



POLICY PRIMER

Migrants in London: Policy Challenges

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Nearly half of the UK's migrants live in London and a third of London's residents were born abroad. This primer discusses the policy challenges arising from the diversity and scale of immigration in London.

The issue: Migration and integration in London

One in three London residents was born abroad, and a quarter of these migrants arrived in the last five years. Nearly a half of the UK's migrants live in London: it is the country's prime destination for new migrants, and also home to some of the longest-settled migrants. In the post-war period, sometimes known as the 'Windrush' era, after the name of an iconic ship which brought the first large group of West Indian migrants to London in 1948, the capital was a key destination for labour migrants from the colonies and former colonies, and members of that generation, as well as their children and grandchildren, form a major settled component of London's population. However, London was increasingly a major destination for new and increasingly diverse waves of migrants from the 1980s onwards, including refugees from countries with no historic connection to the British empire. More recently, it has been a major destination for European migrants, including from the 'A8' accession states joining the enlarged European Union in 2004.

Central government in the UK has no specific policy on migration in the capital. However, both the last (Labour) mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, and the current (Conservative) mayor, Boris Johnson, have demonstrated a strong concern with migration policy, and there have been a number of regional initiatives around migration in the capital. Regional migration policy was focused on the London Asylum Seeker Consortium, established in 2000, which became the Board for Refugee Integration in London (BRIL), staffed by the Greater London Authority (GLA) and with representation from the Mayor's Refugee Advisory Panel (MRAP). The GLA Policy Unit produced a scoping report on asylum seekers in the capital in 2001, and the BRIL began work on a refugee integration strategy, published in 2009 as London Enriched. As with the other regional strategic partnerships, the BRIL's remit was widened from refugees in particular to migrants in general, and

it became the London Strategic Migration Partnership (LSMP), chaired by the Deputy Mayor of London, with the MRAP becoming the mayor's Migrant and Refugee Advisory Panel. The mayor's objectives set out in London Enriched have been widened in 2010 to encompass migrant integration more broadly.

Since 2000, there has been a growing awareness that the social costs of the growing net migration after the A8 accession were being felt at a local and regional level, particularly in the wake of research commissioned by the GLA to attempt to calculate London's new migrant population (Rees and Boden 2006) and especially of an important report by the Audit Commission in 2007, *Crossing Borders*, identifying and quantifying some of these costs. In 2009, the government launched the Migration Impact Fund to help local and regional agencies address these, with the largest allocation going to London. This Fund was scrapped in summer 2010, reflecting both the current government's cutting of discretionary funding streams and its retreat from regionally focused policy interventions.

In 2010 there was also a widening of the gap between the policy debate in the capital and that in the political mainstream. Mayor Johnson, alongside a politically diverse range of interest groups, began advocating the regularisation of undocumented workers and opposing central government's cap on labour migrants.

On the other hand, London has been one of the few places in the UK where the anti-immigrant far right has maintained a significant electoral presence, despite high profile defeats in the May 2010 local elections. The far right British National Party (BNP) won its first council seat in 1993 in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The party gained a number of council seats in the outer East London Borough of Barking and Dagenham between 2004 and 2010 (in 2004 it won 52% of the vote in one ward). BNP secured a seat on the Greater London Assembly in 2008. Under threat from the BNP's electoral success, the Labour MP for Barking, Margaret

Hodge, courted some controversy in 2007 when she publicly suggested that migrants were being prioritised in the allocation for social housing, and questioned their right of access to it (Hodge 2007, Robinson 2007).

As well as these highly controversial topics, key policy issues for London include the churn and mobility of the capital's population (with significant impact on service provision), the extreme polarity of its migrant labour market (with major implications for labour market and economic development policy), and the vast intra-regional differences between the inner and outer boroughs (with ramifications for social cohesion and housing policy). There are a number of academic studies on various aspects of London's migrant population, as well as policy-focused reports on specific relevant topics, but there are few texts which focus specifically on the key policy issues relating to migration in the UK. Among these are the series of documents produced as part of the GLA's London Enriched strategy, including the strategy itself and its evidence base (both published in 2009) and the evidence base produced by COMPAS for the widening of the strategy to migrants rather than refugees (Gidley and Jayaweera 2010). There is also the Migrant Rights Network's report on contemporary migration in London, *Migrant Capital* (Camilo Cock 2010).

London's population is dynamic and diverse

London's population profile is very different from that of the rest of the UK. For example, half of the £100 million spent by public services on translation and interpreting (Easton 2006). But above all, London's population is characterised by rapid flux. Area stability – the proportion of a neighbourhood's population remaining in place over time – is far lower in London than the rest of the UK (Bailey and Livingstone 2007).

Local and regional authorities in London have faced a significant challenge in calculating the scale of the demographic changes, and in allocated resources and planning services as a result. Central government allocations are based on increasingly outdated statistics (usually the 2001 Census). Several local authorities have conducted research to count and describe their changing migrant populations (Greenwich Borough Council 2007,

City of Westminster 2009), as did London Councils, the umbrella body for local government in the capital (London Councils 2010). Migration patterns at local level remain hard to capture, but it is clear that London health services and councils get a 'raw deal' because of the inadequacy of the statistics (Camilo Cock 2010).

The scale of demographic change in London has an impact on service provision, for example in providing school places or social housing. The Multilingual Capital project in 2000 found that over half the students in inner London borough schools and around a quarter in outer London boroughs did not have English as their home language (Baker and Eversley 2000). An updated report is due to be published, which will show even more significant numbers. In the adult sector, nearly a third of the English as a Second Language (ESOL) budget is spent in the capital (Bird 2008).

Another area of service provision particularly affected is health. Maternity care is especially key here, as the proportion of children born to migrant mothers is very significant in London. In outer London boroughs with traditionally lower migrant populations, the proportion of children being born to foreign-born mothers doubled in the last decade (e.g. in Barking and Dagenham, Bexley and Havering). In some inner London boroughs, such as Newham, Brent and Westminster, some 70% of children are in this category (Gidley and Jayaweera 2010). Although these dramatic proportions relate to the younger age profile of migrants than non-migrants in London and to the decreasing number of UK-born women of peak child-bearing age in the capital, there are clearly implications for planning provision and resource allocation.

Some of the UK's most privileged and most deprived international migrants live in London

Some of the most deprived migrants in the country reside in London, and some of the most privileged too. This partly reflects the polarity of London's labour market as a whole – its hunger for both the most qualified and high-paid professionals (for example in areas like banking) and for a massive quantum of low-wage workers in service employment (for instance to

cater or clean the headquarters of finance companies), as finance has replaced industry in London's globalised economy (Camilo Cock 2010). But it also reflects the particular patterns of migration in the capital. Wills et al (2009) describe 'London's Migrant Division of Labour (MDL)'. They argue that London more than ever is dependent on migrant labour in the low-waged section of the economy, including in key sectors central to the capital's economic sustainability such as the service industries.

At the top end of the scale, London has a strong high-skilled sector, which is key to its competitive advantage in the world economy. The skills level of London's working age population is higher than in other international cities and the availability of well qualified staff is a key factor in global businesses located here. This high-skilled workforce is produced by both internal and international migration to the capital, and London is a major destination for highly-skilled workers from within the UK and from abroad (GLA Economics 2010; Dowson et al 2006). The recent OPENCities Monitor, measuring cities' 'openness' to global workforces, ranked London in first place (Bentham 2011).

On the other hand, some of the migrants at the bottom of London's division of labour face problems of exploitation and vulnerability (Community Links 2006; Commission on Vulnerable Employment 2008). Construction, hospitality, retail, contract cleaning and residential care – all major sectors in London – have been identified as the main migrant labour sectors: 95% of London Underground cleaners are foreign-born; disproportionately high numbers of London's nurses and care workers are from abroad (Buchan et al 2006; Cangiano et al 2009). These are also the sectors most vulnerable to poor working conditions and violations of employment codes (Anderson and Rogaly 2005; Low Pay Commission 2009). There is also evidence of pay having declined in these sectors in London in recent years (Wills et al 2009). Domestic work is of particular concern for London, given the concentration of domestic workers in the capital and the large numbers of migrants employed in the sector (Gordolan and Lalani 2009).

Other vulnerable migrants in London include asylum-seekers with subsistence-only support: London is home to nearly one in five of the state-supported

asylum seekers in UK, but two thirds of those with subsistence-only support (Gidley and Jayaweera 2010; Amnesty International 2006). And it is the case amongst labour migrants who have become unemployed. In one government study in 2008, it was estimated that 15% of the capital's rough sleepers were migrants without recourse to public funds (Communities and Local Government 2008). There is also evidence that labour migrants from the accession states are at risk from homelessness, due to precarious employment and limited entitlement to benefits (Shelter 2008). More and more of the capital's rough sleepers – over a quarter – are A2 and A8 nationals (Shelter 2008; Homeless Link 2009).

Many of these categories of migrant have no access to public funds, so migrant destitution is a challenge for voluntary sector providers in the capital. For example, asylum seekers access emergency relief from destitution from charities like the Red Cross. Four in ten homeless people at day centres, hostels and on London's streets are non-UK nationals (Broadway 2008). And destitution is a challenge for local authorities, who are obliged under human rights law provide emergency support for destitute migrants (London Borough of Islington 2006). Irregular migrants – of whom there are some 618,000 in the capital, according to the LSE's conservative estimate (Gordon et al 2009) – are often amongst these most vulnerable migrants.

Authorities in different parts of London need to respond differently to migration

Although London's demographic profile is peculiar in the context of the UK, it has its own variations. Both the wealthiest and the most deprived migrants are concentrated in the inner city. All boroughs have seen an increase in proportions of non-UK born people within the population stock in the past five years, but in (mainly outer) boroughs with lower population turnover this change may appear more evident: percentages of migrants in the population are much lower, but the proportionate growth in these percentages in recent years are more dramatic at London's edges (Gidley and Jayaweera 2010).

These patterns are reflected in different profiles in migrant housing in different parts of the capital. Many

are entering neighbourhoods, for instance in inner London, being vacated as earlier generations of migrants and their children move through the integration process and suburbanise (see Reeve 2008). Overall, low-income migrants are competing with other low-income groups for housing of a type which is under-supplied in the capital (Mayor of London 2004).

These sub-regional patterns have significant impacts on policy issues. In particular, issues around social cohesion are very different in the different types of boroughs. Hickman et al's study of immigration and social cohesion in the UK (2008) included two London case studies: long diverse Kilburn in inner London and newly diverse Downham in outer London. This study developed the idea of 'settled backlash' to describe the outer city dynamic of both white and non-white long-settled working class people feeling displaced by demographic change in areas like Downham. In these outer areas, too, the much smaller private-rented sector also experiences some pressure as a result of arrivals, indirectly impacting on demand for social housing (Reeve 2008). This sometimes meant that long-settled populations experienced competition (Keith and Williams 2006, Rutter and Latorre 2009).

It is these sorts of areas in outer London where far right extremism is having an electoral impact (Guibernau 2010). Downham has been targeted by the far right BNP. The dynamics behind this phenomenon are complex, but one factor is the pattern of demographic change and in particular perceptions of new migrants 'jumping the queue' in the allocation to social welfare goods, and in particular social housing. The evidence suggests, however, that migrant access to social housing is in fact very limited (Rutter and Latorre 2009, Robinson 2007). This creates a policy challenge for local authorities and social housing providers in the 'new contact zones' of the outer city.

London's leaders have taken strong positions on migration issues

Londoners are also significantly less hostile to immigration than the British public as a whole, as shown by several surveys including the official Citizenship Survey (Camilo Cock 2010). London's diversity and

openness is increasingly a theme of its global brand, as exemplified by the 2005 slogan 'the world in one city' used both to win a bid to host the 2012 Olympics and in Mayor Livingstone's response to terrorist bombs in the capital (Vertovec 2006).

Both elected mayors of London have embraced highly controversial policy positions on migration. Both have signed up to the Citizen's Charter, drawn up by the London Citizens movement, a broad coalition of faith-based and trade union groups. The Charter's commitments include a Living Wage for Londoners, a wage rate significantly above the UK national minimum wage. This affects migrant workers in particular, who are heavily represented in the lowest paid sectors of the London economy, and the Living Wage campaign, modelled on the Justice for Cleaners campaign in the US, has prominently featured low-wage migrant workers in service jobs.

More controversially, the Charter includes a commitment to regularise London's undocumented workers, under the slogan 'strangers into citizens'. Mayor Johnson commissioned a major study by the London School of Economics (Gordon et al. 2009) to attempt to count what the mayor has called London's 'shadow population' and assess the economic impact of an 'earned amnesty' policy.

The mayor has also been a high profile opponent of his party's policy of capping labour migration, and, alongside the representative bodies for London's business and higher education sectors, has pointed to the importance of the mobility of labour, and especially highly qualified professionals, to London's distinct economy.

Implications for policy debates

The challenge of making and implementing policy in relation to migration in London is tied up with the challenge of regional governance. More power is devolved to London (in the form of the directly elected mayor, who controls the Greater London Authority and the Greater London Assembly) than to other English regions, and both the current and previous mayor have shown a degree of leadership on migration issues unusual in British politics. But the powers held at London level remain limited, and the London-level migrant

integration strategy, London Enriched, necessarily focuses on co-ordinating the efforts of different London-level stakeholders, rather than setting out a plan for delivering a particular programme of activity.

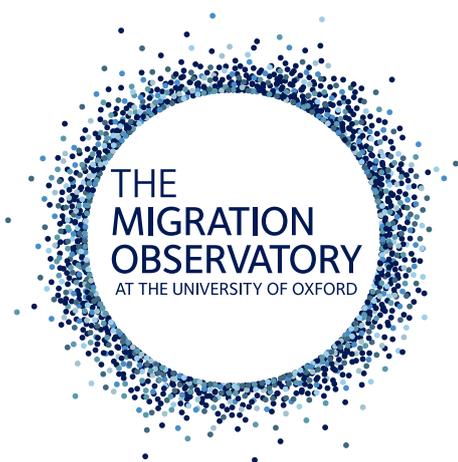
Meanwhile, the impacts of migration, including those relating to housing, are most keenly felt at a lower, local level, and local authorities, while recognising the issue, have limited scope at that geographical scale to respond. There is also a growing migrant voluntary and community sector in London, but it struggles to find a voice in the complex multi-level governance structures in the capital (Blake et al. 2008). Although the new Big Society agenda may mean opportunities for the sector, cuts in voluntary sector funding in the period of fiscal austerity make the outlook less positive (Jones 2011).

Because London has such a large share of Britain's migrant population, UK migration policy in general, as well as other policies that impact on migration, affect the capital keenly. A cap in labour migration will have major implications for London's distinct economy, dependent as it is at both the top and bottom of the labour market, on foreign workers. Limitations on overseas students will also fall disproportionately on London, as there are over 90,000 in London's higher education sector alone – a quarter of London's HE students and a quarter of the HE students in the country (London Higher 2009). However, although there is leadership at a regional level to respond to the policy challenges of London's dynamic and diverse population, regional government has little power to make a difference on the policies that make the most difference to the capital.

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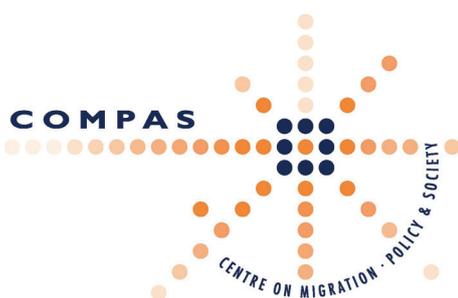
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The Migration Observatory

Based at the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) at the University of Oxford, the Migration Observatory provides independent, authoritative, evidence-based analysis of data on migration and migrants in the UK, to inform media, public and policy debates, and to generate high quality research on international migration and public policy issues. The Observatory's analysis involves experts from a wide range of disciplines and departments at the University of Oxford.



COMPAS

The Migration Observatory is based at the ESRC Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) at the University of Oxford. The mission of COMPAS is to conduct high quality research in order to develop theory and knowledge, inform policy-making and public debate, and engage users of research within the field of migration.

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