

Migration Indicators: February 2009

Background

On 24th February 2009 the Office for National Statistics (ONS), in combination with the Home Office and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), published a range of demographic statistics as part of the most recent quarterly consolidated release. Several of the datasets relate either directly or indirectly to migration. The geography used in the indicators varies but in all cases relates to the UK.

This *Update* presents these indicators as they relate to the UK and London.

Internal Migration

Data on migration within the UK are based on patient re-registrations in cumulative 12-month periods. The full dataset is for countries of the UK and English regions showing flows between regions, hence the UK figure is the total number of inter-regional moves.

Table 1: Internal Migration to and from London, thousands, 12-month periods ending at given quarters

London								
	2002 Q2	2003 Q2	2004 Q2	2005 Q2	2006 Q2	2007 Q2	2008 Q2	Annual Change
In	156.0	152.5	151.6	157.6	163.1	167.0	168.2	1.2
Out	254.2	262.9	267.8	246.9	243.7	248.4	238.8	-9.6
Net	-98.2	-110.4	-116.2	-89.3	-80.6	-81.4	-70.6	10.8
UK	1,268	1,263	1,270	1,213	1,212	1,227	1,190	-37.0
London Flows as % of UK								
	2002 Q2	2003 Q2	2004 Q2	2005 Q2	2006 Q2	2007 Q2	2008 Q2	
In	12.3	12.1	11.9	13.0	13.5	13.6	14.1	
Out	20.0	20.8	21.1	20.4	20.1	20.2	20.1	

The latest 12-month period to the end of June 2008 shows a reduction of nearly 10 thousand in the outflow from London. This is the lowest London outflow this century. On the other hand the gross inflow to London from the rest of the UK was the highest this century. Therefore the net loss from London of less than 71 thousand was nearly 11 thousand fewer than in the previous year and was the lowest since the late 1990s. Overall the number of inter-regional movements in the UK was also at a century low, meaning that London attracted over 14 per cent of all inter-regional moves.

International Migration

Data on international migration are based on a number of sources, principally the International Passenger Survey but also estimates of moves to and from the Republic of Ireland and asylum. The full dataset relates to calendar years for countries of the UK and English regions. However, a

secondary set of information is used for the mid-year to mid-year flows at local authority level for the preparation of the mid-year estimates. The latest data relate to 2007 but the following table shows the longer trends in the more familiar mid-year form. While all gross flows have declined over the past year the net inflows to both UK and London have increased. In the case of London the net inflow has risen from the very low levels recorded in 2006 and 2006-07.

Table 2: International Migration to and from London and the UK, thousands, 12-month periods ending at given quarters

		2002 Q2	2003 Q2	2004 Q2	2005 Q2	2006 Q2	2006 Q4	2007 Q2	2007 Q4	Annual Change
UK	In	488	505	526	593	561	591	595	577	-14
	Out	336	357	353	334	387	400	388	340	-60
	Net	152	147	173	258	174	191	207	237	46
		2002 Q2	2003 Q2	2004 Q2	2005 Q2	2006 Q2	2006 Q4	2007 Q2	2007 Q4	Annual Change
London	In	180	174	178	187	171	170	172	162	-8
	Out	97	111	90	92	98	117	121	92	-25
	Net	83	63	88	95	72	53	51	70	17
		2002 Q2	2003 Q2	2004 Q2	2005 Q2	2006 Q2	2006 Q4	2007 Q2	2007 Q4	
London as % of UK	In	36.9	34.5	33.8	31.5	30.5	28.8	28.9	28.1	
	Out	28.9	31.1	25.5	27.5	25.3	29.3	31.2	27.1	
	Net	54.6	42.9	50.9	36.8	41.4	27.7	24.6	29.5	

Asylum Seekers

Data on asylum are now collected by the UK Border Agency and made available by the Home Office. The applications data are only available for the UK as a whole but the information on those asylum seekers who receive either subsistence only or accommodation support are available for all regions and local authorities, although data are rounded to the nearest 5 and are not published if less than 15 cases (subsistence). However, in the case of accommodation support all local authorities giving some support (even if rounded to zero) are shown in the tabulations.

Table 3: Asylum: UK Applicants (12-month periods ending at given quarters) and Supported Asylum Seekers at end of periods: thousands

	2002 Q2	2003 Q2	2004 Q2	2005 Q2	2006 Q2	2007 Q2	2007 Q4	2008 Q2	2008 Q4	Annual Change
UK Applicants	76.5	72.5	39.7	30.3	24.4	22.3	23.4	25.0	25.7	2.2
Supported										
	2002 Q2	2003 Q2	2004 Q2	2005 Q2	2006 Q2	2007 Q2	2007 Q4	2008 Q2	2008 Q4	Annual Change
UK						48.1	43.0	30.6	31.3	-11.7
London						9.4	7.4	5.3	5.1	-2.3

Asylum applications have recently started to rise again after falling from the annual totals of over 70 thousand around the turn of the century. Numbers receiving support are still falling, representing some backlog of those applying in earlier years.

National Insurance Numbers (NINos)

New NINos allocated to overseas nationals by the DWP have become a useful way of monitoring the flow of citizens of EU accession states coming to the UK for work. The data, rounded to the nearest ten, are available for all local authorities in the UK by a full range of origin countries for financial years.

Table 4: National Insurance Numbers allocated to Overseas Nationals: 12-month periods ending at given quarters: thousands

		2003 Q1	2004 Q1	2005 Q1	2006 Q1	2007 Q1	2007 Q3	2008 Q1	2008 Q3	Annual Change
Total	UK	346.2	373.5	435.4	663.1	705.8	776.5	733.1	719.9	-56.6
	London	149.6	157.4	169.7	235.4	240.9	..	272.7
		2003 Q1	2004 Q1	2005 Q1	2006 Q1	2007 Q1	2007 Q3	2008 Q1	2008 Q3	Annual Change
EU A8	UK	11.4	19.9	107.8	269.3	309.0	335.9	293.8	265.2	-70.7
	London	5.8	8.4	33.2	61.0	64.6	..	63.4
		2003 Q1	2004 Q1	2005 Q1	2006 Q1	2007 Q1	2007 Q3	2008 Q1	2008 Q3	Annual Change
Bulgaria & Romania	UK	5.8	8.4	7.8	5.7	6.8	24.7	36.9	40.9	16.2
	London	3.8	5.2	4.2	1.7	3.4	..	23.4

The total inflow peaked in calendar year 2007 at 797 thousand and the flow from the EU A8 countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) peaked in the year to September 2007. The A8 flow fell by over 20 per cent in the following year. There has been the expected continual increase in flows from Bulgaria and Romania, which joined the EU at the beginning of 2007.

Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) and Bulgaria/Romania

The WRS relates solely to the A8 countries. The data are available by 'regions' related to the first two characters of the postcode and do not align with the government office regions. For workers from Bulgaria and Romania there are a number of administrative ways by which they may legally obtain work in the UK. The data presented here relate to Accession Worker Cards and Registration Certificates, which are mainly given to the self-employed. Data on the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Scheme have not been presented here. None of the data are available below the level of the UK.

Table 5: Worker Registration Scheme (A8); Accession Worker Cards and Registration Certificates (Bulgaria/Romania), calendar years: thousands

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Annual Change
WRS	134.6	212.3	234.7	218.0	165.0	-53.0
				2007	2008	Annual Change
Bulgaria/Romania				40.9	29.9	-11.0

The downturn in WRS reflects what has been seen with NINos for A8 countries. The WRS fall to the end of 2008 was even steeper than that for NINos at about 25 per cent. It is too early to detect trends in the Bulgaria/Romania data given that 2007 was the first year since accession, however the registrations were down each quarter of 2008 compared with 2007.

Conclusions

Although the most recent migration data generally show a diminution of migration flows, the two measures that are used to prepare the mid-year estimates – internal and international migration – both show levels of net migration that imply that London is just about in balance. This compares to a loss of about 30 thousand persons in the year to mid-2007. The most recent estimates in combination show that the current loss could be reduced to less than a thousand – a loss of 71 thousand internal migrants and a gain of 70 thousand international migrants. The data for calendar year 2007 on births and deaths for London show a natural change of 75 thousand. Therefore London is already on course for total population change in 2007-08 to be at least 75 thousand compared to 44 thousand in 2006-07.

The general decline in the numbers of people moving between regions and particularly those leaving London is an indication of the impact of the present financial downturn. While people coming to London tend to be young singles who rent those who leave tend to be families who are owner-occupiers. The reduction in completed sales would appear to be showing up as a significant reduction in the net loss of Londoners to the rest of the UK.

The impact of global economic uncertainty is not shown in the international flows, which are for 2007, however the more up-to-date information on NINos and WRS shows that the deeper one looks through 2008 the greater the decline in the flow of workers to the UK. The only exception is the buoyant NINo flow from Bulgaria and Romania.