

# COMPAS Breakfast Briefing Summary



Photo: Marek Olszewski, COMPAS Visual Arts Competition 2014

## What do we know about the reasons for migration and the social and economic characteristics of migrants in the UK?

Over the last year the Home Office has published three new pieces of analysis, two as Home Office research reports and one in conjunction with the Office for National Statistics (ONS), which provide new insights into the migrant populations living in the United Kingdom.



The first report 'Employment and occupational skill levels among UK and foreign nationals' (Campbell, Cooper and Simmons, Home Office 2014) looked at the trends over the last decade in levels of employment and skills amongst UK national and foreign workers.

The report used pre-existing Labour Force Survey (LFS) data to provide new insights into labour market trends, and additionally grouped occupations into higher and lower skilled jobs using the ONS Standard Occupational Classification to look at the changes in the composition of types of jobs held by UK and foreign nationals.

The report specifically uses foreign nationality rather than country of birth, given that the immigration rules governing employment rights differ according to nationality and not country of birth.

The report identifies the clear and consistent fall in the proportion of lower-skilled employment for UK nationals and its growth amongst foreign migrant

workers. It also shows how the changes in overall employment levels have benefitted UK and foreign nationals differently in different periods over the last decade.



The second report was 'The reason for migration and labour market characteristics of UK residents born abroad' (Cooper, Campbell, Patel and Simmons, Home Office 2014) which uses a new variable collected in the LFS and Annual Population Survey

(APS) to provide detailed analysis of the labour market position for UK residents born abroad, regardless of whether they are now UK citizens or still foreign nationals, according to their original reason for migrating to the UK.

This is the first time this information has been presented and allows us to see more clearly the link between the various routes of entry to the UK under the visa system and the longer-term impacts on the resident population and migrant labour market outcomes.



This analysis of the resident migrant stock provides a contrast with the regular quarterly statistics on immigration flows, emphasising the role which family connections play in bringing longer-term residents to the UK.

The research shows that of the 7.7 million foreign-born residents in the UK, around one fifth came as a spouse or dependant of a British citizen or settled migrant, and a further fifth were spouses or dependants of another migrant coming to the UK (for example to work or study). This report also looks at the labour market outcomes for these different migrants, and reaffirms some of the differences between EU and non-EU migrants as well as providing new data on the relative employment of former students, family migrants and refugees.



The final report 'Social and Economic Characteristics by Length of Residence of Migrant Populations in England and Wales' (ONS Census Output, 04 Nov 2014) was a collaboration

between researchers in the Home Office and Office for National Statistics, building on previous joint-work looking at migration to the UK as reported in the 2011 Census.

In addition to the longstanding question on country of birth, the 2011 Census included important new questions on people's nationality (according to the passport they held) as well as the length of time migrants had been resident in the UK.

This new report uses these questions and looks at a range of other socio-economic variables available from the Census data, in order to present statistics on people who migrated to the UK in recent periods and over many decades.

The report looks at differences in employment and economic activity, qualification levels, types of occupations, housing tenure, English language proficiency and national identity, including the degree to which migrants from different countries acquire British citizenship.

This is the first time such wide-ranging data has been made available in the United Kingdom. The report provides an innovative picture of migrant experience in the UK, including the distinct differences in the long-term socio-economic and cultural outcomes of migrants from different parts of the world. It provides robust evidence drawn from the Census on the degree to which people coming from abroad retain their difference, whether through cultural effects or long-term disadvantage, and the degree to which they become more like the population they have come to be a part of. The picture that emerges is one of a range of experience, pointing to the diversity of the phenomenon called 'migration'. This is essential data for anyone interested in the topic and will provide illuminating new insights no matter your perspective.

#### **The speakers:**

**Jon Simmons** has led the team at the Home Office looking at research on migration and border issues for the last six years. He has helped to develop a range of innovative migration research, including the *Migrant Journey* reports, the 2013 Home Office report on the *Social and Public Service Impacts of Migration* and analyses on migration from the 2011 Census.

**Home Office research on migration** is published at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-research-and-analysis>

**ONS Census migration outputs** are available at [www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/analysis/migration-and-demography/index.html](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/analysis/migration-and-demography/index.html)



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