



What are the social and public service impacts of international migration at the local level?

This briefing presents Home Office research which examines the social and public service impacts of different forms of migration at the local level.

It aims to fill two important knowledge gaps in understanding the impacts of migration by:

- examining migrant composition and impacts at the local, rather than the national, level; and
- examining the impact of different types of migrant (for example, asylum seeker, worker, student), rather than focusing on migrants as a homogeneous group.

The first aim is addressed by the development of a local authority (LA) typology, which uses cluster analysis to classify the 348 LAs within England and Wales into 12 discrete groups on the basis of key migration and socio-economic indicators, reflecting the different volumes and types of migrants they have received.

A Typology of Local Authorities

Cluster name	Number of LAs in cluster (and as a proportion of the national total)	Cluster population (and as a proportion of the national total)	Examples of LAs in cluster
1. Superdiverse London	13 (4%)	3,221,800 (6%)	Brent, Ealing, Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest
2. Cosmopolitan London and Periphery	8 (2%)	1,408,400 (3%)	Camden, Kensington and Chelsea, Oxford, Wandsworth
3. London Suburbs and Satellite Towns	15 (4%)	3,148,400 (6%)	Croydon, Enfield, Harrow, Luton, Slough
4. Diverse Conurbation Centres	17 (5%)	6,767,700 (12%)	Bradford, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool
5. High Turnover Provincial and Student Towns	20 (6%)	3,137,700 (6%)	Cheltenham, Exeter, Lancaster, Southampton, York
6. Asylum Dispersal Areas	28 (8%)	6,379,000 (12%)	Bolton, Plymouth, Rotherham, Swansea,
7. Migrant Worker Towns and Countryside	26 (7%)	2,841,200 (5%)	Boston, Dover, Fenland, Rugby
8. Rural and Coastal Retirement Areas	44 (13%)	5,237,200 (10%)	Arun, Chichester, Cornwall, Teignbridge
9. New, Large, Free-standing and Commuter Towns	28 (8%)	4,385,800 (8%)	Crawley, Dartford, Gloucester, Ipswich, Warrington, Woking
10. Prosperous Small Towns	49 (14%)	6,364,800 (12%)	Cotswolds, St Albans, West Berkshire
11. Industrial and Manufacturing Towns	46 (13%)	6,396,600 (12%)	Ashfield, Bridgend, Hartlepool, Merthyr Tydfil
12. Low Migration Small Towns and Rural Areas	54 (16%)	5,952,400 (11%)	Braintree, Gedling, Stroud, Tewkesbury

From the local authority typology the following key findings were identified:

- Around 50% of the population of England and Wales live in areas experiencing relatively high migration flows. There are 7 different 'high migration' clusters defined in the report, which together comprise 127 LAs (36% of all LAs).
- Around 30% of the population live in areas with moderate migration flows. There are three 'moderate migration' clusters, containing 121 LAs (35% of all LAs).
- Around 20% of the population live in areas with low migration levels. There are 2 'low migration' clusters containing 100 LAs (29% of all LAs).

The local impact of different migrants

The second aim is addressed by a summary of relative impacts by migrant type, based on primary research with LA representatives and discussion with migration experts. This outlines some of the potential impacts of six key types of migrant on selected public services (health, education, social services, housing and policing) and on the local economy and social cohesion. The report draws this exploratory investigation together with the statistical analysis from the LA typology to explore the differential effects of migration across LA clusters, and suggests ways in which this work might be used to inform migration policy at a national and local level, and for further research.

The discussion of relative impacts considers the 'type of migrant' and their impact on various public services, although their impact will, of course, depend on the type of area that they reside in and other factors relating to the skills or well-being of individual migrants. The summary focuses on the 'composition effects' of six types of migrant, based on the extent to which each group's needs are similar or different to the non-migrant population's needs, indicating that type of migrant's proportionate or disproportionate demand on services (see also Migration Advisory Committee, 2012).

The summary of relative impacts suggests the following:

- Legitimate international students and non-European Economic Area (EEA) skilled workers

are likely to have relatively low impacts on public services and social cohesion, making a lower demand on most public services than an average UK resident. However, population effects are not considered here and the overall impact could be larger if numbers arriving in a particular locality are high.

- Low-skilled migrant workers present a mixed picture. They are regarded as bringing economic benefits to some sectors, particularly in times of economic growth, but can also have higher impacts on health, housing and social cohesion in a variety of ways. The negative impacts will be greater for illegal workers, including those who arrived on a student visa but whose primary intention was to work, as these will often live in poor conditions, sometimes work illegally and therefore not contribute taxes, and poorly integrate with the community in which they live.
- Asylum-seeking and refugee families, and asylum seekers or refugees without children are likely to have the highest impact on services compared with other groups, because of their particular circumstances and levels of need. In addition to the costs relating to systems of support made available to asylum seekers, their highest impact is in relation to health services.
- Evidence from the literature and discussions with LAs suggests that an area's local migration history is particularly influential in governing the impacts of migration, particularly in terms of social cohesion.
- However, the nature and impacts of migration will also change over time. The types of migrants received by a particular local area change over time, as do the individual migrants themselves to the degree that they integrate or move elsewhere.

About the speaker:

Jon Simmons is one of the co-authors of the report and Head of Migration and Border Analysis at the Home Office.

The report, "Social and public service impacts of international migration at the local level" can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-and-public-service-impacts-of-international-migration-at-the-local-level>



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