

**Background Briefing for
a conference on:**

**‘The Integration of Migrants:
Engaging Employers, Unions and
the Voluntary Sector’**

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Integration of Migrants: Engaging Employers, Unions and the Voluntary Sector

Many thousands of people come to the UK each year to work, study, re-join their families or seek protection¹. While many plan to stay for only a few months, others intend to stay for some years or indefinitely. The economic and social contribution which these migrants make to the UK is now widely recognised. In order to contribute, migrants may need access to jobs, language tuition, accommodation and services (to the extent allowed by their immigration status), as well as the opportunity to participate in community life and for positive interaction with their neighbours. The process(es) through which migrants are empowered to participate in society, economically and socially, is often termed 'integration': a two way process in which society needs to provide opportunities for migrants to engage, and in which migrants may need advice and support, particularly when they first arrive.

Central and local government and other public agencies have a key role to play in facilitating integration: in providing the legal and policy framework (including anti-discrimination legislation); in deciding the conditions attached to migrants' immigration status (which can limit access to employment and services); and in the provision and coordination of mainstream and targeted public services. The Government's approach to the integration of migrants, currently dominated by work with refugees, is set out in recent policy documents including the Department of Work and Pensions' *Working to Rebuild Lives* on refugee employment (2005)² and the Home Office's broader strategy on refugees, *Integration Matters*³. Beyond refugees, the Home Office's Advisory Board on Integration and Naturalisation was established to advise on provision of resources for preparation for Citizenship but has developed a broader role, organising a conference in 2005 for instance to promote mentoring and befriending. Its employment group plans a survey of employer good practice and to encourage employers to provide ESOL for their migrant staff.⁴

The Home Office will publish a booklet, *Living and working in Britain* later this year, aimed at recent arrivals. Translated into 18 languages it will provide answers to many of the early questions new migrants have on arrival including information on the UK's education, housing, work and health care systems. The booklet will be available on-line, from many organisations working with migrants, and at some overseas diplomatic posts for those obtaining visas that could lead to settlement in the UK.

¹ In 2004, for instance, those arriving included 294,000 students, 124,000 work permit holders and their dependents, 62,400 working holiday makers and 35,400 spouses and fiancés. 54,310 refugees and their dependents were accepted for permanent settlement in the same year. *Control of Immigration Statistics UK 2004; Asylum Statistics UK 2004*. Between May 2004 and December 2005, a further 345,000 'A8' nationals from the new EU countries registered that they were working in the UK, with many working in rural areas and towns and cities, not only in London. Compas has published a significant study of these workers' experience of employment, <http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/changingstatus/> with a second report on their experiences beyond the workplace due later this year.

² Available at http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2005/emp_guide.pdf

³ <http://www.nrif.org.uk/docs/IntegrationMatters.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.abni.org.uk/>

The Government has also recently focused on increasing the opportunity for migrants to learn English. It has developed a new adult curriculum and more than doubled provision of teaching English as a Second Language (ESOL) ⁵ over the past three years.

Importance of civil society

It is however recognised internationally and in the UK that non governmental bodies also have a key role to play, working with or independently from the state sector. The Global Commission on International Migration recently advised the UN that “*The integration process should be actively supported by local and national authorities, employers and members of civil society and should be based on a commitment to non-discrimination and gender equality*”⁶ while at the EU the Common Basic Principles on Integration agreed in 2004 asserted the importance of non-governmental actors alongside the state sector. It cites in particular sports clubs and cultural, social and religious organisations – and more generally the importance of ‘common forums, intercultural dialogue, spaces and activities in which immigrants interact with other people in the host society’.⁷

Here in the UK the Government has emphasised the centrality of the role of the voluntary and community sector and of private enterprise, particularly in the context of refugees. It describes the voluntary sector as ‘indispensable’ and its intention is to increase the contribution it makes.⁸ Government departments and the Scottish Executive fund some voluntary sector work in this field, the government providing £11m in 2004/5 through migrant related funding streams and additional funding through Invest to Save.⁹ In relation to refugees – but not other migrants – coordination with the voluntary sector at the national level is provided by the Home Office and at the regional level by Regional Consortia for Asylum Seeker and Refugee Support. Voluntary and community sector activity in the field is also funded by independent charitable foundations.

In September 2005, the Government agreed a joint statement with the CBI and the TUC, *Managed Migration: Working for Britain*, brokered by the Employability Forum, setting out the respective responsibilities of government, employers and trade unions in relation to migrant workers (see appendix).¹⁰ This recognition of the importance of civil society in integration resonates with the government’s broader community cohesion agenda and its emphasis on ‘active communities’, an agenda which promotes civic engagement through the voluntary and community sector and

⁵ ESOL is an abbreviation of either English for Speakers of Other Languages or English as a Second or Other Language.

⁶ *Migration in an Interconnected World: New Directions for Action*, Report of the Global Commission on International Migration, October 2005.

⁷ Council Document 14615/04 of 19 November 2004. See also European Policy Centre/King Baudouin Foundation *Beyond the Common Basic Principles on Integration: the next steps*, Issue Paper 27, 6 April 2005

⁸ *Integration Matters* (2005) p36

⁹ Through the Refugee Community Development Fund, Challenge Fund and European Refugee Fund, not including core funding to national bodies such as the British Refugee Council.

¹⁰ *Managed Migration: Working For Britain, A Joint Statement from the Home Office, CBI and TUC*. To view see www.employabilityforum.co.uk (section on employers, policy)

volunteering 'to bring people together from different backgrounds and give people a sense of a stake in society'.¹¹

This paper

The purpose of this paper is to provide some background information on the varied contribution which employers, unions, voluntary and community organisations are currently playing in the UK and to identify some of the issues this raises, to inform the discussion at the conference on 4 July. It invites reflection on the extent of responsibility that should fall on employers, unions and voluntary organisations and on ways in which central and local government could facilitate their role.

The many examples given are drawn from the limited research literature on new migrants in the UK and, in most cases, from the companies, trades unions and voluntary and community organisations concerned. The examples given are merely illustrative: the extent to which they do reflect good practice could not be verified and they are not intended to provide a comprehensive picture. It has proved difficult in some cases to obtain examples because they have not previously been drawn together in this form. Moreover, some employers were not confident about drawing attention to the fact that they are employing migrants and preferred the initiatives they were taking to support their workforce not to be publicised. Among trades unions, many initiatives were taking place at the local level with limited coordination and information available at the union's national office. It was difficult to obtain information from some of the community organisations providing services because of their reliance on voluntary workers and lack of a website facility.

The paper moreover is not intended to cover broader contextual issues. It does not provide an analysis of integration processes; discuss the implications of restrictions attached to migrants' immigration status, for instance, nor the importance of protection of employment rights such as the minimum wage. Nor can it discuss the gaps in provision or examples of poor practice. The aim of the paper is more limited: to highlight a range of current initiatives to support migrants and identify some immediate issues they raise, as background information for the conference debates.

Employment

Some migrants have an offer of employment before arriving in the UK. Others want to find suitable employment and may need to improve their English, work skills or qualifications before they can do so. Once in employment, they may continue to need a level of support, whether directly related to their work or to a broader range of needs. These include advice or assistance relating to:-

- recruitment
- conditions of employment, including levels of pay, hours of work and health and safety issues
- language and communication
- training
- discrimination
- induction, orientation and access to services

¹¹ <http://communities.homeoffice.gov.uk/activecomms/>

- accommodation
- financial issues

In the joint statement agreed between the CBI, Home Office and TUC, the role that employers and unions have to play in the process of developing a successful system of managed migration was specifically recognised. We look first at the contribution currently being made by some employers in the UK before looking at the role of trades unions.

Employers

One of the few practical guidance tools available to employers is the Business in the Community Northern Ireland *Voluntary Code of Practice on Employing Migrant Workers/Overseas staff in Northern Ireland* (NI Code of Practice).¹² It encourages employers to take responsibility for supporting the integration and safety of migrant workers not only at work but in the local community and provides guidance on best practice. We found a number of examples in Northern Ireland and Britain where employers in the private and public sectors had chosen to do so.

Recruitment and conditions of employment

Migrants can find it difficult to access suitable employment for a number of reasons including insufficient English for the post, lack of knowledge of the local job market and of recruitment processes, and knowledge of advice and information services such as Jobcentre Plus. They can be assisted by employers who actively seek to recruit from among migrants, whether from among those already in the UK or in their country of origin.

Migrants can benefit from initiatives targeted at a broader range of individuals who face challenges in securing employment. Reed in Partnership, for instance, part of the Reed family of companies, is contracted by government to operate programmes from which migrants benefit in cities across the UK. Migrants who join Reed's programme are allocated a personal advisor and can participate in a personal development programme ('The Journey') or a course to improve literacy and job skills ('The Essentials'). Reed also provides a number of ESOL courses and helps to match the migrants on their programmes with employers with suitable vacancies.

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service is an employer that has been proactive in recruiting migrants already living in its area. It decided that there was a clear link between seeking a workforce that reflects the local community and serving that community through community safety initiatives, and has worked with a number of partner organisations to identify suitable job applicants. Partner organisations have included Refugee Resource, itself searching for employers which could provide refugees with workplace training, as well as Jobcentre Plus and local colleges.

Where workers are recruited directly from overseas, the way in which recruitment takes place can have an impact on their experiences in the UK. Clear and ethical recruitment processes help avoid people, once in the UK, finding that promised accommodation does not materialise, or that there are deductions from wages about which they were not informed when they accepted the job.

¹² A copy is available at http://www.bitc.org.uk/regions/bitc_in_your_region/northern_ireland/

The NI Code of Practice says that employers should:-

- Ensure workers have a copy of their contract and/or terms and conditions and understand it
- Ensure the same pay, terms and conditions of employment are applied to migrant workers as apply to other employees in the same staff grouping
- Recognise that migrant workers are entitled to the same statutory employment rights and are protected by UK employment legislation in the same way as other staff
- Afford migrant workers the same learning and development opportunities as other staff
- Ensure that all workers understand all work related procedures and processes including those whose first language is not English
- Provide workers with details of trade unions operating within the workplace

Barclays Bank is an example of a company that has worked with the East London Communities Organisation (TELCO¹³) to secure better pay and conditions for its cleaning staff who are mainly migrant workers. Barclays became involved with TELCO during the planning stages of its move to Canary Wharf. Its office services were to be managed by Johnson Services which in turn procures services from other firms. As a reflection of its corporate values, and recognising the commercial sense of attracting high quality, trained and committed staff, Barclays worked with Johnson Services in the development of the commercial tender process. Bidders were required to provide a commercially viable proposition which also demonstrated creative and effective ways to motivate and retain staff, paying attention to salary, hours of work, sick pay, holiday rights, pension rights and training. With this steer, several cleaning contractors presented innovative and refreshing solutions. The package concluded with the successful bidder, Rentokil Initial UK Cleaning, was judged to have gone further than others in giving some priority to the welfare of employees, their development and retention, as well as rewarding good performance. This approach is now being applied in other branches of Barclays where contracts are due for renewal.

Language

Migrants with limited or no English are at a disadvantage in securing employment and promotion. They may also be at risk if they cannot read and understand health and safety material. Acquisition of language skills can help in gaining recognition of prior learning and qualifications gained outside the UK. The confidence gained through acquiring language skills can pave the way for migrant workers to undertake work-related or personal development training. There are many barriers to migrant workers being able to acquire a good grounding in English through attendance at classes, including shift working patterns, long working hours, the costs of courses, caring responsibilities, transport problems and a general sense of isolation.

The CBI, in its joint statement with the Home Office and the TUC, recognised the importance of language teaching for migrant workers and made a commitment to

¹³ A voluntary group which is an alliance of active citizens and community leaders organising for change

work with CBI members and government to encourage the provision of English language teaching for those who need it.¹⁴

The NI Code of Practice states that special arrangements should be made for workers with little or no understanding of English including providing translation, use of interpreters or replacing written notices with clearly understood symbols or diagrams. In particular it says employers should:

- Disseminate information about local services in workers' own language and/or signpost workers to relevant service providers
- Support migrant workers to learn English as a second language and where possible provide free ESOL classes in conjunction with the local further education college
- Provide all information and training in a format that takes account of any language difficulties.

Research literature suggests that, particularly where the migrant workforce from a particular country is numerically small, provision of important information relating to health and safety in workers' native tongue is very limited.¹⁵ Certainly employers perceive differing levels of responsibility for providing or facilitating access to language tuition and for translating key documentation. Some employers provide translation or interpretation in the workplace and/or access to language training, although this may be more likely to be available where migrant workers make up a significant proportion of the workforce and, in relation to translation and interpretation, where there is one dominant migrant group in the workplace. Support is sometimes provided within an organised framework, whether via formal classes available at the workplace, support for taking up publicly funded language tuition, help with transport to attend classes or time off being given to attend classes.¹⁶ Employers also provide a variety of informal and unstructured approaches.

Moy Park, for instance, a poultry processing manufacturer in Northern Ireland, has all relevant documents translated into the workers' own languages and interpreters are used to ensure that employees are fully aware of personnel, hygiene and health and safety regulations. A Portuguese/English phrasebook has been provided outlining simple but effective ways of communicating to managers. ESOL classes are offered to all foreign nationals. A full time member of the personnel team has been recruited directly from Portugal.

O'Kane Poultry Group, also based in Northern Ireland, ensures that documents such as instructions, handbooks, induction and training records and contracts are translated into first languages. English classes are provided free of charge on site and provision of free English classes off-site are advertised. An interpreter is always

¹⁴ *Managed Migration: Working For Britain*, A Joint Statement from the Home Office, CBI and TUC, Sept 2005 *op cit*.

¹⁵ See *Migrant Workers in the East of England*, Project Report, Dr Sonia McKay, Dr Andrea Winkelmann-Gleed, June 2005, London Metropolitan University p 127.

¹⁶ See, *Migrant Workers in the Highland and Islands*, Research Report, October 2005 undertaken by UHI PolicyWeb and the National Centre for Migration Studies.

available to help with day to day issues including those not directly relating to employment.

FirstGroup is the UK's largest public transport company. Its bus division, First Bus, in response to a significant driver shortage in 2003, began to recruit bus drivers abroad, initially from Poland and subsequently from other European countries. After passing a basic test before departure they are deployed to a two week residential English course operated specifically for the company. It focuses on teaching English that will be relevant in the work environment.

Bernard Matthews Foods Ltd, the largest turkey processor in Europe and based in East Anglia, employs a team of qualified bi-lingual interpreters and translators and provides regular, accessible language training. It also has a dedicated bi-lingual accommodation manager.

Hammersmith Hospital NHS Trust, one of over 600 NHS Trusts, is based in North West London and is responsible for the Charing Cross, Hammersmith, Queen Charlotte and Chelsea and Ravenscourt Park Hospitals. It decided to seek suitably qualified nurses from abroad when, in 1996, vacancies reached a critical level and now has a unit within its Directorate of Nursing responsible for coordinating its work with internationally recruited nurses. Part of induction for the nurses is four language and culture study days which focus on confidence, telephone skills, handover and common terminology in hospital settings, applying this knowledge to clinical scenarios.

Noon Products is based in West London and manufactures ready-made Indian meals for supply to supermarkets. A significant proportion of its workforce has been from overseas, usually India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan. From 2002-2004, when it was seeking new employees, the organisation ran free ESOL tuition on site through Uxbridge College and funded through the West London Learning Partnership. The courses were two hours a week for 13 weeks and, as they were run on company premises, ensured that everyone could attend. Completing the courses also enabled employees to access other training from which they would previously have been excluded by a lack of language skills.

It appears that a number of factors have an impact on the levels of support an employer will offer in this area including the proportion of migrant workers in the workforce of any one employer, whether the migrant workers speak one language or many and the ability or willingness of the employer to form partnerships with learning providers.

Skills Training

Many workers, including migrants, need training in order to acquire, retain or develop technical skills or knowledge and enable career development. Migrants may need to re-qualify if their existing qualifications are not fully recognised. Even where migrant workers are taking up employment equivalent to that which they undertook

in their home country extra training may be required because of the application of different standards and regulations.¹⁷

The bus division of FirstGroup, First Bus, uses a specially imported left hand drive bus for training its new drivers before they leave for the UK. First Bus also provides a pre-deployment course once the workers have arrived, to familiarize the staff with driving conditions in the UK.

Anglo Polish is a recruitment company based in London, established in October 2004, which specialises in supplying highly skilled Polish tradesmen to the construction industry. After practical testing, which involves putting prospective workers to work on live contracts in Poland, a two day induction course on health and safety is undertaken in Poland in preparation for work in the UK.

Induction, Orientation and Access to Services

Relocating to a new country presents a range of challenges beyond the workplace for the migrant and his or her family. The NI Code of Practice states that employers should:-

- Provide relevant, general information to workers prior to their arrival
- Support workers in familiarising themselves with the local neighbourhood and facilities such as doctors, dentists, schools and local utility providers.
- Establish local liaison relationships with the education and health services representatives, community representative and the police
- Liaise with community organisations regarding provision of 'welcome packs'
- Arrange social or sporting events
- Support workers in accessing the internet and personal emails

The Code of Practice goes on to say that employers should provide induction to support migrant workers in adjusting to both Northern Ireland culture and the organisational culture of the employer. Induction can include practical information about life in the UK.¹⁸ A number of employers have either provided such information themselves or been involved in producing welcome packs dealing with orientation issues and access to services. The following examples are of employers which have significant numbers of migrant workers in their workforce.

Bernard Matthews provides an induction and welcome pack of local information in Portuguese. Moy Park, in Northern Ireland, worked with a number of public and voluntary sector organisations to develop a welcome pack containing important information for people from overseas coming to work and live in the Craigavon, Banbridge, Armagh, Newry and Dungannon areas. This is being issued in various languages as more migrant workers arrive in these areas. Anglo Polish, based in London, has employed a Polish speaking welfare officer to help workers with

¹⁷ *Migrant Workers in the Highland and Islands*, Research Report, October 2005 undertaken by UHI PolicyWeb and the National Centre for Migration Studies p 42.

¹⁸ Employers can benefit from material such as "*Life in the UK: A Journey to Citizenship*" produced by the former Life in the UK Advisory Group, launched by the Advisory Board on Naturalisation and Integration in December 2004, intended for the teachers and mentors of immigrants. www.abni.org.uk

practical needs that can be daunting to people who, very often, have never previously travelled outside Poland.

The Royal Hospitals in Northern Ireland provide their overseas nurses with a welcome pack as well as a comprehensive induction programme. A specific liaison person is allocated to provide advice and support and can be contacted at any time by mobile telephone.

One particular problem migrants can face is opening a bank account, requiring them to have proof of residence and other documentation and to have employment contracts in excess of one year. Migrants can face difficulties in communicating with the bank and restrictions on the services a local bank can offer. This is problematic for workers, not least where employers pay employees direct into their bank account. It also creates problems for workers wanting to send money to family in their country of origin.

The NI Code of Practice recommends that employers give support to migrant workers in relation to setting up bank accounts and obtaining National Insurance Numbers which can be equally problematic. A number of employers do give such assistance, sometimes through a prior arrangement with a particular bank, and in obtaining a National Insurance Number. Tinies Childcare, a chain of childcare agents for parents and child carers with over twenty branches across Yorkshire, the Midlands and Scotland, helps employees open bank accounts in their own name on arrival. Bernard Matthews helps its migrant workers to open bank accounts with limited facilities through an arrangement with a particular bank. The Royal Hospitals in Belfast provides support to its overseas nurses in relation to banking and national insurance numbers.

Accommodation

Migrants can face many problems relating to accommodation including finding vacant premises, its quality, high cost relative to wages and problems arising from multiple occupancy. Accommodation may be provided by an employer on a temporary or permanent basis, paid for by a deduction from wages or, occasionally, at no cost.¹⁹

The NI Code of Practice states that employers should be pro-active in overseeing and assisting with suitable accommodation arrangements for migrant workers. Employers should:

- Where possible source appropriate accommodation and, if necessary, take out a lease on behalf of the tenants, although workers should be free to choose their accommodation if they wish.
- Help ensure that workers are not exploited by accommodation providers and offer advice and assistance if requested
- Give workers a reasonable time to leave employer provided accommodation when they change employment

¹⁹ See *The Extent, Size and Characteristics of the Migrant Workforce in the Vale of Evesham*, Susan Lanz and Rob Gullen, Mercia Research and Strategy, p 35 (housing profile), launched 25 April 2006 and available at <http://wychavon.whub.org.uk/home/wdcindex/wdc-rural.htm>

- Ensure accommodation provided by the employer is not overcrowded and does not pose a risk to the health and safety of those living there.

Tinies Childcare pays for hostel accommodation for new workers for three to four days with a view to the worker taking over the rent if they like it, although they acknowledge that finding alternative cheap, clean and suitable accommodation can be difficult. O’Kane Poultry leases houses for its migrant workers and rent is deducted at the Home Office guideline rates. Foyle Food Group selects accommodation that is suitably equipped and located in a mixed area. It oversees the setting up of all contracts for individuals. Initial accommodation costs are met by way of a salary advance which is then re-paid to the Company over a period of weeks; after a period of time full responsibility for the rental of the property is handed over to the individuals. Moy Park uses agencies to set up accommodation but conducts unannounced audits of agencies and spot checks of agency-supplied accommodation.

Preventing and addressing discrimination in the workplace

The workplace can be a place of isolation and, at worst, hostility for migrant workers.²⁰ Employers can address this by promoting a culture within their organisations that recognises and respects diversity. This can be achieved in a number of ways including:-

- educating the existing workforce about the different cultures involved
- helping the existing workforce to understand the reasons for overseas recruitment
- extending equality and diversity training to all line managers within an organisation
- encouraging existing staff to participate in a mentoring programme, such as the TimeTogether programme run by TimeBank (described below) which involves mentoring refugees.
- organising social or sporting activities involving the whole workforce. O’Kane Poultry, for instance, sets up regular football matches involving migrants and other staff which have raised considerable sums for charity.

The role of employers in the integration of migrants is recognised in the joint CBI, Home Office and TUC statement. There is little practical guidance for employers however, other than the Northern Ireland Code of Practice. Opportunities to share learning in developing such practice appear limited. Business in the Community Northern Ireland held a conference in March 2005 with the Equality Commission for local employers which featured presentations from employers from England, Southern Ireland and Northern Ireland. The conference also gave employers access to experts who provided information on what support is available to them.

Unions

Unions are also making a contribution at the national and local level to improving the situation of migrant workers. Many initiatives within unions are locally inspired and locally based, although it appears there is a move to become more strategic, with increasing co-ordination at the national level. In supporting the joint statement with

²⁰ See, *Migrant Workers in the East of England*, op cit, at p 140, for examples of the sorts of problems encountered by migrant workers in the workplace.

the Home Office and CBI, the TUC set out some priorities for action for unions when it agreed to:-

- Provide migrant workers with information about their legal rights
- Assist its affiliates to organise migrants and represent their interests in the workplace
- Promote equality of pay and conditions for migrant workers and harmonious relations between workers from different countries of origin
- Protect migrants from exploitation
- Consult affiliated unions on policies that affect migrant workers and represent those views to Government

UNISON, the public sector union which also has members in the voluntary and private sectors, has recently published a discussion paper on *International Labour Migration* which addresses the problems faced by migrant workers. It makes a range of recommendations for Government but also for UNISON and other unions, setting out broad programme areas for union activity, many of which are dealt with below.²¹

The areas of activity in which unions are currently engaged in relation to migrants include:-

- Campaigns and publications
- Organising members
- Advice and information
- Education and training
- Myth busting
- Employer engagement
- Supporting migrant networks

Campaigns and Publications

Unions are highlighting the difficulties faced by migrant workers in their campaigns and publications. At the national level, the TUC has produced a series of reports documenting poor treatment of migrant workers and has made recommendations to improve their situation.²² The Transport and General Workers Union (T&G) was part of an alliance that was instrumental in the introduction of legislation to regulate gang masters, in order to avoid the exploitation of migrant workers.²³ The TUC is campaigning for a change in the law to protect migrant seafarers whom shipping firms can pay at a lower rate than UK crews due to a loophole in the law.²⁴

Campaigns are also taking place at the local level to secure the rights of migrants in the workplace. T&G in the North West supported a campaign by Polish workers

²¹ Published in March 06. It can be accessed at <http://www.unison.org.uk/international/migration.asp>

²² TUC, *Overworked, Underpaid and Over Here, Migrant Workers in Britain*, 2003 and TUC, *Forced Labour and Migration to the UK*, 2005.

²³ Gang workers are employed by gangmasters on a temporary basis for agriculture and related industries.

²⁴ Press release, *TUC demands law change to protect migrant workers*, 26 January 2006, see www.tuc.org/equality/tuc-11272-f0.cfm

regarding problems at the Woolworths distribution site in Rochdale including reduction in pay that they had been promised in a recruitment session in Poland, poor and overcrowded accommodation and lower pay and conditions than other workers. The campaign resulted in some positive outcomes for the migrant workers involved.

Organising members

The Labour Force Survey findings for 2002 show that only 20.4% of foreign born workers in the UK belonged to a union (including those in the UK for a long period) compared with 27.2% of those born in the UK. There are a variety of mechanisms that can be used by unions to recruit and organise migrant workers particularly in areas where they are working in significant numbers. The TUC provides some support to Unions in this area. In its conference in November 2005 on “*Organising Unions, Organising Communities*”, for instance, it ran a workshop focusing on the organisation of migrant workers.

The T&G has identified migrant workers as significant in extending the union’s membership. It has employed union organisers from within migrant communities and says that some eighty of its workplace campaigns now include a focus on migrant related issues. Migrants are also a focus in the sector wide agreements it negotiates, for instance in the cleaning sector. The advice services that it provides (see below) are a further way in which the union demonstrates its value to potential members. The T&G has been outspoken in calling for an amnesty for irregular migrants, arguing that their contribution to the labour force is needed and that it would not be appropriate or feasible for them to be required to leave the UK.

Ireland has recently experienced a significant increase in migrant workers and its experience is relevant to developments in the UK. One of its largest unions, SIPTU²⁵, recently announced the recruitment of 15,000 new members among foreign nationals working in Ireland.²⁶ It launched a concerted campaign to recruit migrant workers in response to examples of abuse by some employers. It did this by improving its organising and communications capacity; by providing materials in a variety of languages, including information about pay and conditions, and ensuring that these were distributed in sectors employing high concentrations of migrant workers such as the construction industry. SIPTU also employed three organizers who were foreign language speakers who between them spoke a wide variety of languages including Russian, Latvian, Turkish, Lithuanian and German. SIPTU concentrated on communicating the democratic nature of the union, trying to combat misconceptions that some migrant workers had about the role of unions and building trust between the union and its members or potential members from the migrant labour workforce.²⁷

²⁵ The Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU) represents over 200,000 Irish workers from virtually every category of employment across most sectors of the Irish economy.

²⁶ SIPTU Press Release, January 23, 2006, www.siptu.ie

²⁷ As reported by the GMB through its work in Lincolnshire aimed at migrant workers, resulting in 500 new members.

Advice and Information

A key role for unions is in providing advice and information to migrant workers on their rights in relation to core employment issues, and on matters such as housing, the cost of living and banking. There are a wide variety of initiatives, most taking place at local level.

GMB²⁸ in the Midlands and East Coast Region has developed a project, *GMB Reaching Out Into New Communities*, a significant part of which involves provision of advice and guidance to migrant workers. Two project workers run drop-in sessions in the branch office and out in the community, in which they give advice on employment law matters and signpost to other sources of advice, support and learning. This service is provided to members and non members. The project workers have researched and produced a pocket sized *Lincolnshire Handbook*, having interviewed migrant workers about what support and advice they most need. It deals with a wide range of issues including childcare, NHS services, other sources of advice and employment matters. It is free and is presently available in English, Polish and Lithuanian with plans for it to be published in 11 languages.

The T&G²⁹ set up a free migrant worker legal advice line for members in the summer of 2005 with a different telephone number to the general advice line. This is promoted via an information card widely distributed through the membership. Its use is steadily increasing, with the majority of calls concerning immigration.

After the death of twenty Chinese workers in Morecambe Bay, T&G in the North West publicised 'drop in' sessions so that migrant workers could seek confidential advice and information in particular to combat exploitation by some unregulated gang masters. It has also been instrumental in launching a North West Migration Workers' Institute.³⁰ One of the objectives of the Institute is to provide a region-wide reference point for support and services available to migrant workers and their communities.

The TUC runs drop in advice sessions for migrants both in London and other regions. It produces a leaflet for migrant workers *Working in the UK: Your Rights* which has been translated into 10 languages. It is distributed to recently arrived migrant workers via the Home Office and many other distribution avenues and is available on the TUC website. The TUC has also contributed to production of guidance aimed at those working with migrants, *The Newcomers Handbook*.³¹ It is a reference guide for advisors, representatives, advocates and others interested in ensuring that working age migrants are aware of their rights and of the help that is available in and out of work.

²⁸ Britain's General Union: www.gmb.org.uk

²⁹ The Transport and General Workers' Union: www.tgwu.org

³⁰ Press release, *T&G launches migrant workers initiative in the North West*, 16 December 2005, regional news section of T&G website www.tgwu.org.uk. The Institute will be set up as a charitable body with the initial project worker post being funded by the T&G.

³¹ This is published by Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion, edited by Will Somerville and includes contributions also from the Employability Forum, The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants and the Institute of Public Policy Research. Information about the handbook is at www.cesi.org.uk.

Education and Training

Unions are contributing to the provision of education and training courses for migrant workers, including English language tuition, and signposting workers to other courses. Union learning representatives are responsible for increasing access to education and training for those in employment. The expansion of the Union Learning Fund (which funds union learning projects) announced by the Chancellor in 2003 is enabling the expansion of union interventions in learning in the workplace.³² This intervention is not directed specifically at migrants but can be used for initiatives tailored to their needs. The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) in the West Midlands region, supported by two year funding from the Union Learning Fund, established a project to support and enable career progression for internationally recruited nurses (IRNs). This involved recruiting, training and assigning RCN learning representatives to mentor IRNs and help them develop career development plans. The project formed partnerships with health care providers in the public and private sector to promote career opportunities. It also worked in partnership with the University of Central England and local colleges to establish a 12 week course addressing Skills for Life deficits (IT, numeracy and literacy) for IRNs and a course to prepare Learning Representatives for their mentorship role. In evaluating the project, mentoring was identified as an effective way of helping the integration process of IRNs and funding is being sought for the continuation of this work.

In the *GMB Reaching Out Into New Communities* project, the project workers developed learning partnerships with appropriate employers, organisations and agencies across Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire with a view to establishing English language tuition, focusing on ESOL and achievement of Skills for Life qualifications. This was tailored to migrant workers' working patterns, for example to suit shift working takes account of the transport needs of migrant workers living in rural areas.

The North West Migrant Worker Institute, the establishment of which was driven in large part by the T&G, will have as one of its objectives the identification of specific training needs amongst migrant workers whilst also helping to identify opportunities to optimise the skills which they already have.

Myth busting

Education, however, needs to be a two way street. It is recognised that education of the 'host country' workforce and the wider community is a necessary factor in the integration process. Union representatives have identified the need to avoid 'cultural ghettos' in particular workforces in order to ensure good working relations within the rest of the staff.

Wales TUC in conjunction with the Welsh Refugee Council produced a booklet entitled '*Facts about asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers in Wales*' which helps to rebut common and negative misconceptions about migrant workers. The GMB in Grantham sought and achieved positive local media coverage of their project *GMB*

³² For an outline of the role of union learning representatives, see Chartered Institute of Personal Development (2004).

Reaching Out Into New Communities. The North West Migrant Worker Institute has prioritised the need to educate 'host country' workforces.

Employer engagement

Employers can also be encouraged by unions to consider and address the difficulties faced by migrant workers within their workforce, linking migrant worker issues with broader equality agendas with which employers need to engage. GMB in Grantham, for instance, has worked to develop good relationships with local employers and through discussion has been able to help in the resolution of problems faced by migrant workers – for example, raising with an employer the need to explain a major change in the management and procedures relating to sickness absence to over 300 migrant workers most of whom had limited English language ability.

The North West Workers' Institute, driven by the T&G North West, will collate and promote best practice in the employment of migrant workers, including specific work on health and safety, the promotion of positive recruitment practices, support for flexible ESOL courses and partnerships with employment agencies.

Support networks

Unions are helping to establish or support networks and groups that support migrant workers. The Overseas Nurses Network was launched by UNISON, for instance, in Glasgow in December 2003. It provides an opportunity to meet and get to know other nurses from overseas as well as providing information, such as access to training and support, both social and professional.

The TUC works with, and provides support to, the Portuguese Workers Association and the Federation of British Poles.

Voluntary and Community Sector

Key actors in the integration process are those people and organisations that migrants interact with in the course of their day-to-day life. The voluntary and community sector is often, by nature, able to be flexible and responsive to real need. It can address integration related issues in a person centered way, looking at people holistically, unfettered by the migrant's particular immigration status. In addition to those organisations that have a national remit, there are many organisations operating at a local level which now include a focus on migrants or which have developed specifically to work with them.

A large number of voluntary sector organisations focus on migrants who are refugees and asylum seekers. Fewer specifically address the needs of those who have come as migrant workers, for family reunion or to study, though some of those that originally focused on refugees have now broadened their remit in response to broader needs.

Voluntary sector organisations have also played an important role in initiating or supporting multi-agency networks and forums which address integration related issues. The Scottish Refugee Healthcare Professionals Forum is one such example, a partnership dedicated to supporting the integration of refugee healthcare professionals. Two voluntary organisations, the Scottish Refugee Council and the

Bridges Project are involved. Another example is the East Midland Consortium for Asylum Seeker Support, led by Leicester City Council, which, like other regional asylum consortia, is an inclusive partnership between local authorities, health authorities, the post-16 education sector, police and the voluntary sector, in this case including the Refugee Housing Association and Refugee Action. Its aim is to develop a multi-agency partnership approach to meeting the diverse housing, health, educational, social, cultural and religious needs of asylum seekers and refugees in the area.

The range of activities in which the voluntary and community sector is involved include:

- Advice and information
- Service provision
- Employment
- Mentoring & volunteering
- Building bridges across communities

These categories are not comprehensive and one organisation may well work across a number of activities. The Refugee Council for instance gives advice and support to asylum seekers and refugees to help them rebuild their lives; works with refugee community organisations; cares for unaccompanied refugee children and provides training and employment courses to enable asylum seekers and refugees to use their skills and qualifications. Many organisations working in the field draw on their practical experience working with migrants to inform policy and advocacy initiatives. Many programmes run by voluntary organisations thus contain a strong policy element.

Advice and Information

There are many examples of local organisations providing advice and support to migrants living within a particular locality, and a smaller number of national organisations working through regional branches or projects to provide this support.

Wolverhampton Asylum Seekers and Refugee Service (WARS), for instance, is a local organisation providing free, impartial and confidential advice to refugees and asylum seekers in the Wolverhampton and surrounding locality. The issues on which they are able to provide advice include immigration, voluntary assisted returns and reintegration, issues relating to the National Asylum Support Service (NASS), education, housing, employment, welfare benefits, and health care.³³ It provides the service through a 'drop in' and appointment service.

Refugee Action is a national charity which, since April 2000, has provided a reception service for newly arrived asylum seekers as well as an independent advice and advocacy service.³⁴ The advice work covers a range of specialist topics including access to NASS support, welfare benefits, employment and housing. It also offers advice on issues such as racial harassment, domestic violence, and destitution. It delivers this service through regional offices in Bristol, Leicester, Liverpool, London,

³³ www.warsiag.org.uk

³⁴ www.refugee-action.org.uk

Manchester, Nottingham and Plymouth. It also provides information leaflets in many languages about the asylum and support process.

There is evidence that the existing provision of advice and information is unable to meet demand. Citizen's Advice, which has seen a very significant increase in demand for its services in some areas resulting from the recent employment of migrant workers, has recently recommended that more resources urgently need to be allocated to agencies working with migrant worker communities not only to meet demand but also to ensure that issues are dealt with in a more timely manner.³⁵

Citizens Advice Bureaux help people with legal and other problems by providing information and advice and by influencing policy makers.³⁶ There has been a variety of initiatives by some CABs to provide services that meet the needs of migrant workers. These have included translation and interpretation initiatives: in some CABs a language specialist has been recruited and trained as an adviser in order to increase capacity to engage with migrants; and leaflets on rights and entitlements have been translated into relevant languages. Some CABs have also held special advice sessions for migrant workers and have participated in wider initiatives, such as joint work with credit unions to address the difficulties migrants can face in opening bank accounts.³⁷

Praxis is an East London based organisation which provides a range of support to new residents in the UK, both for their benefit and for that of the community as a whole. It provides advice and orientation to migrants and community groups and second tier advice and training for professionals working with displaced people. It has recently produced a 'Tower Hamlets Welcome Pack' to make it easier to settle into the borough, and provides advice on health, welfare benefits and banking.³⁸

The Migrant Resource Centre, based in Westminster, works 'to effect social justice and change, enabling migrants and refugees to participate fully in society.'³⁹ It does this by, among other things, providing an advice service to migrants in the areas of immigration, housing and welfare benefits via a telephone advice line and through booked appointments.

Service Provision

Many voluntary sector organisations are involved in provision of services including education, health and accommodation. Voluntary organisations are sometimes 'formal' service providers, bidding for commissions from, for example, Learning and Skills Councils. More often they are informal providers and this can highlight gaps in formal service provision. A potential problem for voluntary sector organisations is that they find they are providing services that arguably should be provided by the state and for which they have insufficient resources and support.

³⁵ *Home from Home? Experiences of migrant workers in rural parts of the UK and the impact on local service providers*, CAB evidence briefing, December 2005

³⁶ www.citizensadvice.org.uk

³⁷ See, *Supporting Migrant Workers in Rural Areas, A guide to Citizen Advice Bureaux Initiatives*, Oct 2005, available on website www.citizensadvice.org.uk

³⁸ www.praxis.org.uk. The Tower Hamlets Welcome Pack is accessible from the website.

³⁹ www.migrantsresourcecentre.org.uk

The Housing Association Charitable Trust (HACT), a London-based development agency that acts as a catalyst for change in the housing sector, is developing a good practice guide to help agencies that commission support services to engage with migrant and refugee groups. The guide will also enable migrant and refugee groups to provide services on a formal basis and to bid for commissions. The project will cover the full range of support services including accommodation, training, legal advice, mental health and general support.⁴⁰

Slough Refugee Support is one local agency providing support to migrants in its area. In addition to providing a drop in centre where advice and support is given, it runs English classes, a new mums' club and a job club.⁴¹

Windows for Sudan is a migrant led organisation based in the West Midlands which focuses primarily on young Sudanese migrants. It runs a Youth Development Programme aimed at the reduction of antisocial behaviour of young people aged between 18-25 years. The project runs training schemes covering areas such as language and IT and other confidence building training courses. It actively assists young people to gain work placements and experiences.

Kalayaan is a voluntary organisation based in London that focuses on the rights of migrant domestic workers.⁴² In addition to other activities, it runs and facilitates English classes for domestic migrant workers because it believes that the ability to communicate in English makes it much easier to live and work in the UK, to make friends and reduces domestic workers' dependence on employers.⁴³ Only domestic workers who have been in the UK for three years qualify for free ESOL classes, so Kalayaan runs informal English classes using volunteers to fill the gap in provision for those who have been in the UK for less than three years.

There are also organisations that service the health needs of migrants. The Haven Project for instance, run by Action for Children in Conflict, seeks to treat and alleviate psychological distress in asylum seeker and refugee children by improving the accessibility of mental health services for asylum-seeker and refugee families, many of whom find these services difficult to access.⁴⁴ Action for Children in Conflict has done this by providing a school-based mental health service for asylum seeker and refugee children in a number of cities including London, Oxford, Cardiff, Glasgow, Leicester and Manchester.

Employment

The voluntary sector can be a vital bridge for migrants in finding employment and in acquiring the advice, language tuition and skills training they need. The Employability Forum is an independent organisation based in London that promotes the employment of refugees and the integration of migrant workers in the UK.⁴⁵ It acts as a catalyst, working with the voluntary sector, employers and government, to increase opportunities for employment. It brokered the Joint Statement on Migrant

⁴⁰ <http://www.hact.org.uk>

⁴¹ www.sloughrefugeesupport.org.uk

⁴² <http://www.kalayaan.org.uk>

⁴³ www.kalayaan.org.uk

⁴⁴ www.actionchildren.org

⁴⁵ <http://www.employabilityforum.co.uk>

Workers with the Home Office, TUC and CBI and at a practical level engages with individual employers, encouraging them to take the initiative in providing employment and support to their migrant staff. It is a partner in the Trellis project which aims to transform the experience of refugee job seekers in Birmingham by making services more user friendly and introducing systematic and efficient routing for refugees into employment. It has recently published a guide for refugee nurses and midwives to help them secure professional employment in the UK.

Refugee Resource, an organisation based in Oxford, undertakes a number of projects including the Access First Project, an employment and training partnership initiative that aims to remove barriers to employment faced by refugees through the provision of work preparation courses, one-to-one guidance and advice, the arrangement of placements and use of the organisation's resource area to access information about training and employment offered by other agencies, local jobs and courses and study grants. Oxfordshire County Council, one of the largest employers in the county, has committed itself to offering placements and the County's Fire and Rescue Service (see above) has already done so.

The Bosnia and Herzegovina UK Network is an employment and training project for refugees in the West Midlands. It aims to improve job prospects and opportunities by providing training and mentoring support for refugees. It also works to influence government policy to ensure equal access to employment for refugees.

The Refugee Education and Employment Programme, based in Sheffield, provides refugees and asylum seekers with educational and employment support. It runs a tailored education programme including English language and job search skills, as well as providing advice and information across a broad range of issues.

Mentoring and Volunteering

There is particular richness and variety of voluntary sector projects focused on mentoring and volunteering, but with a primary focus on refugees and asylum seekers rather than migrants more widely. Projects may focus on social integration in its broadest sense but usually have an aspect that relates to access to employment or education either in the immediate or longer term. Mentoring and volunteering projects also often have wider objectives, for instance to challenge negative stereotyping of migrants by other members of the public.

TimeBank is a national charity helping organisations and individuals become part of the volunteering movement.⁴⁶ It set up a Time Together Mentoring Scheme which matches UK citizens with refugees, providing support and encouragement to help them settle into their new communities. An independent evaluation of this project found that 'mentoring is a particularly powerful and effective tool for refugee integration'. There is evidence of refugees securing paid jobs once mentored, having been unemployed in the UK for some years. Increased levels of interviews attended and successful CV development are also reported. One of the wider aims of the scheme was to raise public awareness of the positive contribution that refugees make to the UK. The evaluation of the scheme found that participants become

⁴⁶ www.timebank.org.uk

natural ambassadors and active citizens. The scheme also attracted positive media coverage.⁴⁷

New Bridges Project runs a shadow work experience scheme for asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland. It offers individuals the opportunity to observe the work of others and gain first hand experience of a working environment. The scheme is open to all asylum seekers awaiting a decision on their status and to refugees. It offers employers a chance to develop their own employees' mentoring skills and raises the profile of the company or organisation.

Refugee Action, a national organisation, launched its Liverpool based Peer Mentoring Project in July 2004.⁴⁸ It aims to help young asylum seekers settle into life in the city. It links young asylum seekers with young British people and more established refugees who will help them find out about education, volunteering opportunities, leisure pursuits and local services for young people. It aims to set up 90 such relationships between young people aged from 18-25.

There are also a number of befriending initiatives, providing support to vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers in a broader social context. The Sheffield based Northern Refugee Centre, which aims to improve services and opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers in the Yorkshire and Humberside region, matches volunteers, many of whom are asylum seekers and refugees themselves, with particularly vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers in Sheffield and Barnsley.⁴⁹ The aim is to help overcome depression, isolation, difficulties of language and access to services. This can be done in a variety of ways including talking things over, explaining how services work in the UK, accompanying service users to appointments, and signposting to relevant support services. Volunteers are trained and police-checked and receive support and supervision.

Building bridges across communities

There is an important role for the voluntary sector in promoting positive social interaction between migrants and other members of the local community. A number of voluntary organisations have this aspiration at the heart of their mission. Praxis, for example, describes itself as 'facilitating the creation of new communities'. The Housing Association Charitable Trust (HACT) describes its work as being 'underpinned by a commitment to ... vibrant and inclusive communities'. Projects in this area are often focused at the local level, but there is also a role in shaping debates at the national level, challenging stereotypes and negative perceptions of migrants. Most projects in this area are at an early stage of development.

HACT runs a project, Communities R Us, which seeks to bring together long-term residents and newer refugees in vibrant and co-operative local communities. HACT will work with these groups to tackle shared neighbourhood concerns, for example lack of play space for children or an environmental or social problem. This work started in 2005 and over the lifetime of the project HACT will draw from the

⁴⁷ www.timetogether.org.uk

⁴⁸ <http://www.refugee-action.org.uk/>

⁴⁹ www.nrcentre.org.uk

experience of these local initiatives and develop a toolkit to provide practical guidance on promoting community cohesion in communities with a significant migrant population.

The ICity project aims to raise awareness of refugee and asylum seeker issues within Peterborough's communities. The project uses well respected members of the community to become community champions. Their role is to facilitate open and honest discussion within communities, to tease out their fears and respond to their needs. Community champions will also challenge misconceptions and myths about refugees and asylum seekers. This special initiative, which is the first of its kind in the UK, aims to help members of local communities get on well together, breaking down barriers which hinder understanding between different cultures. The project will also promote volunteering to the city's residents and it has already recruited fifteen volunteers as community champions.

MediaWise (formerly The PressWise Trust) looks at the consequences of inaccurate and/or sensational media coverage of asylum seekers, refugees, Roma and other non settled groups.⁵⁰ It has a project dedicated to promoting best practice in the media coverage of refugee and asylum issues and has produced a guide, together with the National Union of Journalist and UNHCR, to encourage journalists to report immigration and asylum issues accurately and fairly.

Finally, voluntary organisations are themselves helping to build the capacity of smaller refugee and migrant community groups. The Migrant and Refugees Communities Forum (MRCF)⁵¹ is a migrant and refugee led 'second tier infrastructure organisation' which has been working to build capacity in community organisations for the past 13 years. Its work includes providing advice on organisational development, fundraising, governance and financial accountability, and provision of a resource centre with facilities groups can use. MRCF also provides direct casework assistance to individuals and, for instance, provides employment advice, training and financial support to overseas doctors, nurses and dentists.

BRAP (Birmingham Race Action Partnership)⁵² is another organisation contributing in this area - running a year long project funded under the Equal Programme with twelve refugee and community organisations. The aim is to increase understanding of the organisations' own responsibilities under the UK's equality legislation and of wider equality issues such as the potential role of the new Commission on Equality and Human Rights; to build the capacity of women refugees to engage in advocacy work; and to build partnerships between the refugee organisations and other organisations engaging in similar work.

⁵⁰ www.presswise.org.uk

⁵¹ www.mrcf.org.uk

⁵² www.brap.org.uk

Issues for debate

Some employers, unions, voluntary and community sector organisations are clearly contributing to the integration of new migrants in Britain and Northern Ireland. Their initiatives have been prompted by evident need at the local level rather than developing within any national policy framework. With the exception of work relating to refugees, the contribution of these organisation is taking place with limited coordination, shared learning or incentive from the national level. The development of initiatives in response to demand at the local level may ensure that the support provided matches the actual needs of the migrants. The lack of any national framework may however mean that there are significant gaps in provision, that the challenges which employers, unions and voluntary organisations are facing are not identified and addressed, and that organisations are reinventing the wheel because of the lack of a mechanism for sharing good practice and learning from past mistakes. Moreover, the limited opportunities for these organisations to engage in policy debates mean that government policy and services may be developed without drawing sufficiently on their practical experience and the evidence base it could provide.

Given the scale of the challenge, the lack of past debate on the role of civil society in the integration of migrants is perhaps surprising. In relation to employers, we need to know more about why some employers are choosing to provide support to their migrant workforce and others are not, including the significance of the size of the company and the proportion of its workforce that has recently arrived. Is there scope for greater collaboration between small firms in neighbouring areas, and between employers and public and voluntary service providers? What kind of assistance would migrants most like from their employer (other than fair pay and working conditions) and is there any incentive, encouragement or support which the state could provide which would make it more likely that they would provide it. What would be the most effective way for employers to learn from the practice of others, including from employers experiencing the same challenges across the European Union? Should employers also have some formal responsibility for the migrant beyond employment related issues (for instance, for provision of information, social orientation or language provision?). The Government's proposals for reform of the work permit system *A points based system: making migration work for Britain* (March 2006) envisage that employers will in future have a sponsorship relationship with those migrant workers on work permits but the substance of that relationship is still under consideration. Might it appropriately include some expectation of support from the employer, with recognition of 'good employers' in this respect acknowledged within the operation of the system?

It is evident that trade unions also have a crucial role to play in supporting migrants in a number of different ways. Is there a need for that work to be developed strategically from the centre or is the development of locally inspired initiatives, which respond to local need, a satisfactory approach? How can lessons learned from local initiatives be shared more widely, both within and between unions? The Union Learning Fund has provided one means by which unions are able to resource initiatives which are directly benefiting migrant workers. Are there other funding sources which unions might access that would enable them to extend their support, perhaps in coordination with other agencies?

The voluntary sector is well suited to respond to the needs of migrants, because of the nature of the sector and its inherent flexibility, but it faces significant challenges in securing the necessary resources. Much of the work of the voluntary sector focuses on refugees and asylum seekers rather than on migrants more generally? Does this leave a gap in provision for migrants who have come to the UK to work, study or family union? In developing voluntary sector provision in this area is there a danger of the sector being used to plug gaps in service provision which should be provided by the state, overstressing its limited capacity and resources? While there is a level of coordination in the refugee sector, including within government, there appears to be considerable fragmentation in the sector. Could this perhaps in part be overcome by opportunities for the sector to engage in debates on policy and service delivery at the local, regional and national level, opportunities which would ensure that policy makers and service providers also benefited from the sectors' experience of the rapidly changing situations on the ground? It may be necessary to ensure that voluntary organisations feel able to express views on aspects of current policy or service provision without jeopardising existing funding relationships or partnership in service delivery.

Whether addressing the employment needs of migrants or more broadly issues relating to accommodation, education, health and welfare, could it be helpful for all concerned if there were greater clarity on the rights to which different categories of migrants are entitled (and their responsibilities), and clarity on whose responsibility it is to ensure that those rights are respected?

These are merely some of the questions which may be raised at the conference and in the subsequent report on the conference which will reflect the presentations, plenary debates and workshop discussions.

MANAGED MIGRATION: WORKING FOR BRITAIN

A JOINT STATEMENT FROM THE HOME OFFICE, CBI AND TUC

The Home Office, CBI and TUC have issued a joint commitment to support managed migration in the interests of the UK economy.

The United Kingdom has a proud tradition of welcoming newcomers to its shores. Now more than ever, we need the skills and enthusiasm of people from around the world who have chosen to make their homes here and to contribute to our economy and society. To help them to do that, the country needs to invest wisely in their potential within the context of a migration system that is managed in the national interest.

Government, employers and trade unions, in their separate spheres, are all crucial to this process. The Government, the CBI and the TUC support this statement that sets out, for the first time, how we can ensure that the contribution made by workers from overseas is both recognised and enhanced to the full.

The Government will:

- Consult employers and trade unions about migration policies that are in the interests of Britain and were set out in its manifesto;
- Support sustainable economic growth and address skill shortages;
- Seek to ensure that the public understands clearly who is allowed into the United Kingdom and why, and also the vital contribution of migrants to the British economy;
- Support the recognition and accreditation of overseas qualifications wherever they match British standards;
- Respect the need of developing countries to retain skilled professionals;
- Provide support for the teaching of English to ensure migrants are able to contribute fully to the life of the country;
- Keep bureaucracy to a minimum in its dealings with employers about migrant workers and introduce a simpler, clearer and more effective scheme for those wishing to come and work here that focuses on those with the skills to benefit Britain;
- Protect the legal rights of migrant workers.

The CBI will:

- Promote the case for legal and managed migration, support measures to eradicate illegal working and help companies and employees move from the illegal economy to the legal economy;
- Promote integrated and diverse workforces, including migrant workers;
- Work with CBI members and Government to encourage the provision of English language teaching for those who need it;
- Consult CBI members on policies that affect migrant workers and represent those views to Government.

The TUC will:

- Provide migrant workers with information about their legal rights;
- Assist its affiliates to organise migrants and represent their interests in the workplace;
- Promote equality of pay and conditions for migrant workers and harmonious relations between workers from different countries of origin;
- Protect migrants from exploitation;
- Consult affiliated unions on policies that affect migrant workers and represent those views to Government.

Together, we will work in all these ways to ensure that migrant workers can contribute their skills and maximise their potential in the workplace and in the community at large.

September 2005

http://www.employabilityforum.co.uk/documents/CBI-TUC-Home_Office_Joint-Statement.pdf