

ONS Short-term Migrant Flows: Mid-2007

Background

In October 2008, CLG Minister Iain Wright MP outlined in a debate raised by Mark Field MP (Conservative, Cities of London and Westminster), how his department was working with local authorities to manage the transitional impact of migration on local areas. He specifically mentioned the cross-Government programme to improve population and migration statistics (IMPS). He added that ONS estimates use the UN recommended definition of long-term international migrants, but ONS recognise the difficulties some LAs face and have published experimental national-level estimates of short-term migration for mid-2004 to mid-2006. He indicated that ONS intended to produce a feasibility report on its plans to produce local estimates and that if reliable estimates for short-term migrants then became available; the Government could consider whether to include this data in the three-year grants distribution system.

On November 19th 2008 the Office for National Statistics (ONS) released the feasibility report on the production of local area short-term migration estimates. This is obviously a topic that has emerged as a high priority for local authorities in view of the perception of recent increases in short-term migration; particularly since the A8 Eastern European countries joined the EU in May 2004. The GLA, London Councils and many authorities have campaigned for short-term migrants to be considered by CLG in the local government revenue settlements.

On 8th October 2009 ONS issued a research report on local authority level short-term migrant estimates:

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/methodology/specific/population/future/imps/updates/downloads/STMLocalReport.pdf>

The estimates of flows for the year to mid-2007 contained within the report are neither 'national statistics' nor 'experimental statistics' but are being published within the research report to give users a chance to comment on the methodology as well as to 'sense-check' the results. The feedback form is:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/methodology/specific/population/future/imps/updates/downloads/STMFeedback_Form.doc

Following feedback ONS plans to release mid-2008 short-term migrant estimates in May 2010.

ONS Proposals (November 2008)

There was a consultation following the original ONS feasibility study relating to short-term migration that specifically asked for views on the definition of short-term migrants to be used. Following the feedback ONS propose to use a definition that encompasses **any visit of between 1 and 12 months for any purpose**. This is much wider than the UN definition that relates to visits of 3 to 12 months for employment or study. Given the size of the sample in the International Passenger Survey (IPS) the strict UN definition would have only had 212 contacts in the year to mid-2006. The wider proposed definition would have had 2,142 contacts, of whom only 506 were for employment or study. London boroughs and some rural authorities were interested in temporary foreign workers, but the sample size precludes producing estimates of such closely defined groups of migrants at LA

level. If all visits of less than one month were considered the sample would be swamped by the large number of holiday and short business trips that account for about 95% of all visits planned to be of less than a year.

Of the 2,142 visits in the sample for the year to mid-2006, 781 were to destinations in London. Given the level of missing destination records, **London had 41 per cent of the sample of short-term arrivals** to England and Wales. The South East was the next most popular destination, but with less than half the number coming to London.

A further source of information on migration is found in a selection of administrative records. ONS is concentrating on the **Worker Registration Scheme (WRS)** and **National Insurance allocations to overseas nationals (NINo)**.

It is also using a range of variables selected to reflect the different reasons why people arrive in the UK for short visits and their potential locations. These include patient registration data (Flag 4s), unemployment, vacancies, HESA and Census data on overseas students, houses in multiple occupation, long-term emigration estimates, the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR), country of birth of residents and ethnic group population estimates. Each of these sources may be linked with both short-term and long-term arrivals but can offer no information about departures of short-term migrants.

The WRS is specific to migrants from the A8 countries but is unique in asking intended length of stay. Therefore there is value in comparing data for A8 citizens in both the WRS and NINo to attempt to disentangle short-term and long-term migrants. A further issue with the WRS is that it is geographically referenced to place of work rather than home address, like NINo.

ONS plans to link data using **regression modelling** using a range of variables for potential selection in a final model. Also being considered are the ONS estimates of long-term migration and population size. The modelling should **identify significant explanatory variables and their relative importance**.

The IPS 'completed flow' data – ie short-term migrants surveyed on exit – will be modelled. The missing information on location will need to be imputed, using the location of stay information of other contacts. The proposed model, in using a comprehensive range of potential sources, will need to accommodate the fact that a majority of the available variables relate to employment and study. However, variables have been found that should also reflect tourism, visiting friends or family and short-term business stays linked to locations of large or multi-national corporations.

ONS Research Report (October 2009)

Short-term migrant flows have been prepared for local authorities under two headings – workers and non-workers. The flows relate to persons entering the country for periods of between a month and 12 months. England and Wales data from the IPS are split into workers and non-workers. The workers are distributed using NINos while the non-workers are distributed using regression techniques and a number of sources.

The IPS data on workers only has 22 per cent of individuals with a complete response as to local authority areas. A further 11 per cent had partial location information and the vast majority of these related to London. Therefore two-thirds of records had no locational information. Initially two sets of information on NINos, based on date of arrival in the UK, were used – all nationalities and A8 countries only. London boroughs are allocated many more workers when all nationalities are used rather than just A8. The final allocation is based on splitting arrivals into A8 and non-A8 nationalities.

For the allocation of non-workers the final regression model used the following variables:

- Flag 4 – new NHS patients from outside England & Wales
- Hotels & Catering – businesses in the sector from the Inter Department Business Register
- Other Ethnic Group – from 2001 Census
- Mining & Manufacturing – ONS area classification
- London – ONS area classification
- Cities & Services – ONS area classification
- Coastal & Countryside – ONS area classification

A number of other variables were tested but were not selected by the regression. These included:

- Foreign students – HESA
- Non-UK born – 2001 Census
- Employment Size – IDBR
- Long-term Immigration – IPS
- Long-term Emigration – IPS
- Other ethnic categories
- Other area classifications

Only 13 per cent of short-term migrants had come to work. In the non-worker categories, 40 per cent were visiting friends or family, 16 per cent were on holiday, 15 per cent came to study and 9 per cent were on business.

Results

London boroughs fill the top three, and eight of the top ten, places amongst all authorities in receipt of short-term migrant workers, lead by Newham, Brent and Ealing. London boroughs fill the first place, and seven of the top ten, places, amongst all authorities in receipt of all short-term migrants. Westminster leading the way with nearly twice as many short-term migrants as Manchester in second place.

Table 1 shows the estimates for London boroughs. London and England. It also shows the relationship between the short-term migrants and the resident population at mid-2007. At 27 per cent of its resident population Westminster has by far the highest relative population of short-term migrants. The next highest authority is Oxford at 13 per cent followed by Camden and Cambridge at 12 per cent.

The ONS report (see link above) has much more detail about the methodology as well as an Annex showing the estimates for all local authorities in England and Wales.

Table 1: Estimates of short-term migration for London boroughs, mid-2007

	Non-worker	Worker	Total	mid-2007 population estimate (000s)	Per cent of Population		
					Non-worker	Worker	Total
City of London	1,840	170	2,000	8.0	23	2	25
Camden	26,180	1,780	27,970	231.9	11	1	12
Hackney	8,620	1,780	10,400	209.7	4	1	5
Hammer-smith and Fulham	13,070	2,100	15,160	172.5	8	1	9
Haringey	11,510	3,060	14,570	224.7	5	1	6
Islington	13,870	1,500	15,360	187.8	7	1	8
Kensington and Chelsea	15,890	1,490	17,370	178.6	9	1	10
Lambeth	15,240	2,530	17,770	273.2	6	1	7
Lewisham	9,980	1,510	11,480	258.5	4	1	4
Newham	13,990	4,370	18,360	249.6	6	2	7
Southwark	19,180	2,070	21,250	274.4	7	1	8
Tower Hamlets	14,080	2,780	16,860	215.3	7	1	8
Wandsworth	16,280	2,570	18,850	281.8	6	1	7
Westminster, City of	60,330	2,490	62,830	234.1	26	1	27
Inner London	<i>240,000</i>	<i>30,000</i>	<i>270,000</i>	3000.3	8	1	9
Barking and Dagenham	3,620	800	4,410	166.9	2	0	3
Barnet	21,030	2,430	23,460	329.7	6	1	7
Bexley	3,060	380	3,440	222.1	1	0	2
Brent	17,310	4,250	21,560	270.0	6	2	8
Bromley	4,650	510	5,250	300.7	2	0	2
Croydon	9,230	1,450	10,680	339.5	3	0	3
Ealing	25,140	4,010	29,150	305.3	8	1	10
Enfield	6,080	1,490	7,570	285.1	2	1	3
Greenwich	8,440	1,340	9,780	223.1	4	1	4
Harrow	8,140	1,460	9,600	214.6	4	1	4
Havering	2,220	260	2,480	228.4	1	0	1
Hillingdon	10,150	1,120	11,270	250.7	4	0	4
Hounslow	14,600	2,690	17,290	220.6	7	1	8
Kingston upon Thames	10,800	680	11,480	157.9	7	0	7
Merton	9,540	1,620	11,150	199.3	5	1	6
Redbridge	6,370	1,360	7,730	254.4	3	1	3
Richmond upon Thames	8,410	670	9,090	180.0	5	0	5
Sutton	3,770	440	4,210	185.9	2	0	2
Waltham Forest	7,460	2,870	10,330	222.3	3	1	5
Outer London	<i>180,000</i>	<i>30,000</i>	<i>210,000</i>	4556.6	4	1	5
Greater London	<i>420,000</i>	<i>60,000</i>	<i>480,000</i>	7556.9	6	1	6
England	<i>1,124,000</i>	<i>171,000</i>	<i>1,295,000</i>	51092.0	2	0	3

Sums may not add due to independent rounding
Data in italics are based on summing rounded data.

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