
- Previous earnings;
- United Kingdom experience;
- Age.

As can be seen in Figure 15, the numbers coming to Northern Ireland through this route are consistently small, indicating that the vast majority of migrants coming to Northern Ireland do so for lower-skilled work.

\begin{table}[h!]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Financial Year & Northern Ireland & United Kingdom & Northern Ireland as a % of UK \\
\hline
2007/08 & 190 & 25,439 & 0.7 \\
2008/09 & 300 & 20,087 & 1.5 \\
2009/10 & 470 & 23,115 & 2 \\
2010/11 & 269 & 22,077 & 1.2 \\
2011/12 & 253 & 22,318 & 1.1 \\
Total & 1,482 & 113,036 & 1.3 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Approved Applications for Registration Certificates from A2 Nationals}
\end{table}

Source: UKBA

Figure 15

\textsuperscript{50} UKBA, Work Permits and Accession Worker Cards: http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/eucitizens/bulgaria-romania/work-permits/applying/
4.3.3 Sectors Based Scheme (SBS)
The Sectors Based Scheme (SBS) allows Bulgarian and Romanian Nationals to be employed in low-skilled work in the UK’s Food Manufacturing sector. UK-based employers must apply for an SBS Permit on behalf of low-skilled workers to fill vacancies in the food manufacturing sector that cannot be filled by resident workers. The permit will be for a specific job for a specific employer and, unless a new permit is authorised, the A2 migrant will not be allowed to work in another role or company. Once issued with an SBS permit, the migrant worker must then apply for and receive an Accession Worker Card before they can commence working.

An SBS worker will be employed within one or more of the following areas in the food manufacturing industry and will be expected to be employed to do one or more of the specific roles within them:

- Fish processing;
- Meat processing;
- Mushroom processing.

SBS permits are issued for a maximum of 12 months, but as an EU citizen there is no need to leave the UK once it expires if they can support themselves and any dependents. When they have worked in the UK for a continuous 12 months, they can apply for a registration certificate, giving unrestricted access to the UK labour market and no need for an Accession Worker Card.

An SBS permit holder can take additional employment without UKBA permission if:

- It is outside their normal working hours;
- It is no more than 20 hours per week;
- It is in the same Industrial Sector as the sector the SBS permit was issued for;
- It falls under one of the above list;
- They are not employed by a recruitment agency, employment agency or similar business to a personal client.

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51 UKBA, Sectors Based Scheme: http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/eucitizens/bulgaria-romania/sbs/SBSworkers/
Approved Applicants for the Sector Based Scheme (SBS), A2 Nationals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Northern Ireland</th>
<th>United Kingdom</th>
<th>Northern Ireland as a % of UK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007/08</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>1,161</td>
<td>33.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>1,076</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>713</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>935</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,029</strong></td>
<td><strong>23.2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UKBA
Figure 16

Reflecting the relative significance of the agricultural industry in Northern Ireland, a substantial proportion of the UK total of SBS applications were for Northern Ireland.

There was a drop in applications in the UK between 2009 and 2011. Numbers did however rise once again in 2011/12.

4.3.4 Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS)

SAWS is designed to allow farmers and growers in the UK to recruit low-skilled Bulgarian and Romanian workers to do short term agricultural work. The scheme works on a quota basis – farmers and growers who participate in the scheme can employ a fixed number of overseas workers through the scheme each year. In 2012/13 the quota is for 21,250 places – a significant reduction on the numbers employed through this scheme between 2009/10 and 2011/12 as can be seen in Figure 17 – a reduction of between 58.5% and 83.9%.

Successful applicants will receive a work card granting them permission to work in the UK for a maximum of 6 months.

SAWS workers are employed in low-skilled work including:

- Planting and gathering crops;
- On-farm processing and packing of crops;
- Handling livestock.

Workers are paid at least the Agricultural minimum wage and should be provided with accommodation by the employing farmer or grower.

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Figure 17 describes the numbers of A2 migrants employed through the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme between 2007 and 2012. These figures are only available at a UK level and, although the agriculture industry is significant in Northern Ireland, there are no official figures regarding the impact of migrant workers on the industry.

**Approved Applications for the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS) from A2 Nationals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>United Kingdom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007/08</td>
<td>11,722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
<td>16,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>33,673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>39,077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>36,773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>137,535</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UKBA

Labour market restrictions in the EU for Romanian and Bulgarian Nationals are due to end at the end of 2013. With no Northern Irish data available to relate how important A2 migrants are to the agriculture and food processing industries through SAWS, and a suspected trend of low-skilled labourers undertaking agricultural work in other economies that are showing greater prospects, the effect on Northern Ireland is difficult to predict. This is especially unfortunate due to the emphasis being placed on the agricultural and food processing industries.

In order to analyse the impact and importance of migrant workers in Northern Ireland, data is essential to know how many there are and what industries they are employed in.

### 4.4 Non-EEA Migrants

#### 4.4.1 Points Based System (PBS)
For non-EEA nationals working in Northern Ireland, the Federation of Small Businesses conducted a survey in May 2011 from the views of small firms from the FSB survey panel about how the changes to migration rules might affect them. They concluded that 7% of small business employers in Northern Ireland have a proportion of their workforce from outside the EU (9% in the UK as a whole). Among these employers, the vast majority were unaware of the Points Based System for non-EEA citizens and the recent scheme changes.
Furthermore, from those who were aware, the majority indicated that the changes to the Tier I and Tier II Points System would have no impact on their business\(^53\).

Anecdotal evidence indicates that non-EEA nationals were usually employed in manual occupations such as food processing. However, there is no data to back this up.

Numbers covering the time of application (which should, but won’t necessarily, roughly correlate with the time of entry) of non-EEA workers can be extracted from the Points Based System database. The PBS, implemented by the Labour Government in 2008 for non-EEA workers coming to the UK, works by awarding applicants points based on, for example, their skills, qualifications and salary, and requiring them to meet a minimum points threshold, these points totalling to classify a migrant under five different tiers\(^54\):

**Tier I** – Highly skilled migrants seeking work or self employment. These now include entrepreneurs, investors and those with exceptional talent (the latter either having been recognised as leaders in their field or as having the ability to be one).

**Tier II** – Allows skilled workers under the sub-heading of ‘general’ to work in the UK with a license from a registered sponsor – an annual cap of 20,700 was introduced for between the 6\(^{th}\) April 2012 and the 5\(^{th}\) April 2013 for those earning less than £150,000. There is no limit for the number of skilled workers earning above this threshold. This route also includes Intra-Company Transfers (ICTs), ministers of Religion and Sportspersons.

**Tier III** – Allowed low-skilled workers to temporarily fill temporary shortages in the UK Labour Market. This route is now closed.

**Tier IV** – Students.

**Tier V** – Temporary or domestic workers, charity workers and youth mobility schemes\(^55\).

As required the points can be amended to adjust to changing Labour Market needs in the UK.

The fact that the FSB has commented that the majority of employers in Northern Ireland who are aware of the changes to the PBS Tier I and II routes will not see any impact on their business again suggests that Northern Ireland is not benefitting from high-skilled migrant workers, but rather the low-skilled categories.

Figure 18 shows the proportion of non-EEA migrants coming to work in Northern Ireland as compared to the UK as a whole. These figures cannot be taken as the total population of


\(^{54}\) For more detailed information on the Points Based System see: [http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/policyandlaw/immigrationlaw/immigrationrules/part6a/](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/policyandlaw/immigrationlaw/immigrationrules/part6a/)

\(^{55}\) Tiers II through V require a sponsorship from a licensed sponsor such as an employer or an education institution.
non-EEA nationals working in Northern Ireland however as there is no requirement for these migrants to record their leaving or moving within Northern Ireland and the UK.

### Approved Points Based System Applications, non-EEA Nationals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Northern Ireland</th>
<th>United Kingdom</th>
<th>NI Applications as a % of UK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Main Applicants</td>
<td>Dependents</td>
<td>Main Applicants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>62,865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>769</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>172,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>775</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>185,480</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>723</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>165,874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,597</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,296</strong></td>
<td><strong>586,729</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UKBA

Figure 18
CHAPTER 5 GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Data from the Census can provide evidence for the geographical location of EU and non-EEA migrants within Northern Ireland on the 27th March 2011.

Based on data from the question on Country of Birth from the 2011 Census, the region of Northern Ireland (of which there is a total of 1,810,863 residents) plays host to 9,703 (0.5% of the population) people born in EU Countries who were members pre-2004; 35,704 people born in the EU Accession Countries (2% of the population); and 36,046 people born in ‘Other’ Countries/Non-EEA Countries (2% of the population).

As can be seen in Figure 19, at the time of the 2011 Census the highest proportion of people born in EU accession countries were in the Mid-Ulster District (4.2% of the population) and the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon District (3.1%). At 3.7% of the population Belfast City had the highest prevalence of people born outside the EU in ‘Other’ countries along with the Lisburn City and Castlereagh District (2.3%) and the Antrim and Newtownabbey District (2.2%).

Statistics from the question on the main language spoken can also be used to estimate the number of migrants within areas in Northern Ireland (Figure 20) - 24% of Northern Irish residents whose main language wasn’t English lived in Belfast on Census day. However, at 9.3% Dungannon had the highest prevalence of main languages other than English, followed by Craigavon at 6.1% and Belfast at 4.8%.
Census 2011 – Country of Birth

Country of Birth

Source: NISRA, Census 2011
Figure 19
## Census 2011 – Main Language Spoken

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northern Ireland</strong></td>
<td>1,735,711</td>
<td>1,681,171</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>17,731</td>
<td>6,250</td>
<td>4,164</td>
<td>2,293</td>
<td>2,257</td>
<td>2,214</td>
<td>1,895</td>
<td>1,273</td>
<td>1,191</td>
<td>1,174</td>
<td>1,008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Belfast City</strong></td>
<td>269,804</td>
<td>256,904</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>3,665</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>1,650</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>999</td>
<td>746</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>North Down and Ards District</strong></td>
<td>151,381</td>
<td>149,099</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Antrim and Newtownabbey District</strong></td>
<td>132,620</td>
<td>129,013</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>1,165</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>176</td>
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<td>228</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>87</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lisburn City and Castlereagh District</strong></td>
<td>179,581</td>
<td>175,547</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>1,047</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Newry City, Mourne and Down District</strong></td>
<td>161,721</td>
<td>156,794</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>836</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon District</strong></td>
<td>191,469</td>
<td>183,316</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>2,944</td>
<td>1,731</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>834</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>170</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mid and East Antrim District</strong></td>
<td>130,405</td>
<td>127,554</td>
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<td>1,105</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td>365</td>
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<td>59</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Causeway Coast and Glens District</strong></td>
<td>135,500</td>
<td>132,921</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>1,272</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mid-Ulster District</strong></td>
<td>133,278</td>
<td>125,715</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>2,008</td>
<td>2,039</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>903</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Derry City and Strabane District</strong></td>
<td>141,550</td>
<td>139,090</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fermanagh and Omagh District</strong></td>
<td>108,402</td>
<td>105,218</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>1,242</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NISRA, Census 2011

Figure 20
CHAPTER 6: THE ROLE OF ECONOMIC MIGRATION IN PROMOTING ECONOMIC GROWTH

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- DETI have identified Telecommunications & ICT, Life & Health Sciences, Agrifood, Advanced Materials and Advanced Engineering as priority sectors for growth in Northern Ireland; Business Services and Financial Services are recognized as key enabling sectors for growth.
- Traditionally financial and accounting services in Northern Ireland are focused on domestic services – this will need to shift to international marketing in order to spur economic growth;
- Highly skilled ICT professionals are emigrating out of NI for a higher rate of return for their work;
- There is an increased demand for STEM qualified staff, particularly in industries that are not attractive to graduates, e.g. in the Science-Based sector and in Energy and Utilities, an industry in which there is an absolute shortage of appropriately skilled/qualified staff. Non-EEA migrants need to be employed to fill the lead-time it will take to train a competent work-force;
- The Agri-food industry has a large scope for growing through the ‘Food 2030 Strategy’. Scotland and the Republic of Ireland have also responded to the demand for increased food production;
- The Agri-food and tourism and hospitality industries can play a key role in employing low-skilled/qualified workers, and in bringing industry to rural communities;
- A labour shortage may occur for lower-skilled occupations in food production/processing and hospitality due to the economic recovery providing greater choice for the resident labour force, and as less A8 migrants are migrating to Northern Ireland as a result of worsening economic conditions in the UK, stronger economic conditions in Eastern Europe (based on their GDP growth rate – they are still below EU averages) and the European labour market being fully opened to them;
- The Creative Media sector in Northern Ireland is attracting more high-status work and bigger productions, and care needs to be taken to ensure tax levels and a reluctance to employ migrants don’t make production companies go to other more favourable locations;
- Throughout all industries, the education system needs to improve to facilitate demanded skills and qualifications, and the industries need to become more effective in promoting their attractiveness as an industry in which to work.
There is a lack of data pertaining to the role of economic migration in promoting growth. Although migrant labour reports conducted in England include data on migrant occupational and sectoral patterns, this statistical data does not currently exist in Northern Ireland. And, while Sector Skills Councils in Northern Ireland have produced reports on skill shortages within the individual industries, little of it is relevant to migration. In the absence of such data, what we can do is highlight industries targeted for economic growth as well as industries in which high numbers of migrants are known to work and discuss how migration may play a role within the development of these sectors.

### 6.1 Skill Gaps in Northern Ireland

As it currently stands, while the proportion of those qualified to Level 3 and above in Northern Ireland (53.2%) remains fairly consistent with UK levels (56%), the proportion of those with no qualifications (18.3%) is significantly larger than that in the UK (11%)\(^{56, 57}\). Thirty five percent of the 25-64 year old population in Northern Ireland have either no or low qualifications and employers are increasingly citing that it is difficult to recruit the correct calibre of staff due to a lack of employability skills, for example, poor completion of application forms, poor presentation and attitude at interviews, a lack of awareness of what the job entails and a lack of experience and insufficient command of the English language\(^{58}\). Furthermore, employers are reporting those with higher qualifications, namely graduates, as not being ready for employment.

A vast majority of employers throughout all industries report skill gaps regarding basic essential and generic skills i.e. literacy, numeracy, communication (both oral and written) and basic IT skills. As a result, the Department for Employment and Learning has highlighted the development of literacy and numeracy skills within the workforce as essential to building a strong foundation for economic growth in Northern Ireland. While anecdotal evidence suggests that Northern Irish schools provide a good level of academic achievement by UK standards, it may be time to emphasise employability and life skills as well as deliver a better grounding in literacy and numeracy throughout the population. These issues are particularly

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\(^{57}\) *Labour Force Survey October to December 2010*, UK Population Age 22-64 by Highest Qualification.

important to resolve as the current school population will be feeding the future workforce on which the economy is built.

The “Success Through Skills: Transforming Futures” strategy developed by DEL recognizes that migration also has a role to play in growing the workforce to the desired levels and that the region must be competitive in attracting skilled people by offering attractive lifestyle and employment opportunities59.

Management and leadership are key skill requirements for every sector. Under this heading sit areas of expertise such as finance, budgeting, energy and people management as well as sector-specific roles, e.g. kitchen and stock management within the restaurant industry. Management skills are not only the foundation for the future survival and competitiveness of a business, but are particularly important in Northern Ireland as the vast majority of businesses are SMEs (small to medium-sized businesses employing less than 50 people) or micro-businesses (employing less than 10 people). SMEs in Northern Ireland account for 98.2% of all Northern Irish based VAT and/or PAYE registered enterprises (with micro-businesses accounting for 89% of the Northern Irish total). Medium-sized businesses (employing between 50 and 250 people) account for 1.5% of NI enterprises, and large businesses (employing more than 250 people) account for only 0.3%60. As a result of this business structure, large numbers of managers are needed to match the large number of businesses. However as a significant number of them will likely be owner-managed they may be less likely to identify failings as managers in themselves than others.

6.2 Economic growth through investment in key sectors

The Northern Ireland Economic Strategy 201261 identifies the following industries as holding the greatest potential for growth: Telecommunications & ICT, Life & Health Sciences, Agrifood, Advanced Materials and Advanced Engineering. The strategy further recognizes the importance of Financial Services and Business Services to enabling economic growth.

At 9.4% Northern Ireland has the lowest proportion of enterprises in the professional, scientific and technical sector out of all UK regions. By investing in a

59 DEL, Success through Skills – Transforming Futures; The Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland, 2011.
highly skilled workforce Northern Ireland will be better equipped to compete in the global marketplace. While investing in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education will help attract large international businesses to Northern Ireland, there must also be investment in skills such as foreign languages which will enable the workforce to engage effectively in global marketing.

It must also be acknowledged that across many sectors, skilled indigenous workers often choose to emigrate due to lower wage rates and a lack of career progression routes available in Northern Ireland. An example of this can be seen in the construction sector, an industry which is among those that have been hardest hit by the recession, contracting by 26% between December 2007 and June 2010. British Columbia Construction Association visited Belfast in October 2012 with recruitment opportunities for 500 immediate vacancies and up to 20,000 in the next few years. The Canadian construction industry is currently suffering labour shortages and is turning to Northern Ireland as “Irish craft workers often have a wider skills range than their counterparts in Canada whose training can be narrowly focussed”.

Furthermore, in October 2012 the launch of the first online International Job Fair, advertising 180 jobs throughout the world in a variety of sectors was promoted on local online job sites. As well as emigration, rural communities can also suffer economically from internal migration within Northern Ireland as graduates and higher-skilled people move into the cities (mainly Belfast) to undertake their career. This effect may be off-set to some degree by a boost in one or all of the traditional sectors such as agricultural, food processing or tourism.

6.2.1 Financial Services

Northern Ireland employed 6,008 people in the areas of accountancy, bookkeeping, auditing and tax consultancy in 2010. However while London has a concentration of internationally orientated financial activities with almost half of employers recruiting non-EEA personnel, 5% or less of the financial industry workforce employed in Northern Ireland and Wales were from non-EEA origins.

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62 STEM subjects include Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.
63 NIFDA, Value of Food and Drink Industry to Northern Ireland, December 2010.
64 BBC News Northern Ireland, Canadian Construction Company looking Belfast Builders, 29th September 2012.
65 www.internationaljobsfair.com hosted by IrishJobs.ie, Nijobs.com and MyJobGroup.co.uk.

Unless otherwise stated, this reference covers the section on ‘Financial Services’.
67 Ibid: Unless otherwise stated, this reference covers the section on ‘Financial Services’.
While the overall industry share of migrant employment is relatively low in Northern Ireland, it tends to be concentrated in higher value-added/skilled occupations. This is very different to other industries, such as manufacturing, construction, tourism etc., where non-UK born employment is concentrated in lower value-added/skilled occupations. However, a significant majority of employers across all sub-sectors, and firms of all sizes, within financial services felt that an inability to employ non-EEA staff would have no effect on their business (89%). This highlights Northern Ireland’s focus on internal financial affairs.

In order to transform the financial services sector into an industry that will spur economic growth, a shift in focus is required. If we look at London for example, the top global financial centre in the world\(^\text{68}\), the main concentration is in internationally orientated financial activities with almost half of employers recruiting non-EEA personnel. In Northern Ireland, however, the established financial industry is geared towards internal retail activities\(^\text{69}\). Within the sector investment banks tend to hire much more from overseas than any other employer whilst the financial advice sector, with its focus on the UK market, is far less likely to need talent from abroad.

There is a trend from within the Financial Services Industry to look progressively more to international students and international graduates to meet their recruitment needs. Employers cite three main reasons for hiring international students:

1. To meet business needs stemming from their multinational presence;
2. To meet cultural needs and take advantage of the cultural diversity international graduates bring to the marketplace;
3. Because of the skills and abilities that can differentiate between internationally educated graduates and UK educated graduates.

The Financial Services Skill Council has also identified that future expansion demand growth has become more moderate than in the past suggesting that the market as it stands is saturated. Thus a greater priority should be placed on up-skilling and re-skilling the workforce so that greater proficiency can be achieved as well as expansion into the likes of international financial services. This is corroborated by research undertaken in 2010 by DEL on the future skills needs of the Northern Ireland Financial Services Industry which concludes that the domestic industry will continue to consolidate while growth opportunities lie with businesses

\(^{68}\) Global Financial Centres Index.

which have an international orientation\textsuperscript{70}. An international workforce is key to building this side of the industry. This stems from the need for employees to have an understanding of the business culture in countries in which the firm is operating as much as any technical or linguistic understanding\textsuperscript{71}. Northern Ireland, however performs less well than other UK regions at attracting such talent\textsuperscript{72}. As BRIC and other similar economies develop with a concomitant growth in the demand for financial services, this may result in the gaps in the Northern Ireland industry being put into sharper relief.

Encouraging foreign companies to invest in Northern Ireland is therefore going to be strategically important in establishing NI in the market, and in order to do this it will have to be accepted that non-EEA nationals are going to come into the country with these industries. In the short term the higher-skilled work may in particular be occupied by non-EEA nationals, but in the long-term the resident workforce in Northern Ireland should become accomplished in the required skills, learning from team members experienced in the industry. However the need for employees to have an understanding of business cultures elsewhere in the world suggests that a culturally diverse workforce would be advantageous to any organization building its international profile.

For foreign direct investment in this sector, Northern Ireland has many advantages as a location, and indeed several major financial services companies have already established themselves in Northern Ireland including US based Citi, the Allstate Corporation, Liberty Mutual and NYSE Euronext.

Benefits of investing in Northern Ireland include\textsuperscript{73}:

- **Cost savings** – typical financial services salaries in Northern Ireland are 40\% lower than London and 30\% below Dublin; city centre property costs for Belfast are approximately one quarter of the cost of London and one third that of Dublin; broadband prices are 20\% less than Dublin, Manchester and Glasgow;
- **Infrastructure** – Northern Ireland has exceptionally strong credentials on financial services technology; Northern Ireland was the first region in Europe to have 100\% access to broadband and will shortly offer Europe’s fastest direct telecoms connection to North America; each year Northern


\textsuperscript{72} Global Financial Centres Index.

\textsuperscript{73} Invest NI, *Financial Services Brochure*, 2011.
Ireland produces more than 4,000 graduates in business and technology related disciplines including around 1,000 postgraduates;

- **Transport links** – a 90 minute drive from the major financial services hub of Dublin, New York is a six hour direct flight and there are nearly thirty flights to London every day.

### 6.2.2 Telecommunications & ICT

When recruiting experienced ICT professionals, around four out of five businesses employed from the resident labour force in Northern Ireland. However, 6% of companies did not recruit any employees from Northern Ireland, 12% recruited from the rest of the UK, 7% from Ireland and 8% from the EU. One in twenty ICT companies who took on experienced ICT professionals recruited from non-EEA countries, mainly due to the higher skill levels available or because specific skills were required. The January 2012 Snapshot Survey of the E-Skills industry also shows that 37% of ICT and 29% of larger companies report ICT staff had left their company in the past two years compared to just 15% of non-ICT companies. The main reason given for the staff turnover is that the employees were leaving to take up an ICT professional role in another company, usually emigrating out of Northern Ireland. The wage rate in Northern Ireland is among the lowest in the UK and so there can be issues with skilled people emigrating to locations with a higher rate of return for their work.

Another instance where wage levels become an issue in Northern Ireland is Intra-Company Transfers whereby large companies move staff from their overseas operations to their organisations in the UK. This is a common trend in the ICT sector. However, while there are currently no limits on the number of employees that can migrate to Northern Ireland through Intra-Company Transfers, there are salary requirements that must be met depending on the length of stay to minimise the risk of migrants displacing domestic workers. At the same time, discussion with employers suggest that it may be the case that large numbers of Intra-Company Transfers are employed at management levels where the wage limit of £40,000 will have little influence.

The current UK Shortage Occupation List includes the occupations of Software Developer and Systems Engineer within ‘visual effects and 2D/3D computer

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74 E-Skills, Northern Ireland IT and Telecoms Regional Data-Sheet, January 2012.  
Unless otherwise stated, this reference covers the section on ‘ICT’.

75 Ibid: Unless otherwise stated, this reference covers the section on ‘ICT’.
animation for film, television or video games. Local employers however would like to see the definition of these occupations broadened as they consider the current role descriptions on the Shortage Occupation List too prescriptive for the purposes of their business.

There are over 100 international ICT companies that have invested in Northern Ireland including SAP, Fujitsu, HP, Openwave, Microsoft and the Allstate Corporation. Furthermore, R&D facilities are available at 13 globally recognised ICT-related research centres.

Northern Ireland provides one of the most cost-efficient business locations in Europe with costs 38% below the European average. Companies are delivering software solutions to their US parent companies saving up to 50% on London costs and 35% on US costs. In addition, Northern Ireland offers favourable tax rates, further enhanced by the R&D tax credit scheme. The relatively small size of the NI ICT sector means that any investment in a particular niche will skew the skill demand in the industry. It will be difficult for the local education system to anticipate all the potential skill requirements which, coupled with falling numbers of local ‘A’ level and postgraduate candidates in this field will lead employers to look further afield for skilled labour. Attracting and retaining high-skilled ICT migrants as well as better utilisation of migrant labour currently residing in Northern Ireland is seen as being of critical importance if the more aspirational growth scenarios for the sector are to be realised.

6.2.3 Energy and Utilities
In Northern Ireland, while energy has not been highlighted as a priority growth industry, the development of the economic infrastructure will provide a firm foundation for growth. Key indicators in this respect have been identified for the energy sector.

76 E-Skills for UKCES, Sector Skills Assessment, Not Yet Published.
77 NISMP, NISMP Response to Migration Advisory Committee Call for Evidence: Review of the Shortage Occupation Lists for the UK, Nov 2012.
80 ibid
81 EU Skills, Skills Assessment Northern Ireland 2010, 2010. Unless otherwise stated, this reference covers the section on ‘Energy and Utility’.
EU Skills research suggests that there are 18,550 employees operating in the sector across NI within 900 businesses\(^3\). The sector is formed from a few dominant large companies, generally operating across the utilities leading to increased demand for multi-utility training and qualifications, supported by a large number of small and medium sized contractor companies which provide specialised services to each of the industries. The utilities (electricity, gas and water) are recognised as being of economic significance and of suffering from a skills deficit.

In a survey carried out by the CBI, 89% of energy and water employers were seeking scientific and mathematically skilled staff. Electrical, mechanical, power systems, design and planning skills at degree level are particularly important to the utilities, especially going forward as infrastructure expansion projects, including low carbon energy technologies, begin to ramp up. These infrastructure plans will result in an increased demand for STEM qualified graduates, presenting further demands on higher education budgets. Energy and Utility companies also have concerns regarding graduates from STEM subjects. These concerns include the fact that the sector does not seem attractive to graduates, resulting in a low rate of graduates applying for vacancies, and the opinion that the acquired degrees are not relevant to the business.

The highest skills deficit in the sector is with regard to experienced senior engineers and engineering managers/technicians. In the short term little can be done to address skill shortages through intra-EU recruitment as there is an absolute shortage of appropriately skilled/qualified applicants. Thus there is a need in the short term to recruit from outside the EU as there will be a significant lead-time (approximately 5 years) to create and train a competent workforce plus further time needed to gain appropriate experience. Numbers of non-EEA migrants employed may be small, but they will be filling crucial roles in the industry until the indigenous workforce can be trained to take over. Following a successful submission of evidence of skills shortages in the industry to the Migration Advisory Committee in 2009 by EU Skills, 23 EU Skills occupations were added to the UK's Shortage Occupation List.

The two main challenges facing the sector in the immediate future include the need to adhere to environmental pressure to decarbonise the economy, and to replace the existing aging infrastructure. Over the next ten to fifteen years, around £200bn will be spent across the UK on new power generation, transmission and distribution systems. An additional £10bn is planned for a full smart roll-out and smart grid

trials and deployment. Such a scheme requires a high degree of skill and capital investment and it is the hope that the UK will be at the forefront of this global revolution. Other industrialised countries are currently going through the same shift and less industrially developed countries are increasingly demanding electric provision. Thus this sector has the opportunity for economic growth through international business.

6.2.4 Science-Based Sector (Advanced Materials, Advanced Engineering, Life & Health Sciences)\textsuperscript{84}

There are approximately 15,000 people employed in the science-based sector. While the hi-tech manufacturing sector can be high-value added and provide higher than average wages for employees, Northern Ireland has the second lowest rate of innovation within enterprises in the UK, and STEM subjects would appear to be the least appreciated in Northern Ireland\textsuperscript{85}. Furthermore, due to a lack of appropriate skills and a poor sector image, 57\% of employers of professional scientists and engineers find that they have hard-to-fill vacancies.

The majority of employers place a high value on graduates and trade apprentices entering the sector, although the age demographic of the sector is slightly skewed due to the qualification requirements. The majority of the workforce (54\%) are aged between 35 and 54.

An additional employment requirement of 2,800 is predicted for 2017 with science-related occupations expected to form the majority of workforce demand. It will be important to encourage young people to take up careers in science-based occupations. It is also important to note that as part of the contributions to the NISMP response to the MAC consultation on Tier 2 criteria in November 2012, it was noted that there is a global shortage of skilled workers in this sector and that programmes currently offered through UK tertiary education do not adequately address the existing skills gaps. For metal mining in particular, the limited industry in the EU means that means that experienced geologists and mining engineers must almost always be recruited from elsewhere\textsuperscript{86}.


\textit{Unless otherwise stated, this reference covers the section on the ‘Science-Based Sector’.}

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid: \textit{Unless otherwise stated, this reference covers the section on the ‘Science-Based Sector’}.

\textsuperscript{86} NISMP, \textit{NISMP Response to Migration Advisory Committee Call for Evidence: Review of the Shortage Occupation Lists for the UK}, Nov 2012.
While Northern Ireland does not have a significant oil and gas footprint, the sector is still important to the economy with an overall turnover of £1.3bn, Gross Value Added of £0.6bn and a contribution of 18% of all Northern Irish exports. Within the sector, 60% of their output is exported from Northern Ireland. This is compared to a Northern Irish manufacturing average of 35%.

6.3 Investment Opportunities

Northern Ireland is an attractive country to invest in – the region has a relatively young population and competitive labour costs as wage levels are among the lowest in the UK\textsuperscript{87}. Although in November 2012 the median weekly wage for a public sector worker in Northern Ireland was £576.30 (compared to £564.60 in the UK), there is a large difference in private sector earnings where the median weekly wage is £397.70 in Northern Ireland compared to a UK average of £479.10\textsuperscript{88}. Invest NI have highlighted these advantages for international companies investing in Northern Ireland which include cost savings through wage levels and rental rates, the shared regulations and ethos as the UK and the transport links to America, Europe and the mainland UK\textsuperscript{89}.

Northern Ireland also has a successful track record in attracting inward investment through Invest NI and a strong tourism environment boosted by projects such as ‘Our Time, Our Place’ and the Titanic Centre\textsuperscript{90}.

Two key elements in investment decisions include the quality of the infrastructure and the rate of taxation. Good transport and telephone links, reliable and affordable energy and a schools/college system producing a well educated workforce are essential to encourage investment and to help local businesses to grow and compete in an increasingly global marketplace. There has been recent success in attracting high-value jobs and investment from major US corporations, made possible through investment in cutting edge telecoms connectivity. Northern Ireland now has faster

\textsuperscript{87} ONS, 2012 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings; 2012 Provisional Results Release, November 2012. It should be noted that the earnings for London and the South East boost the UK average as they have substantially higher wages.

\textsuperscript{88} DFP, Results from the Northern Ireland Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2012, November 2012.

\textsuperscript{89} Invest NI, Financial Services Sector Brochure – Locate in Northern Ireland; ICT Sector Brochure – Invest in Northern Ireland; Business Services Sector Brochure – Locate in Northern Ireland, 2011.

\textsuperscript{90} HM Treasury, Rebalancing the NI Economy, March 2011.
and more reliable access to the global internet than many other competitor regions\textsuperscript{91}.

Northern Ireland also provides a competitive nearshore proposition to Europe, with the advantage of operating in the same time-zone and regulatory environment as the UK. As part of the European Union, companies located in Northern Ireland can take advantage of tariff-free access to the world’s largest consumer market of over 400 million people.

However, two things currently have the potential to detract investors. The first is the lack of consensus regarding corporation tax, the level of which will dictate the attractiveness of Northern Ireland to investors. The second is the migration legislation that dictates that, while there are no limits on the number of Intra-Company Transfers (a route many foreign direct investors, particularly in the ICT industry undertake), there is a lower wage limit which, as it currently stands, is based on wage bands in England. As Invest NI have highlighted as an incentive several times in their campaigns, Northern Irish wage rates are significantly lower than those found in the rest of the UK. However, this incentive may be neutralised by the lower wage limit imposed on Intra-Company Transfers.

A limit on the number of Tier 2 Non-EEA migrants may also make it more difficult to employ skilled staff that the company may want to bring with them or recruit. In addition, a decreasing ability to attract internationally mobile staff\textsuperscript{92} and a perceived unwelcoming atmosphere may dissuade companies from investing in the UK altogether\textsuperscript{93}.

\textsuperscript{91} Department of the Northern Ireland Executive, \textit{Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2011-21: Building a Better Future}.
\textsuperscript{92} CBI: Making the UK the best place to invest
6.4 Developing Traditional Industries

There is broad agreement that Northern Ireland needs to develop the private sector and to evolve from its traditional reliance on the public sector. But while there is increasing focus on high-skilled industries that are high value and have high export rates, it is also important to concentrate on the industries and skills in which Northern Ireland already has a strong foundation and to build on pre-existing strengths.

Two industries in which Northern Ireland has a tradition of hiring large numbers of migrant workers are the agri-food industry and private health care. Although there are no official statistics regarding migrant volumes for either industry, anecdotal evidence suggests that indigenous workers do not want to be associated with the poor reputations that these industries can have with regard to long hours, shift work and typical low pay levels. In private health care in particular there is a lack of data (the number of migrant workers in residential and nursing care is estimated at 8.5% and 1.7% in domiciliary care\(^{94}\)) and available facts on skill shortages within the workforce are based on the English Health Care sector rather than Northern Ireland. Employers have, however, reported that migrant workers are returning to their country of origin due to the difficult economic climate in Northern Ireland which will leave a shortage of care workers at a time when the demand for care will be increasing due to the demographic shift to an older population and the increase of cases of certain diseases\(^ {95}\).

Industries which have an already proven capacity for success in Northern Ireland and which have potential for further growth include the agricultural and food processing sectors, the tourism and hospitality industry and the creative industries.

6.4.1 Agri-Food Industry\(^ {96}\)

In 2010 the agri-food industry in Northern Ireland held an estimated 20% of all Northern Ireland private sector employment, up to 92,000 people involved in activities such as primary production, food processing and the supply chain of local

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\(^{94}\) Northern Ireland Social Care Council; Skills for Care and Development, *Sector Skills Assessment: Northern Ireland*, February 2012.

\(^{95}\) Ibid

\(^{96}\) LANTRA, *Northern Ireland Sector Skills Assessment, 2010/11*. Unless otherwise stated, this reference covers the section on the ‘Agri-Food Industry’. 
transport, packaging and engineering. Twelve food and drink processing firms featured in the Belfast Telegraph Top 100 Companies in Northern Ireland and five of these were in the top 50. Furthermore, the food and drink industry has always made an important contribution to the Northern Ireland export trade. In 2008 two thirds of the output of the industry was sold outside Northern Ireland, with over £1.2bn in sales to the GB market, £516m to the Republic of Ireland and £360m to markets outside the UK and Ireland. This represents a significant net earnings contribution to the Northern Ireland economy.

The Food 2030 Strategy published by DEFRA highlights UK food security as a key issue against a backdrop of climate change and a growing world population. The strategy sets out a challenge for the UK to ensure that it can feed itself in the years to come through sustainable food production. This is set in the context of a trade deficit for food in the UK which has risen from £10.4bn in 1997-1999 to £18.4bn in 2008.

The need for greater food security and the current UK deficit for food together represent an outstanding opportunity for the Northern Ireland agri-food sector to continue its growth and further increase exports to the GB market.

The Scottish Executive and the Irish Government have both demonstrated that they are very alive to the potential for growth in their agri-food sectors. The Scottish Executive has set a target for the Scottish food and drink industry to grow by 60% to £12.5bn by 2017 and a vision to build Scotland’s international reputation as ‘A Land of Food and Drink’, which it is supporting with new investment.

The UK was the main destination for Republic of Ireland agri-food and drink exports in 2008 accounting for 45% (3.3bn Euros) of all exports. In its published strategy ‘Food Harvest 2020’, the Irish Government has set a target to grow its exports of food and beverages by over 40% to 12bn Euros by 2020, including more than an additional 1bn Euros to the UK market.

Northern Ireland has geographic and natural advantages in the agri-food industry. Firstly, as there is growing interest in sourcing British foods, together with new Country of Origin labelling guidelines, Northern Ireland can benefit from claiming provenance in both Britain and Ireland; and secondly, while certain regions are unable to compete due to water deficit issues caused by climate change and population growth, Northern Ireland with an ample water supply, available land and
a temperate climate has a more sustainable production model, especially in grassland livestock based food products\textsuperscript{99}.

The industry is in an ideal position to address two economic issues in Northern Ireland – the large proportion of people with low skills/qualifications or none at all, and the declining rural community economy. Agri-food production has the crucial capacity to create jobs at lower skill levels and a successful and growing food and drink industry is likely to generate additional employment and income for the rural economy, where it sources from, and as such is probably the single most important source of sustaining the rural population.

The potential of the industry has been recognised in the draft Programme for Government 2011-15, which contains a commitment ‘to develop a strategic plan for the agri-food sector’ and it is hoped that this strategy will be at least as successful as driving forward export-led employment growth as the strategies already in place in the Republic and Scotland.

In order to proceed there are important skill gaps that need to be tackled such as marketing and senior management skills, and industry specific skills such as animal nutrition and genetic traits. If the industry is to increase its competitiveness, it also needs to raise the level of investment in research and development at every step of the supply chain.

In addition, the food and drink industry, particularly the food processing industry, contains highly unattractive jobs which entail long hours and hard manual work for low pay. As a result, although the data is somewhat lacking, it is the industry in which most believe migrant workers to be employed – Dunbia for instance employs 1,240 people in Northern Ireland and around 60\% at operative level are migrant workers\textsuperscript{100}.

The Lantra/DARD Survey 2010\textsuperscript{101}, recording data from the agricultural sector\textsuperscript{102}, found that only 2\% of businesses surveyed employed migrant workers in the previous 12 months, placing migrant employment in the sector at 3\%, the majority from Poland. Robust analysis of results from the Lantra/DARD Survey at an industry level is not however possible due to the low number of responding businesses. This makes any analysis unreliable but it does suggest that the use of migrant labour is highest within farming industries. A2 nationals are allowed to

\textsuperscript{100} Business in the Community, \textit{Best Practice Case Studies for Employing Migrant Workers}.
\textsuperscript{101} Lantra, \textit{Northern Ireland Skills Assessment}, 2010/11.
\textsuperscript{102} Note that DARD/Lantra covers the agricultural sectors and not food processing whose Sector Skill Council is Improve.
enter the UK for a maximum of 6 months under the Seasonal Agricultural Scheme (SAWS) to be employed in low-skilled seasonal work such as planting/gathering crops, on farm packaging of produce and handling of livestock. However figures are only available at a UK level – 36,773 in 2011/12. A quota for 2012 and 2013 has been set at 21,250 workers\textsuperscript{103}. This may have implications for agricultural industries in NI wishing to expand.

In 2009, within industries which fall under the Lantra remit there was a vacancy rate of only 1.6% (1,025) of total employment, 47% of which were classed as Hard-to-Fill. The most commonly cited reasons for Hard-to-Fill Vacancies were a lack of job specific skills and technical skills, business management and IT skills. Other key factors included that people were not interested in doing the job (17.9%) and shift work/unsociable hours (16% each).

Around 8% of the sector’s workforce is reported as having a skill gap (5,350 employees). Animal Health and Welfare and Environmental industries report the highest proportion of skill gaps at 14% and 13.5% respectively and farming the lowest at 5.2%.

Climate/seasonal change, increasing costs of commodities (e.g. fertiliser and oil), disease epidemics, technological change and legislation will have a bearing on future skills needs.

6.4.2 Tourism and Hospitality\textsuperscript{104}

Tourism is a priority sector and the sector sets out a bold ambition for the future to increase tourism employment to 50,000 by 2020, with 4.5million visitors annually generating £1bn for the NI economy.

People 1\textsuperscript{st} report that in 2011, 6,700 migrant workers were employed in the hospitality sector across the industries of hotels and restaurants\textsuperscript{105}. This equates to 18% of the total workforce as compared to the 25% of migrant workers employed in the UK hospitality sector.

Across the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism sectors, 14% of employers had vacancies compared to 12% as a whole in Northern Ireland, and 5% of them are classed as Hard-to-Fill. This has largely been explained by a combination of high

\textsuperscript{103} UKBA, Approved Applications for the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme.

\textsuperscript{104} People 1\textsuperscript{st}, Sector Skills Assessment for the Hospitality, Leisure, Travel and Tourism Sector 2010, December 2010. \textit{Unless otherwise stated, this reference covers the section on 'Tourism and Hospitality'}.

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid: \textit{Unless otherwise stated, this reference covers the section on 'Tourism and Hospitality'}.
labour turnover and poor perception of the sector in which to pursue a career. 12% of employers reported a skill gap in their workforce in 2010.

The most difficult positions to fill are managerial (especially important due to nearly 90% of businesses in the sector being classed as SMEs) and skilled chef occupations, and the majority of skill gaps relate to these two occupations alongside customer service skills. The Migration Advisory Committee has defined skilled chefs as earning at least £8.45 per hour after deductions for accommodation, meals etc. and as having at least three year’s relative experience. However, with lower wage levels in Northern Ireland, recruiting skilled chefs from non-EEA countries (particularly specialists in Asian and Oriental cuisines that incorporate skills that cannot easily be taught in the UK) may be a challenge under the new migration restrictions. In fact the People 1st Sector Skills Assessment states that the UK’s immigration policy will create significant skills shortages for Asian and Oriental restaurants.

It is estimated that annually, sector employers need to recruit around 2,000 chefs. At the time of the Sector Assessment report 1,527 individuals were studying towards a cooking related qualification – there is a considerable shortfall.

Another issue to take into consideration, especially when considering a desired increase in employment and business, is the lower-skilled front-line occupations. Traditionally these roles are in the majority filled by transient staff such as students and migrants (particularly EU migrants from Poland). Generally work within the sector has been seen as a temporary stop-gap job rather than a career, and the sector needs to concentrate on and create a higher skilled and more professional sector. Through the recession there has been increased stability in the sector as people are unwilling to leave employment in the poor economic conditions, but as the economy recovers this trend can be predicted to fall again. Combine this with the fact that there has been a stark reduction in EU migrants working in the UK and the industry could face hard-to-fill vacancies through a lack of applicants or interest.
6.4.3 Creative Media

Another sector in which investment may wield large gains is the creative media sector. An industry that will help drive the tourism sector is the film industry that, while less mature than the UK industry, it is becoming of greater strategic importance in Northern Ireland.

The success of Belfast’s Titanic Studios in attracting HBO’s drama Game of Thrones (said to contribute about £20 million per series to the Northern Ireland economy) and films such as Universal’s Your Highness (which brought in £11m) have already improved the perception of Northern Ireland as a production location among film-makers. However PwC have advised that EU countries are starting to increase tax breaks to attract film production and unless Northern Ireland can do the same its competitive edge could be damaged. A report by PwC suggested that the UK entertainment and media market would grow by 3.7% per annum on average for the four years up to 2014.

The creative media sector contains a highly qualified workforce with 69% holding a Level 4 qualification. While a vast proportion of the workforce are graduates, the supply side in Northern Ireland was viewed as not being up to the mark in providing job-ready candidates, with many courses identified as not teaching material relevant for the industry and being around two years behind industry requirements. There are further issues with many businesses in the sector being established by young, highly-educated entrepreneurs who often lack business experience and have little knowledge of business skills such as sales, marketing and accountancy.

At the time of the Sector Skills Assessment report the creative media industry in Northern Ireland employed approximately 10,900 people with a further 1,100 employed in creative media occupations in other industries. Of the 12% of employers reporting vacancies in 2010, 57% of them reported Hard-to-Fill Vacancies (the highest of the UK regions which average 46%). Main reasons cited were a lack of relevant work experience or skills.

40% of Northern Ireland employers reported a skills gap compared to only 27% across the UK. In short supply were job/sector-specific skills such as production skills for multi-platform content and understanding of intellectual property legislation, and management and leadership skills and commercial acumen. These shortages have resulted in the industry importing labour – NI Screen-funded film

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106 Skillset, Sector Skills Assessment for the Creative Media Industries in Northern Ireland, January 2011. Unless otherwise stated, this reference covers the section on ‘Creative Media’.

107 Ibid: Unless otherwise stated, this reference covers the section on ‘Creative Media’.

productions have typically seen at least half of total staff and crew coming from outside Northern Ireland.
CHAPTER 7  CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While there are no official figures for migrants employed within Northern Ireland, anecdotal evidence would suggest that migrant labour is an important factor in many large industries, particularly those which operate in a global market or employ people in low-skilled or unattractive occupations. We should therefore be cognisant of the impact migration flows will have on the local economy.

While the legislative changes to the Points Based System will not affect EU migrants, who make up the majority of those employed in low-skilled and unattractive occupations, there has nevertheless been a marked decrease in EU migrants immigrating to Northern Ireland. This is partly due to worsening economic conditions locally, and partly due to recent access to the full European labour market for A8 migrants. In addition Polish\textsuperscript{109} and Eurostat data indicate that in terms of 2011 GDP growth rate, four A8 countries were leading the Eurozone: Estonia (up 8.3% on the previous year), Lithuania (5.9%), Latvia (5.5%) and Poland (4.5%). UK growth rate in 2011 was 0.9% on the previous year. In 2009 Poland was the only EU country showing economic growth in the Eurozone (up 1.6% on the previous year). Economically, Poland is growing fast: in 1995 Poland’s GDP per capita was 43% of the EU average; in 2000 it was 48%; and preliminary data in 2011 indicates that it is 65% of the average\textsuperscript{110}. It should be noted however, that while the Eastern European countries are swiftly growing, their GDP rate is still well below the European average. Nevertheless, stronger economic conditions at home may impact on the decision about whether or not to emigrate.

In Northern Ireland the agriculture, food processing, hospitality and private health care sectors rely disproportionately on a migrant labour workforce. Non-skills related reasons such as low pay, unattractive work and shift work may go some way towards explaining why there are large numbers of A8 migrants rather than indigenous workers employed in these sectors. Without action to tackle these non-skills barriers these sectors may face a shortage of labour which will only worsen as economic recovery grants more choice to the resident labour force, and as EU migrants exercise their rights to access the full European labour market. Coupled with the sectoral plans to develop and expand these industries, the implications of these labour shortages will be acutely felt.

\textsuperscript{109} Główny Urząd Statystyczny – Poland’s Central Statistical Office, charged with collecting and publishing statistics related to the country’s economy, population and society.
\textsuperscript{110} Ministry of Treasury,
For higher skilled roles in the likes of the financial, ICT and science-based industries, an agenda for growth and accessing the global market will call for skills that are generally met through the use of non-EEA labour within the UK, i.e. language skills, cultural knowledge, job-specific skills, experience in international business etc., essential for economic competitiveness. The new migrant legislative restrictions on non-EEA migrants may severely restrict Northern Ireland’s ability to establish itself and compete in the international market. Moreover, lower general wage levels within Northern Ireland may restrict Intra-Company Transfers and inhibit local industries’ ability to attract foreign direct investment. Restrictions on international students upon completing their course may also result in a reduction of Non-EEA migrants considering the UK labour market.

From the research conducted both by DEL and Sector Skill Councils, it is apparent that there needs to be a restructuring of the education/training system at either end of the spectrum, that is, there needs to be an improvement in basic essential skills (e.g. communication, literacy etc.) as well as in higher skills in order to provide effective management teams and establish a more innovative business environment. Increased numbers of STEM-educated workers will be required to fulfil the intentions of improving upon the markets identified for growth in the 2012 Northern Ireland Economic Strategy. However, even if training and education is provided to create a workforce skilled to the required degree, there will still be a lag time before this workforce is qualified, experienced and employment ready. Thus, for at least the short term, migrant workers may still need to be employed to build and develop the sectors and in the longer term, for businesses which have a global reach, a culturally diverse workforce will help develop a company’s understanding of other markets and so enhance competitiveness.

Lower skilled businesses which wish to expand, particularly those in the agri-food and hospitality industries, are likely to require a continued supply of migrant workers alongside an incentive to employ the resident population in these roles. The expansion of these industries may reinvigorate rural communities which are likely to suffer from low levels of employment and economic activity as industry tends to be focused within cities.

The availability of statistical data regarding migrant labour in Northern Ireland is a key issue when considering employment and migration policy: the small proportion among the small proportional size of Northern Ireland compared to the UK means that data collection and analysis is not currently a priority. In order to bolster these conclusions, or indeed any other forecasts that are made with regard to the level and deployment of migrant labour, it will be necessary for UK-wide research to disaggregate findings across the regions and for more Northern Ireland specific
research to be carried out in relation to particular industries. Policy makers and employers must take into consideration the implications of possible changes in migration patterns from both within and outside the EU when developing economic plans and related skills and recruitment strategies.

**Recommendations**

- Immigration policy should reflect the requirements of the Northern Irish economy which are different to those of other regions. In order to fully inform such work, further research is required regarding deployment and impact of migrant workers in Northern Ireland and trends in migration patterns to and from the region. It is recommended that NISMP approach the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) to carry out this initial work.

- Policy makers and employers must take into account the implications of the findings of any MAC research, the effects this will have on the economy and strategies for economic growth, and plan accordingly.

- Employers and employer representatives, in association with relevant government departments, should develop appropriate strategies to address non-skills related barriers to work such as low pay for difficult manual labour and shift work, which deter indigenous Northern Irish workers.

- Employers, in association with their representative Sector Skills Councils and relevant government departments, should develop appropriate strategies for attracting, recruiting and retaining appropriately skilled workers from both the indigenous population and, where necessary, the migrant labour pool.

- Skill shortages with regards to employability, including literacy and numeracy, must be factored into education planning so that the education system contributes effectively towards economic growth.

- NISMP should support any changes in immigration policies which facilitate the economic growth as planned for by the Executive if such changes are demonstrated as necessary.
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Migration
Collaboration
Policy
Cohesion
Migrant Worker
Regional
Asylum
Refugee
Local Economy
Integration