

DOES IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT MATTER (DIEM)?

Irregular Immigrants and Control Policies in the UK

FINAL REPORT

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Executive Summary

Illegal immigration, irregular migrants and the processes used by governments and other official bodies to deport, prosecute or otherwise undertake enforcement activities against people on the basis of immigration status form one of the most contentious and vexed element of global migration debate.

This report presents findings from an ESRC-funded project examining irregular migration and immigration enforcement in the UK. The study focuses specifically on in-country immigration law enforcement and its effects, impacts and limits, a phenomenon that has so far received very little academic attention.

It looks at the impact of increasingly tight legislation and robust enforcement measures on irregular migration and on irregular immigrants; in particular, it investigates:

- The organisational structure, culture and practices of immigration law enforcement agencies;
- The political, legal, practical and ethical limits of law enforcement;
- The interaction between irregular immigrants' strategies, employer practices and enforcement measures;
- How irregular migrants navigate internal immigration controls;
- The impact of enforcement on irregular migrants' access to fundamental rights;
- How this suite of processes, actions and impacts are perceived and shape policies.

The investigation considers three sometimes overlapping groups – **immigration enforcement (29 individuals interviewed)**– which are examined at both a managerial and delivery level; **stakeholder groups** such as public service providers (16 individuals) and employers (18 individuals), who are also charged with the enforcement of migration laws, as well as voluntary sector organisations (21 individuals); and the **target groups for enforcement action** – notably the irregular migrants themselves (175 individuals).

Key findings

Our research provides little evidence suggesting that immigration enforcement brings down numbers of irregular immigrants. Instead, immigration enforcement seems to have (unintended) side-effects; it increases human suffering whilst offering opportunities to criminals and giving rise to criminal practices and pushes irregular immigrants further underground.

Key findings for each group are listed below:

Immigration Enforcement Agencies Key Findings

- Constant legal and institutional changes as well as budget cuts mean that Immigration Enforcement (IE) is an agency under substantial stress.
- We found a lack of institutional coherence in the form of a triple disjoint between (1) political leadership and the organisation, (2) senior level and frontline level staff and (3) the organisation and individuals working within it.

- Immigration officers often expressed frustration with policy, law, the media, constant changes, management, employment contracts and difficult working conditions. Morale generally appeared low and staff across all ranks report some dissatisfaction.
- Some aspects of IE's remit increasingly resemble the work of the police. Relationships between the police and IE have intensified significantly but remain intricate and sometimes tense.
- There is a diverse range of obstacles to enforcement including: funding cuts, changes to employment contracts, structural problems within the organisation, legal restrictions and difficulties with internal cultural change.

Stakeholder Groups Key Findings

Public sector service providers:

- Views on new public-service partnerships with Immigration Enforcement (IE) ranged widely: from positivity about these partnerships, through apprehension about proposed collaboration and the added workload and bureaucracy that would involve; to concern about the potential conflicts of interest that such collaboration would pose.
- Whilst an enforcement ethos is now firmly integrated into public services this is not yet the case with regards to enforcing immigration law. Few public services have adopted an enforcement language to justify their collaboration with the Home Office.

Voluntary Service Organisations:

- Migrant irregularity was perceived by many Voluntary Sector Organisations (VSOs) as a social construct of government policy. Many demonstrated a keen understanding of current trajectories in policy, as well as the wider historical context for irregular migration today.
- Most of the VSOs interviewed were critical of what they saw as an anti-immigrant environment, running from public discourse through to policy. They often referred to a concerted effort by the media and the government to equate migrant irregularity with criminality and public service abuse.
- All but one VSO explicitly referred to the government's plan to create 'a hostile environment' and all expressed condemnation of its possible consequences for migrants' access to fundamental rights. The criminalisation of migration was seen as pushing vulnerable people underground.

Employers of irregular migrants:

- Employers interviewed suggested that Britain is a challenging place to run a small business, explaining that they were squeezed by the economic downturn, increasing regulation, rising national and local authority taxes, labour law and immigration legislation.
- Several employers believed that British workers reject working for ethnic businesses or in low paid jobs.
- A common perception from employers was that immigration enforcement operations were unjustified.
- While for some businesses the deterrent effect of enforcement visits was significant – leading them to take considerable steps to avoid employment of irregular migrants, for other businesses the impact was zero or temporary and many continued employing irregular immigrant workers.

Irregular Immigrants Key Findings

- Almost all interviewees were not deterred by tightened immigration controls or the 'hostile environment' approach. Only one out of 175 people interviewed contemplated return.
- Nevertheless, over half of the interviewees disclosed anxiety and stress. However, just under half did not fear or only feared immigration enforcement at the beginning of their irregular activity.
- Access to workers' rights appeared to be highly ethnicised. Whereas some irregular migrants felt they were paid decent wages and treated well by their employers, others reported exploitation - sometimes extreme.
- Those who had accessed health care services were generally satisfied. Some were refused access and many were deterred from approaching the health services.

Introduction

Illegal immigration, irregular migrants and the processes used by governments and other official bodies to deport, prosecute or otherwise undertake enforcement activities against people on the basis of immigration status form the most contentious and vexed element of global migration debates.

In the UK, government immigration policy has, for a number of years, attempted to reduce irregular migration by making life as difficult as possible for those without, or in breach of, their official status. A concept described by Theresa May in 2012 as the “hostile environment” includes requiring banks, landlords, employers and public service providers to refuse to provide services without evidence of the applicant’s immigration status as well as requiring certain data sharing and reporting mechanisms of the various stakeholders with Immigration Enforcement.

While this “hostile environment policy” has been contentious¹ to the extent that it has even been reframed, or rebranded, by the ex-Minister for Immigration Brandon Lewis under guidance of former Home Secretary, Amber Rudd, as the “compliant environment”², it remains in place and directly affecting large numbers of individuals and stakeholders. The policy was a fundamental factor in the “Windrush scandal” that saw a number of people residing in the UK legally facing restrictions on their ability to access key services, such as housing and healthcare. The resulting media attention and public concern means that certain elements of the policy have been paused - for instance, for the over 30s - to respond to concerns with regards to the so-called ‘Windrush generation’ - immigrants from the Commonwealth who arrived in the UK in the 1950s and 1960s³.

But despite the efforts of the UK Government, and the creation of a hostile/compliant environment, the UK still hosts a significant population of irregular migrants. Total numbers are unknowable based on current data and approaches to measurement, but are believed to be in the hundreds of thousands, at least. If such a population can remain (or even expand) while such a concerted and ubiquitous effort is made to reduce it, it begs the question that this report asks - Does Immigration Enforcement Matter?

For the past four years a team led by Dr Franck Duvell has conducted an ESRC-funded project examining irregular migration and immigration enforcement in the UK. The study looks specifically at in-country immigration law enforcement and its effects, impacts and limits, a phenomenon that has so far received very little academic attention⁴.

This report presents emerging findings from this study. It looks at the impact of increasingly tight legislation and robust enforcement measures on irregular migration and on irregular immigrants; in particular, it investigates:

- The organisational structure, culture and practices of immigration law enforcement agencies;
- The political, legal, practical and ethical limits of law enforcement;

¹ See, for instance, the debate on The Observer, 22 April 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/apr/22/observer-view-on-theresa-mays-hateful-hostile-environment-immigration-policy>, or The Times, 25 April 2018, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/may-insists-that-hostile-environment-policy-is-what-the-people-wanted-bf6p9gpkx>

² Hansard, 16 October 2017, vol. 629

³ See the Guardian, 12/7/2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/jul/12/home-office-urged-to-go-further-with-hostile-environment-suspension>

⁴ The project builds on five previous projects: Bill Jordan and Franck Duvell’s 1998-2000 project on ‘Irregular immigrant workers in the UK; An EU-funded FP4 study on ‘Informal administrative practices and shifting immigrant strategies led by Prof. Anna Triandafyllidou, EUI; a 2000-2003 study on organisational culture of migration management agencies where Bill Jordan and Franck Duvell were the British partners; The 2007-2009 EU-funded and EUI-led project ‘Clandestino: Counting the uncountable’ (EUI/Duvell); The 2009-2011 ‘Fundamental rights of irregular immigrants’ (conducted by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development and funded by the EU’s Fundamental Rights Agency); And the 2013 work undertaken by Myriam Cherti for IPPR on return and reintegration of irregular immigrants.

- The interaction between irregular immigrants' strategies, employer practices and enforcement measures;
- How irregular migrants navigate and survive internal immigration controls;
- The impact of enforcement on irregular migrants' access to fundamental rights;
- How this suite of processes, actions and impacts are perceived and shape policies.

Essentially this investigation considers three sometimes overlapping groups – **enforcement agencies** – which are examined at both a managerial and delivery level; **stakeholder groups** such as public service providers and employers, who are also charged with the enforcement of migration laws as well as voluntary sector organisations; and the target groups for enforcement action – notably the **irregular migrants** themselves as well as their **employers**, but also others facilitating their lives in the UK. See figure 1.

Context – Irregular Immigration in the UK

For the purpose of this study irregular immigrants are defined as individuals who do not have the right to stay in the UK, or have, due to their actions, had that right revoked, and are, if detected, liable to removal. This definition does not take into account possible reversal of a removal order as a result of an appeal or judicial review. Hence, it is to be acknowledged that what is deemed irregular at first sight might be assessed otherwise in court.

Sizing the issue

“The existing estimates of the irregular migrant population of the UK are outdated. These estimates are either based directly on 2001 Census data or are extrapolations from such data. As such, any extrapolation from the 2001 figures is unreliable.” (Dr Carlos Vargas-Silva, COMPAS, University of Oxford to the researchers)

Irregular immigration is, by definition, an issue for which there is little hard data because individuals involved disguise their activities. Neither irregular entry, irregular residence, or irregular working is easy to detect. The only hard data available usually refers to immigration control and enforcement, as for instance, refused entry, detection of visa overstayers or migrants working in breach of the terms of their visas. In April 2015, exit checks were introduced which facilitate the collation of additional data on immigrants who have overstayed or resided in the UK without authorisation. However, so far, the statistics generated from this are considered to be only ‘experimental’.⁵

The earliest scientific evidence on the size of the irregular immigrant population in the UK was provided by Woodbridge (2005).⁶ This study gave an ‘overall estimate as a range of between 310,000 and 570,000 with a central estimate of 430,000, as at census day 2001’ - or 0.74% of the total population. A subsequent report by Gordon et al. (2009) suggested a ‘central estimate ...of 618,000, with a range

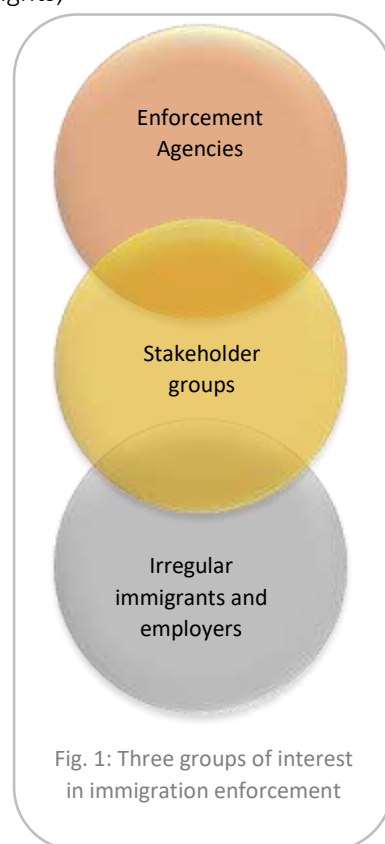


Fig. 1: Three groups of interest in immigration enforcement

⁵ Home Office (2016), *A report on the statistics being collected under the exit checks programme*, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/547989/report-on-statistics-being-collected-under-exit-checks-programme.pdf; Home Office (2017), *Second report on statistics being collected under the exit checks programme*, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/639621/second-report-on-statistics-being-collected-under-exit-checks.pdf

⁶ Woodbridge, Jo (2005), *Sizing the unauthorised (illegal) migrant population in the United Kingdom in 2001*, London: Home Office

of 417,000-863,000 at the end of 2007', which would amount to 1% of the total population.⁷ In 2010, Migration Watch argued that a 'plausible estimate for illegal immigrants in the UK would be 1.1 million', equivalent to 1.75 per cent of the total population.⁸ However, a key problem with all of these calculations is that they are based on the initial 2001 census data and are, more or less, simply extrapolations. But recently, Lemaitre (2017), a former OECD demographer, offered a fresh estimate based on an alternative method combining census data with International Passenger Survey (IPS) data. He estimated that in 2011 there were 617,000-861,000 irregular immigrants in the UK⁹.

The lack of empirical analysis of the level of the UK's irregular migration population means that any such speculation should be seen with significant scepticism. Carlos Vargas-Silva at COMPAS argues that the key method applied (residual method based on deducting the total regular immigrant population from the total population to calculate the irregular population) contains too many unknowns (uncertainty over the regular immigrant population, notably birth, mortality and emigration rates which all need to be estimated too). The Office of National Statistics also concluded that 'the methodology behind this work requires huge assumptions thus making the estimates largely uncertain'.¹⁰

To conclude, the data discussed above present no more than assumptions. Therefore, it cannot be said with any certainty what size the UK's irregular migration population actually is, or whether numbers have increased. For further detail on the numbers involved please see the chapter 'Immigration enforcement in numbers'.

UK policy and law context

Immigration legislation and the organisational structure of immigration control as well as its leadership have been subject to constant – and sometimes confusing - change. There have been a series of new pieces of legislation introduced in recent years, notably the Asylum and Immigration Act 2004, the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006, the UK Borders Act 2007, the 2009 Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act, and more recently the Immigration Act 2014 and the Immigration Act 2016.

In addition, the immigration rules ('some of the most important pieces of legislation that make up the UK's immigration law')¹¹ were changed 5,600 times since 2010, as a recent Guardian investigation revealed and their volume has grown from 140,000 to 375,000 words¹². There were at last 55 substantial changes.

In 2007, the Immigration and Nationality Department (IND) became the Border and Immigration Agency (BIA). A year later this was converted into the UK Border Agency (UKBA) which then incorporated the customs functions including the staff of HM Revenue and Customs. In 2012, Border Force became a separate directorate and in 2013 UKBA was split into three directorates: UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI), Immigration Enforcement (IE) and Border Force. Finally, over the past ten years there have been six different Home Secretaries and eight Immigration Ministers.

⁷ Gordon, Ian; Scanlon, Kathleen; Travers, Tony; Whitehead, Christine (2009), *Economic impact on the London and UK economy of an earned regularisation of irregular migrants to the UK*, London: LSE

⁸ Migration Watch (2010), *The Illegal migrant population in the UK*, Briefing paper, <https://www.migrationwatchuk.org/briefing-paper/190>

⁹ Lemaitre, Georges (2017), A General Method for Estimating the Number of Unauthorised Immigrants Using Standard Data Sources, Berlin: GMDAC, <https://gmdac.iom.int/sites/default/files/presentations/irregular%20migration/Georges%20Lemaitre.pdf>

¹⁰ Office for National Statistics (2015) *Illegal immigrants in the UK*

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/aboutus/transparencyandgovernance/freedomofinformationfoi/illegalimmigrantsintheuk>

¹¹ Home Office (2017), *Immigration rules*, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules>

¹² The Guardian (2018), *Revealed, immigration rules more than double in length*, 27/8/2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/aug/27/revealed-immigration-rules-have-more-than-doubled-in-length-since-2010>

Understanding the 'hostile environment' approach and its limits

In recent years, a key aim of first the coalition and the subsequent two Conservative governments has been to reduce net migration. Traditionally, British immigration control has focussed on border security and entry controls – however, for two decades this has successively shifted towards in-country controls. By 1996, the Asylum and Immigration Act stipulated that employment of immigrants who do not have permission to stay and/or to work was an offence, and therefore required employers to check prospective employees' immigration status. The 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act granted immigration officers powers to arrest. The 2006 Asylum, Immigration and Nationality Act further strengthened employer sanctions. The 2007 Border Act reinforced immigration officers' powers and law enforcement in the field of employment. However, implementation has remained piecemeal.

In 2012, the then Home Secretary, Theresa May, suggested a comprehensive approach towards irregular migration which she called the 'hostile environment', stating: *"the aim is to create here in Britain a really hostile environment for illegal migration" [...] what we don't want is a situation where people think that they can come here and overstay because they're able to access everything they need*".¹³

In 2013, the Home Office deployed vans displaying billboards reading 'In the UK illegally? Go home or face arrest'. However, these triggered angry responses and delivered little impact. A Home Office assessment of the campaign suggested that it led to only 11 irregular immigrants leaving the UK.¹⁴ The campaign was discontinued with reports of the Home Secretary admitting the vans were *"too much of a blunt instrument"*.¹⁵

The hostile environment approach was subsequently translated into the 2014 Immigration Act¹⁶ (and further amended in 2016) which created legislation to deny irregular migrants access to housing (art. 0-37), health services (art. 38, 39), bank accounts (art. 40-43), driving licences (art. 46, 47) and to investigate sham marriages (art. 48-62) whilst also restricting rights to general appeals (art. 15). This added to previous legislation, which excluded irregular immigrants from employment and benefits and placed a legal onus on landlords, letting agencies, financial institutions, the DVLA and the NHS to verify customers' and patients' right to be in the country – blurring lines between stakeholders and enforcement agencies.¹⁷

This legislation is supported by policy measures such as the 2015 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Home Office and the Department of Education regarding passing-on details of school pupils and their families,¹⁸ the 2017 MoU between the Home Office and the National Health Service's (NHS) General Practitioners (GPs) regarding passing on patient details via Personal

¹³ Kirkup, James; Winnett, Robert (2012), Theresa May interview: 'We're going to give illegal migrants a really hostile reception', *The Telegraph*, 25/5/2012, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/9291483/Theresa-May-interview-Were-going-to-give-illegal-migrants-a-really-hostile-reception.html>

¹⁴ The Guardian (2013), 'Go home' vans resulted in 11 people leaving Britain, says report, 31/10/2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/oct/31/go-home-vans-11-leave-britain>

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ Immigration Act 2014 (c. 22), London: The Stationary Office

¹⁷ The discriminatory side-effects this has on regular have been discussed, for instance, by Consterdine, Erica (2018), Hostile environment: the UK government's draconian immigration policy explained, *The Conversation*, 26/4/2018, <http://theconversation.com/hostile-environment-the-uk-governments-draconian-immigration-policy-explained-95460>

¹⁸ Home Office (2016), *Memorandum of Understanding between Home Office and Department for Education*, <https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/377285/response/941438/attach/5/20161016%20DfE%20HO%20MoU%20redacted.pdf>

Demographics Service (PDS) and NHS Digital to Immigration Enforcement¹⁹ and the recent MoU between the Home Office and the Department of Work and Pension's Child Maintenance Group.²⁰

Further to this, in 2016, a Controlling Migration Fund for collaboration with local councils was set up; part one is meant to improve public services to immigrants whereas part two *"led by Immigration Enforcement, worth £40 million...[is]...direct[ing] enforcement action against people in the UK illegally in order to reduce pressures on local areas"*.²¹

In 2015, a project was piloted whereby immigration enforcement officers were placed in two London hospitals²² and the regulations on health charges for foreign nationals were amended. From 2017, 20 NHS hospitals started compulsory ID checks on 'overseas visitors'.²³ As a consequence, immigrants deemed irregular have been prevented from accessing public services regularly.

More recently, immigration enforcement agencies have replaced the concept 'hostile environment' with 'a compliant environment' approach, because the former was felt to be too aggressive, although the participants in one of the project's workshops agreed that by October 2017 the actual policy and approach have not changed.²⁴

The interplay between policy and individuals

The comparatively small enforcement arm of the Home Office, Immigration Enforcement (IE) (5,048 staff in financial quarter 3 2016/17), is mandated to deal with those who do not comply with immigration law. However, thousands - if not millions - of members of society contribute to an environment that allows irregular migration to happen.

The findings from this study suggest that as a side-effect of the current 'hostile environment' approach, irregular immigrants and their employers and landlords have developed diverse practices to prevent detection and have to some extent become resilient to the threat of enforcement actions. Thus, the numbers of those who are living without a regular immigration status may have increased. Furthermore, current policies appear to have contributed to an increase of certain criminal activities. For instance, several people interviewed for this study reported slavery-like exploitation, abusive landlords, and the existence of a market for false identity papers and other documents.

Methodology

This qualitative research project is based on interviews with key actors across all stages of the immigration enforcement process including: managers of immigration enforcement teams, immigration officers, local government officers, public service providers, voluntary organisations, employers and irregular migrants themselves. In total 272 interviews were conducted, of which 175

¹⁹ Home Office (2017), *Memorandum of Understanding between Health and Social Care Information Centre and the Home Office and the Department of Health*, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/585928/MOU_v3.pdf

²⁰ Bloomer, Natalie; Jeraj, Samir (2017), *Single parent families could be left 'destitute' as Home Office access child maintenance records*, 8/11/2017, politics.co.uk, www.politics.co.uk/news/2017/11/08/single-parent-families-could-be-left-destitute-as-home-office

²¹ Department for Communities and Local Government (2017), *Local councils to receive £15 million in extra funding*, 19/7/2017, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/local-councils-to-receive-15-million-in-extra-funding>

²² Barnes, Sophie (2015), *Immigration officers at London trust for patient charging pilot*, *Health Service Journal*, 15/7/2015, <https://www.hsj.co.uk/st-georges-university-hospitals-nhs-foundation-trust/immigration-officers-at-london-trust-for-patient-charging-pilot/5087894.article>

²³ Forster, Katie (2017), *Patients at 20 NHS hospitals forced to show passports and ID in 'health tourism' crackdown*, *The Independent*, 17/1/2017, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/nhs-hospitals-20-forced-show-passports-id-health-tourism-crackdown-healthcare-jeremy-hunt-government-a7530931.html>. In principle, this policy targets so-called 'health tourists' meaning persons who are not residents in the UK but de facto targets all immigrants and in effect may also exclude immigrant residents who lack proper immigration status

²⁴ Held on 12 October 2017 in London by the project team, it was attended by seven mostly senior immigration officers. The more recent developments are beyond the scope of this project

were with immigrants without a regular immigration status. Interview data was supplemented by ethnographic analysis from participant observation work by Myriam Cherti. For more detail on the methods used in this study, please see Appendix 1.

Enforcement Delivery

Background

This part of the study investigates the organisational structure, practices and cultures of the Immigration Enforcement (IE) directorate, one of three immigration directorates of the Home Office, and related police practices in the UK. The research was conducted from 2014-2018 and thus under conditions of change: austerity conditions since 2008, change of government in 2015 from the Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition to a Conservative government, changes to immigration policy and law, as in 2016, and around the period of campaigning and the subsequent UK referendum on EU membership in 2016.

For this enforcement delivery component of the research we conducted 28 interviews with 29 individuals (5 police officers and 24 immigration officers of all ranks and both genders) in London and Merseyside from late 2015 to early 2017. The limitations of sample size mean that the results are not representative and cannot be meaningfully quantified. Whilst the quotes represent perceptions and experiences of individual members of staff they nevertheless indicate patterns within the organisation.

Organisational Structure

Mandate and goals

From the interviews with staff at Immigration Enforcement (IE) it was hard to see a clear and commonly shared mandate. Instead we found a diversity of ideas and differing institutional goals.

The most commonly cited policy goal of IE was ‘removal’ (*‘to arrest and get rid of’*, IO²⁵ 21). A key criterion identified with this goal was ‘removability’ which usually related to nationality. A second criterion was to address ‘harm’ to society and in particular focussing on criminals identified as *‘high harm offenders’* (CIO 16). These goals were limited to enforcement and depict a prevalent enforcement ethos.

Centralisation and hierarchies

IE has become more hierarchical and more centralised over the last two decades; there are central directives, command structures, central intelligence units prioritising cases, and central detention units, all of which have improved control and consistency.

However, the centralised structure has been regionalised, re-compartmentalised and divided into multiple tasks conducted by separate teams. The impact of this on interlocutors’ perspectives of the overall *organisational structure* is that they perceive a confusing array of roles and levels. At least 12 hierarchical levels were identified within IE, as well as a large number of departments, units, working groups, teams and compartments of teams. The respondents referred to 59 different units and a significant number of individual operations and many said it was difficult to understand the entire organisational structure:

‘the problem is we’ve got so many directorates and strategic, you know, teams, so many little enforcement units around the country’ (IO 6)

²⁵ Abbreviations: IE – Immigration Enforcement directorate, IO – immigration officer, CIO – chief immigration officer, PO – police officer

Manager/staff ratio is inconsistent and ranges from 1:3 in some units to 1:20 in others. IE was also felt to be '*a very London-centric organisation*' (IO 21)

This results in a disjoint between the numerous national, regional and operational units. The current organisational structure contributes to disempowering staff while disconnecting them from management structures.

Professionalism and working practices

Interviewees agreed that in the past immigration enforcement activity was unprofessional and appreciated the new professionalism that was introduced in terms of powers, uniforms, training, risk assessments and assurance checks, and a generally more standardised set of procedures further enhanced with the formation of the Immigration Enforcement directorate. Also, improvements to IT facilities were appreciated. Officers welcomed the expansion of their powers to investigate and arrest, as well as a wider recognition of the importance of intelligence.

A further issue related to the issue of professional discretion: The new hierarchical structure meant that discretion of "street-level bureaucrats" has diminished - although it continues at higher hierarchical levels where officers still have discretion. This was judged to be a problem by those interviewed who suggested that local conditions, opinion, understanding, approach, styles and even '*gut feeling*' (CIO 7) informed implementation. Amongst the key challenges informing discretion in enforcement was the need to establish whether there were sufficient resources to perform a task or to assess whether the quality of intelligence was sufficient to trigger an enforcement operation.

Linked to the issue of professional discretion is the issue of prioritisation which created significant space for confusion and tension. Prioritisation occurred at multiple levels around the organisation - national, local, managerial and operational levels. Priorities were not universal or clear, officers said they either generally prioritised removal/voluntary return or only removable cases, others rather prioritised identifying and removing high harm cases, some instead mentioned identifying and removing failed asylum seekers, other paid more attention to high support cost cases and cases involving fines. Such divergences in prioritisation were identified between the practices by Immigration Compliance and Enforcement (ICE) teams and the National Removal Command (NRC) and between Immigration Officers (IOs) and Chief Immigration Officers (CIOs).

This lack of clarity about mandates, hierarchy, prioritisation and discretion meant that definitions of success presented problems. Variations in understandings of IE priorities resulted in conflicting ideas of what represented success (answers prioritised different numbers of: arrests, detention, removal/voluntary departure or preventing abuse of the system). This seemed to come from the compartmentalised structure of the organisation where each part, in accordance with its task, develops its own measures of success.

Professional identities

There were sometimes blurred and conflicting professional identities. On the one hand, there is evidence for widely shared professional pride, notably among local teams. Also, ethnic diversity and gender balance has been embraced as part of this identity which helps create a sense of an inclusive organisation.

On the other hand, there were less positive identities: *'we're professionally employed to ruin people's day'* (IO 19) and more confused sense of what the organisation and staff actually are - IE is *'still in that murky middle ground of being not quite a police force but not quite civil servant'* (IO 21).

This duality of character is also visible in the broader culture of the organisation where some interviewees referred to caring teams and good spirits while others criticised senior management's top-down work style and indifference vis-a-vis staff.

Austerity and cuts

These factors were deemed to have had an impact on workloads, stress and morale. Cuts, and related changes to the size of operational areas, restrictions due to an overtime ban, problems arising from staff in one and the same unit who are nevertheless on different types of contracts (SDA and AWH, see below), deploying staff to emerging crises and dealing with backlogs were all felt to have undermined operational capacity: *'we can't carry on the way we are because there are not enough of us'*, (CIO 18).

Some interviewees suggest that due to limited resources, part of the expected work of IE, notably compliance visits, seem to be sacrificed.

Working conditions and attitudes

A change from Shift Disturbance Allowance (SDA) to Annualised Working Hours (AWH) employment contracts, an overtime ban and subsequent loss of income, combined with limited career opportunities and the recruitment of senior staff from outside the organisation, generated deep frustration. Also, the impact this had on private life was described as damaging.

Overall, working conditions were seen very critically: *'we worked like donkeys'*, (PO 3); *'it's a lot more stressful'*, (IO 5); *'keep on nicking people, you just churn, churn, churn'*, (IO 9)

Some claimed they lost up to a third of their disposable income due to changes in their contract and subsequent loss of overtime pay. These conditions were even seen to result in some exploitation: *'you've got to keep going until the job is finished, ...management said no overtime, seniors said no budget, so, what happens is we do unpaid hours, shifts'*, (IO 6).

Views of policy, change, and other actors

Perhaps as a result of these changes, views on policy were broadly negative and political leadership was widely criticised, partly rejected, and only rarely appreciated. This reveals a major tension between policy, and policy makers, and the organisation. In one extreme case an Immigration Officer pointedly argued *'policy is our biggest enemy'* (IO 21).

Relatedly, all interviewees extensively referred to legal and organisational change. Whereas some noted constructive effects, others emphasised the negative effects:

'[the] biggest issue is the constant restructuring which makes that chain of command, disrupts it all the time, disrupts the accountability. ...Reappoint, reallocate, it's this obsession with re-branding, even changing the names of units and acronyms', (CIO 8).

The media was widely and critically discussed - in particular its power to set agendas and override professional considerations: *'we were actually being sort of governed by the Daily Mail'* (PO 3).

Relations with the police were perceived as complex. Even though police and IE are two law enforcement agencies overseen by the same government department - the Home Office – several

interviewees suggested that they remained separate *'they're [a] fundamentally different organisation'*, (IE Director, 24).

Consequences

Different agendas - notably reducing net and irregular migration vs increasing safety of communities, and cultures - generated tensions. On the one hand, a police officer felt that IE has *'very strange working practices'* (PO 3); on the other hand, an immigration officer complained about the police *'barking orders'* (IO 21).

Intra-institutional cooperation: At times in our research we found evidence that there was overlap, criticism, conflict and tension within and between the three immigration directorates, the diverse units of IE and other Home Office agencies. For instance, there was some duplication of responsibility and conflict between the IE's intelligence units of Immigration Compliance and Enforcement (ICE) and Interventions and Sanctions (ISU) (*'there's a joining up issue'*, CIO 25) and between caseworkers, ICE teams and the National Removal Command (NRC). There were also signs of internal competition between diverse immigration agencies over scarce resources, notably detention space, and conflicts between regional offices.

Cooperation with public services: IE continues relying on other public services to enforce immigration law. Relations with other departments and authorities such as: the licensing authority, registrars, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), local authorities, and trading standards ranged from cooperation to partial or full refusal: *'They just don't like working with immigration [enforcement]'* (CIO 25).

Cooperation with community organisations and community relations: Community organisations were approached using both trust-building and threatening methods which result in mixed relations, ranging from cooperation and friendly reservation to outright rejection. Stories of hostility by the public, notably attacks (even though this appears limited to a few locations) have quickly travelled across the organisation and were referred to widely (*'they slashed the tyres and everything of all the vehicles that were out on visits and then another time they blocked them in and were throwing stuff at them'*, CIO, 13). It seems a small number of incidents had a disproportionate demoralising impact.

Frustration and morale: Interviewees of all ranks expressed significant levels of alienation from policy, leadership and management, referring to lack of appreciation, care, ownership, room for creativity and innovation. Also it was identified by some interviewees that *'bullying is quite a problem'* (CIO 8). They expressed frustration with the limits set by legislation, obstacles to detention and removal, as well as with the division of work, conditions at work, contracts and pay. This is so widespread and omnipresent that it has developed into a culture of frustration: *'my incentive to do the job is rock bottom'* (IO 20); *'morale is very, very low'* (former manager 11).

Major obstacles to enforcement mentioned included: lack of cooperation of foreign authorities; lack of documentation; human rights legislation and judicial review rights; family rights; appeals; limited powers to enter properties or detain individuals; out-dated IT; obtaining warrants; the London-centric nature of the service; extended operational areas; lack of detention space and a lack of staff resources. It was also felt that intelligence about individuals is often outdated, inaccurate or non-existent which means that inevitably people may slip through the net.

Incidents such as the Calais crisis in 2015 or just dealing with backlogs can result in the already scarce resources being concentrated at such points, leaving other areas without cover. Interviewees also believed that certain uniforms and marked vans had the unintended consequence of warning people and communities of the arrival of immigration services. Meanwhile, other policies were said to push migrants and employers into ever more shadowy practices.

Stakeholders

Public Sector

Background

The fieldwork with public sector organisations was conducted between 2014 and 2017, as mentioned previously, a period when the Immigration Bill was being discussed in Parliament and when enforcement initiatives such as hospital and landlord checks were being piloted. Public services were also increasingly integrated into the 'hostile environment' or 'compliant environment' approach.

For this part of the project 16 public service staff were interviewed. They were selected through purposive sampling in two of our research sites, London and Merseyside. The interviews covered four different local authorities (three in London and one in Merseyside). Services were sampled if, under current legislation, they were expected to cooperate with Immigration Enforcement. Staff interviewed came from different departments, including a registry office, housing services, children's services, No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) units and refugee strategy teams.

Three interviews were conducted with health professionals (a GP and two Registrars) and two with Overseas Visitors Managers in two London hospitals. In addition, two interviews were conducted with the Security Industry Authority (SIA) and the Gangmaster Licensing Authority (GLA), which, for the purposes of this project, were deemed part of the public sector.

Perceptions of Migration and Irregularity

Interviewees focused on the complexity of the immigration system and how this could lead to irregularity. A significant number of interviewees associated irregular migration with illegality, law breaking and criminality. Some also conceptualised irregular migration as putting '*a strain on public services*' (PS14²⁶) and conflated different types of migrants - such as irregular migrants and so-called '*health tourists*' (PS10).

Another thread of discussion considered irregular migration in terms of the dangers that individual migrants expose themselves to, such as exploitation, or the impacts they had on society at large (e.g. through untreated communicable disease). In general, however, our respondents expressed less concern for the welfare of irregular migrants and more about the 'strain on public services'.

Many respondents perceived migration, public services and control through an economic lens. For instance, several respondents referred to the need to '*manage migration*' in relation to scarce resources (PS14). Some made a link between irregular migrants, the lack of funding available for threadbare public services, and immigration enforcement ('*the social services said there's no money, give the family money to go back to the country where they come from*', PS5).

A number of respondents informally distinguished between more or less deserving irregular migrants on the basis of whether or not they were *in need* but also whether or not they play by the rules (e.g. PS14). This was not based on legal definitions but on individual perceptions.

Several local authority representatives were concerned about the significant amounts of money spent through NRPF on supporting families under Section 17 or individuals under Section 21 of the National Assistance Act. This money is not recouped from central government and ends up coming from local

²⁶ Abbreviation: PS – public service agency representative

authorities' own shrinking budgets *'so they have got a huge incentive to cut costs, and they're doing it really brazenly'* (VSO7²⁷) a voluntary sector organisation representative believes.

Some respondents believe that immigration policy – and wider public discourse around immigration – often tips into racism, and allows for prejudicial assumptions, blurring the formal distinction between generations of individuals who are born overseas (and thus migrants) and people born in the UK who are not migrants but may come from visible minorities that people wrongly assume to be migrants. Often these views reflected stereotypes, sometimes verging on anti-immigration attitudes (*'a lot has changed in the country, people, who're coming in from all kinds, all parts of the world and try to bring their own culture and ...the integration we're talking about is not really happening'*, PS5) and racial prejudice, *'Africa's mostly black men do look alike sometimes, ...the same thing applies to Asian women and Asian men, sometimes they look alike'* (PS5).

Some frontline workers framed immigrants' access to public services or jobs as a matter of fairness. For instance, some asserted that *'the system is fair and the right people get in and the wrong people don't get in'* (PS4).

Many frontline workers in public services showed only limited knowledge of irregular immigrants' entitlement to rights. This led some to favour swift detention and deportation, showing relative disregard for any harmful consequences to the migrants.

'Human rights aren't part of this; right and wrong is. I think that's much more fundamental, right and wrong, isn't it? They will scream human rights to you until they're blue in the face but actually you still haven't paid! If we carry on, we will sink! ... I'm far from racist' (PS11).

In the health service, those working in administration and management expressed more negative opinions about migrants than clinical professionals providing the medical service itself. This was based on their concern that the NHS is being overused by those not entitled to use it.

Perceptions of policy and media

Several respondents were of the opinion that the 'hostile environment' approach was actually hostile for everyone. Some used the example of the 'Go Home Vans' to explain how they too felt impacted by the degree of hostility around them, even as rights-bearing citizens. This touches upon a critical issue in terms of the politics of irregular migration, namely the extent to which it can be seen to impinge upon the lives of the population at large, beyond irregular migrants themselves. Notably, this seems to generate a context in which irregular immigrants, for instance, do not report crimes which means that criminals will not be persecuted and thus remain a threat to society. Equally, irregular immigrants might avoid health services, which means that contagious diseases could remain untreated which also represents a threat for society as a whole. Some interviewees observed that irregular immigrants were more likely to present to public services, despite their fears of immigration enforcement, if they had concerns for their children rather than for themselves.

Several public-service workers referred to immigration targets. Some see the focus on irregular migration as a false target, one which by definition cannot be reliably counted. There was a view that this in fact *'creates public anxiety about public services'* (PS20).

²⁷ Abbreviation: VSO – voluntary sector organisation representative

Another recurring theme in conversations with public service workers is the role of the media. Indeed, often, even those whose views on immigration can be interpreted as negative criticised the mainstream media, which they see as bent on simplifying a complex issue and driving policy change.

The theme of managing migration provided an opening to explore issues of fairness, including with reference to race and nationality.

Perception of Immigration Control and Enforcement

Views on the Home Office (HO) were mixed throughout the sector. Some considered new collaborations to be mutually beneficial, in that excluding irregular immigrants is reducing pressure on public services while meeting HO targets. Others reported that the opposite was the case and that, due to the inefficiency of the Home Office, expenditures were created that could have been avoided (*'we have a number of cases, for example, that have not been in any process with the Home Office for two, three, four years. We've found failed asylum seekers who shouldn't be supported by us'*, PS2). There was concern among some interviewees that the HO was too influential in shaping how they conduct their own work. Others complained that new responsibilities with regards to immigration status checks increased their workload. And some held very negative views, relationships are *'quite poor, I'd say, quite poor. I think we view them as people that lose documents, are aggressive and rude. And inefficient. And slow. And bossy'* (PS4).

Public service workers expressed concerns about the impact of having Immigration Enforcement (IE) involved in frontline service provision (*'our concern about that was people will disappear if you put enforcement as the first thing, but they will probably disappear somewhere. There are still people with children and there are still people with no money, so where are they disappearing to?'*, (PS3)). In particular, they referred to migrant safety and respect for human rights. For some public service workers, both in local government and in the NHS, the fact that they have to work with IE creates an environment that makes migrants - even those with a regular status - worried about approaching those services. Notably, the physical presence of HO staff (immigration officers, or enforcement officers) in spaces where public services are provided was perceived by many interviewees as more likely to deter irregular migrants from seeking public support, so that, as a consequence, they will 'disappear' from the radar of public services altogether.

Perception of the Consequences of Immigration Control and Enforcement on Public Service Provision

Local authorities:

The No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) teams working in local councils were, in general, concerned about supporting those who were in need, particularly children (*'I think the children, um, there is an overwhelming feeling of just the need for support'*, PS4). But some local authorities were also very strict about the support they could provide to irregular migrants. One NRPF team spoke of having to turn away 80 per cent of the migrants who approached them for help, whilst they remained destitute and their families vulnerable. But some went even further than this, notably one also talked about their involvement in immigration enforcement (*'we will contribute greatly to detecting irregular migrants in different ways. ...that's a statutory duty so I do do it. So we have no problems with that'*, PS1). Other local authorities' departments, such as the registry office, also felt more of a need to cooperate with IE in order to catch out a potential sham marriage or detect fraud PS2, PS11). By virtue of looking for discrepancies, many felt that the nature of their job has changed towards catching people out rather than supporting their needs.

Healthcare:

Within the healthcare service, there were stark distinctions between health professionals and administrators (e.g. receptionists and overseas visitors managers). We found that those delivering medical treatment often seemed less concerned about establishing the eligibility of patients and restricting access to irregular migrants. Conversely, those involved in administration felt much more strongly about checking a patient's entitlements to specific health services before allowing access.

Childcare:

Under certain conditions respondents rejected the requirements under the hostile environment approach and did not report irregular immigrants to the Home Office, *'what they say, is ...all of us should be doing their role, ...and you think, Oh if I report this person and they send this person back, what is the benefit? It's not good, ...for us and our team, a few times we've come in contact with people like that, we've kind of passed them on to social services instead of going straight to the Home Office. Because we felt pity, there are children involved, there are children that need support, and all that'* (PS5).

General responses:

Public service staff expressed empathy for immigrants in an irregular position, *'[they are] staying here illegally but they are working and they are trying to make a living, they are trying to survive, they're trying to live... Where they come from things are difficult'* (PS5). Several respondents criticised the fact that so many migrants were left in limbo for months, sometimes years, on end. Some interviewees said that for those who are refused support, there should be a quick process to remove them for the sake of their own mental health, and to reduce pressure on services. Other suggested that current practices only drive people underground (*'people will disappear if you put enforcement as the first thing but they will probably disappear somewhere'* PS3).

Immigration policies were perceived by several public-service interviewees as barriers to accessing justice, making it more difficult to keep in line with safeguarding policies. This was particularly mentioned by some NRPF teams, as they see these policies impacting on the most vulnerable irregular migrants.

Public service workers who perceived immigration as a problem which needs to be curbed expressed faith in the overall project of building 'a hostile environment' that prevents access to social services. However, those who challenged the notion that immigration is a problem in the first place recognised the increased difficulty in assessing service users' cases based on their needs alone.

Medical staff interviewed describe the professional obligation to provide health care to everybody and the legal obligation to exclude irregular immigrants as an acute conflict of interest. They explain that despite having sworn the Hippocratic Oath to treat everyone and not differentiate between patients, the NHS is now requesting that they do just this on the basis of immigration status.

According to some public-service workers, a 'conflict of interest' (PS3) is created between the mandate to provide services and immigration enforcement requirements. Also, conflicts of interests can arise when some HO workers and frontline service workers were seen to hold prejudiced or anti-immigrant opinions when they are supposed to maintain objective and professional standards.

Some interviewees criticised the role of private contractors in providing public services to the most vulnerable users, reducing both professionalism and accountability in the system. Others critically noted that the hostile environment targets migrants unfairly. For instance, it is suggested that such an

approach diminishes migrants' opportunity to prove their contribution. And a Registrar from one London council suggested that all migrants should have a right to work.

The Voluntary Sector

Background

The interviews with voluntary sector organisations (VSOs) were conducted between 2014 and 2017, as mentioned previously, a period when the Immigration Bill was still being discussed in parliament and when enforcement initiatives such as hospital and landlord checks were still being piloted. The associated concerns expressed by some voluntary sector representatives were mixed with hope that some of the proposed initiatives would not go ahead following the pilots. Such optimism was fomented by the abandoning of the "Go Home Vans" pilot after strong condemnation from the British public, including from the voluntary and community sector. Research was shaped by a specific research question which focussed on VSOs perceptions of immigration enforcement and public services' role in immigration control.

19 VSOs were sampled and 21 interviews conducted; these were identified through purposive sampling in two research areas, London and Merseyside. Of the 19 organisations sampled, 16 were London-based (although some had a reach beyond London) and three organisations were based in Merseyside.

Different types of organisations were sampled ensuring that the sample included charities organised by and for the migrant groups researched (Turks, Brazilians, and Ukrainians). Unfortunately, Pakistani community organisations could not be included because interview requests were turned down; instead, organisations were included who also served Pakistani clients. Also, there was no VSO catering for Australians. Further to this, organisations were sampled covering the four key areas featured in the 'hostile environment' approach at the time of the research: healthcare, housing, legal support and employment.

Interviews were conducted with: one health service provider, a housing support organisation, three associations providing legal support, one migrant workers' organisation as well as three national network organisations, four community organisations, three umbrella organisations of migrant community groups, a campaigning organisation, a faith-based organisation, and a transatlantic funding organisation focusing on migrant integration.

General perceptions of migration and migration policy

Voluntary sector workers often presented a nuanced and historically-aware understanding of the current context for irregular migration. Their accounts focused on particular experiences, often giving examples of individual clients or service users, reflecting the type of work they engage in and their proximity to migrant communities. Respondents often detailed the different sets of circumstances that lead to an individual being classified as an 'irregular' migrant, ranging from Britain's colonial past to administrative changes resulting in altered statuses.

All voluntary sector interviewees were generally critical of what they saw as an anti-immigrant environment, running from public discourse through to policy. Many also demonstrated a keen understanding of current trajectories in policy. Critical views of immigration enforcement were in response to: policies to create the 'hostile environment' (to which several respondents made explicit reference); general scapegoating and racism; and a blurred public perception of what irregular migration is and who is an irregular migrant.

For several respondents, the role of the Home Office (HO) has shifted from 'management' to 'suppression' of immigration, at all costs. *'There is a feeling sometimes within different bits of government that the Home Office are a bit out of control; that when it comes to enforcement they've got carte blanche; they can do what they want because they've got the political wind behind their sails on it'* (VSO20HouseNat).

For many VSO respondents, there is a nexus between anti-immigrant discourse and the introduction of ever more stringent anti-immigration measures and policies such as landlord checks and widespread criminalisation of migrants, which they see as putting people at risk of exploitation and harm, in particular with regards to employment, housing and healthcare.

Perceptions of the 'hostile environment'

As mentioned, the 'hostile environment' is a set of policy measures introduced by Theresa May as the Home Secretary from 2014 onwards with the aim of making life so difficult for irregular migrants either living in or aspiring to come to the UK that they would leave voluntarily or not seek to enter the UK in the first place. Hostile environment initiatives led to serious concerns and even suggestions that it provided a perverse incentive for public services wanting to manage down demand.

On the impact of the hostile environment, one interviewee summed up the views of many in observing that *'we are driving people underground and that's probably what the Home Office wants... They want people to be desperate, they want them to be depressed and they want them to leave the country'* (VSO9MigSuppo).

All of the VSO interviewees expressed condemnation for the possible consequences of the hostile environment in terms of migrants' needs. An overwhelming number of VSO representatives described how irregular migrants experienced 'living in fear'. This is also thought of as a mode of governance: *'we also live in a society which is fuelled by fear, ...control people through fear, so the fear of the other'* (VSO3MigSuppLo).

Another major theme running through the interviews is the Immigration Act 2014, and amended in 2016, which introduced limitations on access to services, including health services, work and housing, and reductions to the right to appeal against HO decisions. Notably, interviewees warned that the presence of HO Enforcement Officers embedded in frontline public services means that irregular migrants are less likely to seek help and therefore more likely to 'disappear' underground.

Perceptions of and Responses to Irregular Immigration

There was a clear distinction between the responses of the different VSOs to irregular migration. Most umbrella and long-standing organisations focused more on legal and political (i.e. structural) matters, whereas particularly migrant-led organisations made it clear that the position they held focused rather on the practical dimension, drawing on the challenges they observed in providing more practical services, such as health care or poverty alleviation.

At least two thirds of the respondents expressed concerns that the media and government too readily equate irregularity of migrants with crime and thus criminalise the phenomenon. This is in addition to perceptions of some general 'fearmongering' around the issue. Most respondents thought this approach misrepresented irregular migrants but that it was used to justify enforcement.

Specifically, respondents noted that there are many unknowns and misconceptions around what 'irregular migration' is. Several of them talked about 'scapegoating' (e.g. *'it really needs politicians to stop scapegoating migrants'*, VSO2MigSuppNet) which allows a wide portion of the population to grow

accustomed to the idea that immigrants are to blame for economic and social problems. This is twinned with an implicit perception of the 'irregular' migrant racialised as non-white:

'Nobody knows what irregular migration is. They'll talk about it because they see it in the newspapers, but what's the difference between regular migrants and irregular migrants? And when people do find it, when people do find out there is this, you know, Australian nurse at the moment who's campaigning on her own behalf ...and they find out it's somebody like her, they're horrified. They think surely ...surely not?' (VSO1MigSuppNat).

As well as a lack of clarity on who is an irregular migrant, there is a general confusion around the issue of entitlements, in healthcare in particular, especially regarding frontline staff who may not be aware of all the legal issues associated with particular types of migrants. This lack of clarity was attributed to the Home Office not being able to provide up to date information to public service providers. It was also observed that there are migrants who *'...because they know they have a problem with their documentation, will put up with things in ways they wouldn't have to normally and make choices that they would rather not make'* (VSO20HouseNat).

Another approach found was that interviewees contrasted what they perceive as anti-immigrant discourse with what they encounter in their work with migrants: there is a perception that migration and even irregular migration is *'good for the economy'* (VSO10MigSuppLo). Therefore, the argument was made *'I don't think irregular migration is the problem. Because if you look at the vast majority of people that we see who are irregular, they've worked. They have contributed'* (VSO10MigSuppLopart1). As a result of this perception, many interviewees regard the criminalisation of irregular migration as cover to enable politicians to appear 'tough'. There is a belief that many politicians understand that migration is in fact necessary for the economy but are bound by public opinion (e.g. VSO5MigSuppLo).

In this vein, some regard the measures taken by successive governments to combat irregular migration, such as large-scale raids with multiple vans, not as effective in terms of reducing numbers of irregular migrants but rather a demonstration of power. This is also seen through the placement of enforcement workers in local authorities and other frontline services. There was the perception held by some that this resulted in a break-down of relationships between service users and service providers, and increasing the 'fear factor' among migrants and non-migrants alike.

Many VSO workers reframe the issue by suggesting that the problem with irregular migrants is not that they are violating immigration legislation but, on the contrary, they are being failed by the immigration system. Thereby they reject the notion that irregular immigrants abuse the system. In this context, they argue that irregular migrants are no longer supported as they should be but instead are being criminalised. They also suggest that recent restrictions create a market for criminals and increase criminal activities.

The most commonly recurrent theme within the interviews with VSO representatives was that the target group is vulnerable, the point was made 57 times by 16 of the 21 interviewees, and the impact of increasing exclusion and criminalisation of immigration on the most vulnerable. A widely held opinion was that the current system criminalises and pushes people underground, thereby making those that are already vulnerable even more vulnerable and leaving many open to exploitation.

Women in particular were seen as the primary victims, as respondents explained the gendered impact of the changing discourse and changing regulations, and asked the question about who is most at risk. For example, a migrant rights organisation outside London, explained:

'The immigration policies they are putting in place, they are racist, and they are disadvantaging especially the women. The men who are single will just move into the system, they will go underground, they will do just any job and then they can survive, but a mother with a child - how can she go underground and work? The single woman who has been forced into that situation will end up in prostitution to survive. We have a system that is breeding abuse,' (VSO14MigSuppLiv).

Care leavers were also described by some interviewees as a vulnerable group directly affected by enforcement. It was described as the area where there are tensions in trying to balance children/young people's welfare and immigration control and enforcement.

'It's really difficult for social workers to navigate that ...to do what's best for the young people who they've had in their care ...and potentially be told that they have to withdraw, leaving care support', (VSO19ChildLo).

There were concerns among many interviewees that, in terms of access to support and accommodation, there is a minimal safety net for people whose status is irregular. They cited: Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999; Section 17 and Section 20 of the Children Act 1989; Section 21 of the National Assistance Act 1948; and then non-statutory services such as homeless shelters, although these have also come under scrutiny lately for collaborating with the HO, especially regarding Eastern European migrants.

The key message from VSO interviewees was that whilst immigration enforcement focuses on punitive measures, rather than on justice and fairness, the voluntary sector will remain apprehensive towards it. As one respondent explained, *'I don't know how immigration enforcement can be done in a fair manner. People would need to have representation for a start. Without that, it can't even pretend to be fair', (VSO6MigSuppLo).*

Concerns about specific policy responses

Accessing justice, including the removal of legal aid

Concerns about restrictions in accessing legal aid was another theme found in the interviews. It was suggested that this prevents migrants from accessing legal remedy for any kind of abuse or crime; furthermore, it was felt that not reporting crime and criminals has repercussions for society as a whole. Also, a lack of access to legal advice with regard to regularising their status was mentioned as an issue. In particular, by restricting appeal rights, those that have 'done everything right' are still denied access to justice:

'The thing that we're most concerned about, especially with the removal of legal aid, is that you have families who are facing enforcement action potentially ...very random ...We don't know who gets it and who doesn't ...and they might never ever have seen a lawyer', (VSO19ChildLo).

Landlord checks

The impact of the recently introduced landlord checks on people's ability to find adequate housing was raised by several interviewees. There were concerns that the new regulations may lead to more discrimination:

'We're worried that landlords will just refuse people we're sending to them and of course that will be a very specific [group of] people; people who look a bit 'migranty', (VSO20HousNat).

Employment compliance

The new regulations – and in particular punitive measures against the employment of irregular immigrant workers – were said to have perverse effects, increasing the exploitation of undocumented migrants by employers. Some interviewees expressed concerns that these regulations, requiring employers to conduct passport checks, push undocumented migrant workers into the hands of criminals trading false documents.

‘Because of the regulations that are supposed to protect from evil actually [they] make us go and feed those bastards on the black market and give them a job and huge profit; every year we are pushing migrants to go and buy a different country’s passport so the employer can tick a box’, (VSO12MigSuppLo).

Healthcare

One VSO found that one in five service users were afraid of being arrested if they went to see a doctor. Another VSO found that thousands of requests had been made by the Home Office to the Health and Social Care Information Centre for intelligence that could be used for immigration enforcement. As a result, they feared many irregular migrants will shy away from health services. In addition, they noted a skills gap; new policies and regulations have already been rolled out but clinical practitioners, receptionists, and other key staff in medical settings had not been adequately trained in these. It is feared that this lack of clarity and lack of training leaves the door open for variable interpretation and thus possible discrimination.

Employers

Background

This part of the project studied how a specific category of employers perceived the economic conditions of the industries in which irregular immigrants were working; this helps understanding how they explain or justify their practices. It specifically examined employers’ checking practices in the employment of immigrants and their perceptions of and experiences with immigration enforcement, as well as of broader issues related to migration policies.

The team interviewed 18 employers across the 16 research areas of this project. 16 of the 18 interviews were conducted by the same interviewers as the migrants with irregular status, the exceptions were two Brazilians²⁸. Employers were sampled on the basis that they (1) were operating in the industries prioritised by Immigration Enforcement; (2) were industries where the irregular immigrant interviewees were working and (3) had in the past, or were still, employing migrants working irregularly.

In methodological terms a homogenous sample was conducted meaning that a small group of subjects was selected for examination and analysis. The sample was small because the research aimed to understand and describe this particular group in greater depth.

Two types of businesses were studied: franchises or large businesses including some chains, and small or family businesses. Most were immigrant or ethnic minority-owned businesses (there are an

²⁸ The research assistant conducting the migrant interviews was no longer available; therefore, we recruited another interviewer to complete the task

estimated 456,000 immigrant-owned²⁹ and 300,000 ethnic minority owned businesses in the UK³⁰ - though the two categories overlap). Some had a fixed location, like shops and restaurants, whilst others were mobile service providers. The sample consists of a range of employers with different backgrounds, including four white British, two Brazilian, five Turkish, four Pakistani and four Russian employers. These were running four restaurants, three pubs, two construction companies, two off licences, one events venue, one textile retailer, one shop, one take away, one cafe and a beauty salon.

Businesses

The businesses studied employed a total of 265 staff though one, a restaurant chain, stood-out, employing around 100 staff. They admitted to either employing irregular immigrants, employing students working more hours than permitted, engaging subcontractors whose immigration status they did not verify, or irregularly employing immigrants in the past. Some did not report or admit any such practices. The employers interviewed employed around 50 immigrants irregularly, just under a fifth of all their employees in this sample.

Most interviewees were either immigrants themselves or members of established black and ethnic minority communities. Several went through periods of hardship, precarity, and even irregularity themselves. Setting up a business was often part of their, and their families', migration and survival strategy.

One prominent theme running through the interviews was that business had been coming under increasing economic pressure. Several interviewees also pointed to fierce competition and diminishing profit margins: *'it is very difficult, especially since the credit crunch, small businesses such as my takeaway have been hit particularly hard'* (employer 8), *'we as small shop owners have to compete with big companies, ...we can't afford to pay high wages'* (employer 13). Only construction businesses seemed to be doing better.

Priorities were *'to run the business; this is the first priority'* (employer 12). This was related to a second priority: *'I have family that I am responsible for. How will I take care of my family? Through the profit of the business. ...I have to think of the best for my business, so I value work performance rather than papers'* (employer 14). Obligations to the community came third: *'we are a community, we ask help from each other'*, (employer 12).

Irregular Employment

Three distinctly different patterns in the composition of staff in the businesses studied could be identified.

- First, some employers relied on EU and old Commonwealth links – including Australian – immigrant workforce.
- Second, other employers relied on a mix of white British, ethnic minority British, EU and other immigrant workers: *'Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi, Romanian and Albanian staff'* (employer 7).
- And third, several relied entirely on a non-EU immigrant ethnic minority workforce.

²⁹ Centre for Entrepreneurs, DueDil (2015), *Migrant Entrepreneurs: Building Our Businesses Creating Our Jobs*, London, <https://centreforentrepreneurs.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/MigrantEntrepreneursWEB.pdf>

³⁰ BIS (2013), *Business population estimates for the UK and regions 2013*, London: Department for business, innovation and skills

One construction employer (employer 17) pointedly insists: *'for me as an employer the immigrants are very important. Without them I would not run my business.'*

Key expectations the employers had of their workers were staff that 'you can trust' (employer 13), have 'experience' (employer 6) and language skills (employer 11), are resilient, and prepared to work for low wages.

Workers were usually supplied by way of immigration, notably new arrivals, like foreign spouses, foreign students and asylum seekers but some employers believed that *'the number of staff is decreasing due to the decreasing number of new immigrants'* implying that a reduction in immigration leads to a reduction in available workers (employer 14).

Others pointed out that *'it's very hard to get people, particularly British people'* (employer 1) and that *'white British people do not tend to work in the restaurants that are owned by a minority. They usually work in those chain restaurants owned or managed by white English people'* (employer 10) but some believed that where legally employed staff were unable to work in the way that they (the employers) believed that they should, they had no little choice but to employ people who may not have legal status: *'if your legally employed staff cannot produce that quality you employ the ones that can do that'* (employer 10).

Hiring and Immigration Status Checks

No employer used employment agencies; instead, they recruited through word of mouth, from family or other employers, through social networks, by putting notes in their windows or from job seekers walking in. There was thus no control mechanism between the applicants and employers.

Some employers had checks undertaken on new staff by dedicated HR teams in headquarters or accountants, if they had one, helping to run the business. However, none said they had ever received any information from government authorities, and most were not aware of specific immigration legislation.

Typically, most employers focussed on visas and would *'ask for documents and work permit [...] but there are always some exceptions. There are certain people here that I can't say no to'* (employer 12). Others conducted checks not to actually exclude workers from employment but to satisfy legal obligations to check documents: *'I do not really check the documents. I just photocopy them. I just check the photo and the date of arrival'* (employer 11). One insisted *'it is not my responsibility to check and decide that it is genuine or not'* (employer 10), while others entered into an agreement or colluded with irregular immigrants, *'people who work for me have some ways of getting some papers that I can make a photocopy of and put it in their work files'* (employer 16). Taking on workers but declaring them 'self-employed' and thus not conducting visa checks was another practise found. Through such practises, the fiction of compliance with the law was created.

Immigration Enforcement

Some employers seemed to not actively recruit but rather to tolerate some migrants working irregularly, *'what we witnessed is that some staff used their friends NI number. ...Some are staying here with student visa. Sometimes they work overtime in order to complete their shift. I do not specifically check for how many hours they do'* (employer 10).

Another practice involved some employers being open to discuss irregular employment options, *'firstly, we do a trial session for a week. Prior to that I ask for a copy of their passport. ...We sit down and talk about the contract. If the person does not want a contract we talk about other options'* (employer 11).

The interviews also reveal the role of peer pressure, *'I had to employ two undocumented people. I say I had to because one of them was my relative and the other one was my friend's relative'* (employer 12). One explained *'we as small shop owners have to compete with big companies, ...now we have to employ illegal migrants to decrease the expenses'* (employer 13). A construction boss admitted *'they all have some problems with either visa and or permission to work here'* (employer 16).

Notably, the priorities cited above often appear to prevail over legal obligations and drive irregular employment, *'if they find a good employee with no work permit they will still go for it'* (employer 12), *'I have to think of the best for my business, so I value work performance rather than papers'* (employer 14), *'if a friend asks me to employ his illegal cousin I need to give him a chance'* (employer 12). Some framed this as a charitable act but also as ethnic solidarity, *'I have to employ them because no one else will and they'll be in trouble'* (employer 16).

Most interviewees had heard of immigration controls or operations though often without having experienced anything personally - *'I have never experienced [an immigration operation]'*, employer 14; *'I know immigration services have raided a few restaurants within this area because I read this in the paper and heard it from the neighbours'*, employer 9. In several cases, this was anecdotal knowledge referring to incidences some years ago.

Some who had experienced compliance visits or enforcement operation were fairly impressed. One said he was lucky because the irregular immigrant worker happened to have his day off that day. Those who were visited by Immigration Enforcement (IE) whilst no irregularities were detected were wondering why they were targeted. Such visits appeared unfounded which suggests that if based on intelligence, this was inaccurate information.

However, several other respondents complained about the manner in which IE operates - *'it was horrible. It was a terrible experience ...because of the way they treated us. ...Especially because there were clients when they came. It was very aggressive; the way they invade your space and treat you as if, the way they think they can treat you, and this is because we are migrants'*, employer 5; *'when they come from the Immigration Service they surround the restaurant and annoy the customers. ...they damage your reputation'*, employer 10.

Deterrence and its Limits

The deterrent effect of immigration visits and enforcement were varied, with some taking the risk very seriously, while others saw enforcement as either a temporary challenge to overcome or simply an irritation.

Some interviewees suggested they were significantly concerned and had taken action as a result: *'myself and other colleagues that own cafes, we no longer employ [illegal migrants], there is no way because it is a great risk'* (employer 6).

Others implied that the situation had become more difficult recently, *'in the past you could probably get away with this but now times are different given that there are such stringent rules'* (employer 7).

Others were not impressed by fines, and seemed pragmatic about enforcement: *'the employers will find a way to overcome that'* (employer 11); *'losses [are] the reality of this business'* (employer 20).

Other accounts suggest that the deterrent effects of operations and sanctions is temporary, *'people who got fines or warnings, they don't employ illegals for some time after they get a warning or fine but they start to employ again, they have to do that'* (employer 13). Another implied it *'is a bit of a lottery'* (employer 18). Another pattern was that immigration enforcement had no visible deterrent effect, *'[fines] I think that I'm not at risk in that respect. ...It doesn't work as a deterrent at all'* (employer 16).

Instead, employers of irregular immigrants developed strategies to avoid attention and detection - *'I tell [workers] ...how to look after the appearance of our site [to avoid] attracting attention of all sorts of officials. People have to be careful. Both employers and workers. And that's about it'* (employer 16). Another owner believed it was safe to hide irregular immigrants in a mainstream café and amongst a partly British workforce. Employers also suggested that location matters, *'friends in London seem to be more stressed than us. We are more relaxed in X, I think. ...The controls or checks are stricter [there] than in smaller places, like X'* (employer 12).

Others believed that certain nationalities are more vulnerable to checks than others or that risk depends on the size of the business and that small businesses are less visible to the authorities. One employer demonstrated some insight into the strategy of Immigration Enforcement, *'officers usually raid a couple of shops in an area to intimidate others. They are not regular checks'* (employer 13). Finally, the risks related to immigration raids were put into perspective by the general risks to small businesses, *'my business is constantly at risk even if there weren't more [immigration] restrictions'* (employer 18).

Finally, one pattern found was that some employers did not believe that immigration controls were either efficient or sustainable. One elaborated *'I've lost a few people who were caught and sent back to Ukraine but two of them came back later anyway. So I'm curious about what was the point in sending them back'* (employer 16).

Perceptions of policy and recommendations

Criticism of immigration policies was frequently voiced. Several complained that *'policies do change on a rapid basis'* (employer 7), *'each year the Home Office puts more restrictions on migrants and their work permits'* (employer 12). It was felt that policy is *'creating intolerance'* (employer 6), and *'has segregated people and made it as if it is "us" and "them", which creates barriers in society'* (employer 7).

Policy was also considered specifically hostile to *'small businesses, cafes and the like are not being well protected by this [immigration] act'* (employer 6). A construction company owner declared *'you won't survive in this business if you do everything by the book. ...Change the system so I don't have to hide my ways of doing my business'* (employer 18) and another described policy as inconsistent, *'whatever they do there just doesn't make any sense. ...This economy needs migrants. Certain sectors depend completely on immigrants. ...It's so stupid to introduce those restrictions. ...It doesn't work. People still come here for work because they know that they're needed here. For them, it's a chance to improve their lives. For businesses here, it's a chance to develop'* (employer 16).

Some employers specifically explained that immigration restrictions negatively impact on or even interrupt their supply of workers: *'new legislation doesn't allow spouses into the country unless their partner earns more than a certain amount of money. ...A lot of parents are not getting their children married to people from "back home", thus there hasn't been any influx of new staff from South Asia'* (employer 7); *'I mostly have students who worked for me on a part-time basis or 20 hours, but this hourly allocation has been reduced now. You cannot employ someone for 10 hours because this is too*

little' (employer 9); *'it is already difficult to find ...staff in the leisure sector. If the government puts sanctions on immigration or make the conditions difficult our sector will not benefit from that'* (employer 11); *'we were more flexible in employment. Now we get stressed and concerned whom to employ and whom not to employ'* (employer 12).

Another argued *'French, Italian, Spanish or American restaurants are lucky, they can easily find employees, their staffs are either from the EU or the States and have no trouble of working in the UK. On the other hand, in our restaurant the food should be produced by Turkish chefs and served by Turkish staff and Turkish people need visa to come to the UK. ...We are less fortunate to employ qualified staff in comparison to the other restaurants'* (employer 10).

Another interviewee illustrates that small businesses believed that policy is ignorant of their needs, *'the law doesn't know the reality that our people face here. And the law doesn't know how this industry works'* (employer 20). This sets the preconditions for some alienation and subsequently disobedience of the legislation.

One employer suggested that IE should be plain-clothed in order to minimise public attention and disruption to businesses. This resonates with the wish of many IE officers interviewed for this project who also preferred remaining plain-clothed in order to avoid unnecessarily high attention, though for a different reason. Some made more far-reaching suggestions and demand to *'legalize these workers'* (employer 6) or *'we should have the free movement of people'* (employer 1). This echoes some of the view of the voluntary sector staff interviewed.

Irregular Immigrants

Background

This section summarises the findings based on 175 qualitative interviews with irregular immigrants of five nationalities - Australian, Brazilian, Pakistani, Ukrainian and Turkish nationals (including ethnic Turks and Kurds). The interviews were conducted in 2016 in 14 locations across the UK (London, one city and three rural towns in South England, five cities and towns in the Midlands, two largely rural areas in North England, and one city and a rural area in Scotland). They were conducted by eleven mother-tongue interviewers.

Of the interviewees, 122 were male and 53 female, 136 were aged between 18-38 years, 34 were 39-57 and five were 58+, 68% had tertiary and 26% at least secondary education; 53% were single and 40% were married or in a partnership. About a third of the interviewees had children, with some of these children abroad and others in the UK. Our analysis suggests that children represent a significant proportion of the irregular immigrant population.

The interviewees worked in ten main sectors – construction (30); hospitality (29); retail (19); cleaning (18); domestic/care work (18); delivery/driving (8); education (8) and security(7). Though others worked in a mix of sectors including design (1), architecture (1), engineering (1), business consulting (1), accountancy (2), management (2), PR (1) IT (3), factory work (3), barber/beautician (3), music (2), a nightclub (1) and car wash (2) or handing out of leaflets (1), 7 were students, 6 were not working outside the home (unemployed or housewives) and 1 appeared to be involved in criminal activities (dealing drugs).

Pathways into Irregularity

The interviewees provide a range of accounts of their motivations, notably:

Work ('Worker' motive):

'my aim was to come here and work' (PMa59M2)

Improving their/their families' lives ('Betterment' motive):

'I left Turkey in order to get better opportunities for the family' (TKe33M2)

Saving money ('Saving' motive):

'my key objective has been to earn and save to go back to Brazil and set up my gym' (BLo04M1)

Learning/study ('Learner' motive):

'I wanted to improve my English. I studied English at the university first' (TBr37M2)

Travel/adventure ('Traveller' motive):

'mainly for the opportunity to travel, and yeah, for good experience', ALo01M1,

Family disputes ('Family dispute' motive):

'we wanted to get married, my parents were angry, they started to threaten us, we were not safe there'(PLa48F2)

Family/love ('Family/love' motive):

'I met P. [partner]. Then, all of the sudden I was supposed to leave the country [UK], and I did not know what to do' (ALo03F1)

Political flight/asylum (Political motive):

'I came here due to political reasons. I was sentenced nine years of imprisonment' (TBr11F3)

Different motivations shape different migration strategies and intentions with regards to working in breach of and/or overstaying their visa. Those presenting worker, betterment or political motives were more likely to arrive with an intention to breach the law whereas those with education, travel or family/love accounts were more likely to develop such an intention post- arrival.

The main migration strategies in this sample (and thus pathways into irregularity) were working in breach (97, including 45 students and 26 visitors), visa overstaying (55), document fraud including entry and staying/working on false documents (42), refused asylum seekers absconding (13) and clandestine entrants (4).

The irregular immigrants' behaviours can be distinguished by three types:

- Those who intentionally violate immigration regulations from the outset ('planners'),
- Others who only successively develop such intentions as a consequence of the circumstances arising whilst in the UK ('successive intentionals'),
- And a small group who slip into irregularity unintentionally ('accidentals').

Changes in travellers' or migrants' economic circumstances (such as finding that conditions in the destination country were less favourable than expected) or personal circumstances (falling in love) shape individual intentions. Some of those who did not intend to overstay subsequently did, whilst others who intended to overstay only for a limited period of time stayed significantly longer.

Intentions were also influenced by other actors. Notably, some of the 'successive intentionals' were coaxed into unlawful strategies. Some of the 'accidentals' were cheated or misled by others, such as employers who promised, but did not sort out, visas. Hence, divergent levels of commitment and human agency add another element to the explanation of different strategies.

Another pattern identified was switching from a regular migration status to irregularity and back to regularity. This not only illustrates fluid migration strategies but also that even regular immigrants' migration histories may be dotted with periods of irregularity. Regularisation was a prominent theme running through many peoples' experiences:

'life has really improved since I am regularised' (PRo25M3)

However, the study reveals two strategies: genuine regularisation and regularisation through deceit. Genuine regularisation may be achieved, for example, through children/family rights while regularisation by deceit is likely to take place through sham marriages or the European Community Association Agreement (known as the Ankara Agreement³¹). The latter is only available to Turkish nationals and contains regulations for residence as a self-employed person.

³¹ Agreement establishing an Association between the European Economic Community and Turkey allowing Turkish nationals to establish themselves as self-employed in the EU, http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2003/december/tradoc_115266.pdf. However, practitioners have recently noticed a tightening of procedures, see RadcliffesLeBrasseur (2017), *Does the Home Office's current attitude towards the Ankara Agreement signal its extinction?*, 31/10/17, <https://www.rlb-law.com/briefings/immigration/home-offices-current-attitude-towards-ankara-agreement-signal-extinction/>

For many, agents or smugglers played an important role in facilitating migration. These agents included visa or immigration advisors, travel agencies, and lawyers - as well as sham marriage brokers – and either supported the migrants' entering or residing in the country. Assistance in entering the country included helping migrants enter regularly - by deceit or on false documents - or clandestinely, while support for those already residing in the UK included providing advice on how to abuse the system and the supply of false documents to support various applications and false IDs.

Some interviewees revealed complex irregular migration trajectories; some had engaged in long overland journeys before arriving in the UK whilst others previously worked irregularly in other countries

'I tried to settle in Italy but I didn't like Italians. [In France] I was working as a painter; it became very difficult so I decided to come to UK' (PRy29M2)

Experiences, perception of and responses to Immigration Enforcement

Of the 175 interviewees, 125 were aware of immigration enforcement operations, 18 had experienced work-place raids, 11 had experienced raids of private addresses, whilst 11 had also been detained at some point and one was even removed.

The groups who experienced this most frequently were migrants from Pakistan, followed by those from Turkey. Other nationalities were less likely to have experienced this, with Australians and Ukrainians experiencing the least. Almost all, except Australians, were aware of enforcement operations.

91 of the interviewees feared immigration controls or raids, 29 said that they only feared raids at the beginning of their irregularity, and 55 said they did not fear such enforcement. Those from Pakistan or Turkey were more likely to fear immigration controls whereas the others were more relaxed

'I deal with my personal problems in a very light manner, ...I joke with my friends about my illegality. I don't live in fear because of it' (BL005M1)

A key thread running through the findings was that interviewees still considered life in the UK, including employment opportunities and rule of law, better than in their country of origin. This explains the limited impact of the threat of enforcement on deterring irregular migration.

'being an illegal in this country is still better than being legal in Ukraine' (UL002F2)

Relationships with fellow citizens was complex for many; on the one hand, interviewees counted on ethnic solidarity; on the other hand, they referred to fear of denunciation from countrymen or competitors. Again, this was particularly visible among Turkish and Pakistanis nationals. Among these groups there was a belief that denunciation was a major trigger of enforcement actions:

'Some Turkish people do not get along well with one another. One shop owner denounces the other' (TKe28M1)

Another pattern of perceptions referred to 'reputation' and/or 'race'; some interviewees believed that the different nationalities are targeted differently:

'I wish I was blond' (TBr18M2)

'I don't think they can detect me now. ...I'm just like any of those Poles and Lithuanians who come here for work' (UMa36M1)

Interlocutors highlighted suspicions that they may be apprehended in certain key situations. Many believed that specific industries or institutions were more likely to be targeted – those more commonly mentioned were takeaways, shops, garages, and what was described as bogus colleges. One suggested registrars are specifically targeted. Others believed that certain locations, notably London, and specific addresses, like those that were visited before, are prone to be targeted. Another believed that raids are conducted mostly in the early mornings.

The interviewees, except Australians, suggest that immigration enforcement is perceived as omnipresent. Interviewees speculated about the main strategies of IE and talked about the threat of raids, and some accounts suggest a kind of panic discourse within certain social networks.

This results in two contrasting psychological responses: (a) a little more than half of our interviewees displayed high and constant levels of stress whilst (b) others showed high levels of resilience. They were more likely to display stress at the beginning of their irregular position and became more resilient the longer they managed to stay in the UK. However, some also became stressed over time. The interviewees were generally considering - or had already developed – strategies in terms of their residence, work, and other areas of their lives which they believed would help prevent detection.

These included avoiding or leaving London, avoiding certain locations or neighbourhoods, large companies or construction sites, certain industries like Kebab shops, and avoiding morning shifts or wearing work uniforms. They also set up warning systems - for example, using Whatsapp messenger boards. Others moved out of areas where immigration enforcement raids were observed, moved addresses under which they had previously been recorded, avoided addresses that had been raided before, avoided houses of other immigrants, hid IDs at different addresses, and avoided the London Underground. Many suggested avoiding trouble, or other actions which would draw attention to them, and not disclosing their precarious status to anybody.

The respondents distinguished between raids, detection, detention and removal. Several seemed more likely to be frightened by the prospect of being detained, whilst removal was perceived with mixed feelings. For some, the degree of concern depended on the duration of their residence in the UK, on what they had achieved in terms of savings, whether they could afford returning home, and on their family situation. Some perceived removal as being 'sent home' and some suggested they would take this as a chance to see their family. Others felt this would be a threat to their family or other acquaintances and employers in the UK. Some inferred they would be coming back, and the one respondent who had experienced removal (to Ukraine) was back within a month and a half.

The interviews reveal widespread use of false or fake documents.

Interviewees:

- Entered the UK on false IDs - including several Ukrainian respondents.
- Obtained false IDs in the country to facilitate staying and working – including several Brazilians *'there is this industry of fake documents here, it is amazing, you can get anything you want, ID cards, passports, driver's licence, this construction card, anything you need. I never imagined that I'd find this here, this is a First World country, it is not supposed to happen here!'* (BLo04M1).
- Used fake documents to support Ankara Agreement applications (this was limited to Turkish interviewees - see above).

Access to human rights

In order to analyse irregular immigrants' access to human rights, this study applies an analytical framework derived from the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR, not to be confused with the EU's Charter on Fundamental Rights), the relevant UN covenants, and the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency report on 'Fundamental rights of irregular immigrants'. This project specifically analysed five areas, employment, health care, housing, legal remedy and children/family life to explore to what extent irregular immigrants have access to services that cater for these fundamental rights.

Employment

The UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 7 stipulates 'the right of *everyone* to the enjoyment of just and favourable conditions of work, ... fair wages, safe and healthy working conditions'. Our interviews, however, illustrate mixed but ethnicised experiences. Australians felt they were neither treated nor paid differently after their visa expired. Ukrainians, after arriving in the UK, were often paid low wages though after some months managed to find better paid jobs.

Many were still paid below the minimum wage at £5 or £6 per hour but were satisfied. Professionals, higher skilled, the self-employed, and those on false documents who were able to declare their employment to Inland Revenue, though under a false identity, got higher salaries - in exceptional cases up to £3-4,000/month, as was the case with some Ukrainian and Turkish interviewees. Irregular immigrants also tend to work extremely long hours – sometimes up to 17 hours per day. Sometimes this is voluntarily to compensate for low pay: *'I get £80-90 per day. It is usually more than 12 hours. Hard job'* (TLo01M2). Other times it is as a result of some form of force/coercion.

Pakistani migrants were most likely to describe being most exploited: *'employers have used people's vulnerability to exploit them'* (PLo13M3). Some respondents earned as little as £1 or £2 per hour plus possible payments in-kind, such as food and accommodation. Unsurprisingly, then, some, notably Brazilians, Turks and Pakistanis, likened their situation to slavery. It was felt that there is no legal remedy: *'when people exploited me I couldn't fight this because I was not legal'* (PLo13M3). One interviewee suggested that due a combination of economic downturn, anti-immigrant sentiments, and increased restrictions, matters got worse for irregular immigrant workers.

Health Care

This study reveals diverse strategies in terms of how irregular immigrants deal with health issues. Those who were able to, said that they would register with healthcare providers whilst still on a visa. Others registered using their false IDs. Finding GPs that won't ask for passports, applied lenient eligibility checks and/or treated patients whilst knowing that they lacked an immigration status, were common approaches. Alternatively, privately paid treatment, obtaining medicines or advice over Skype from doctors back home, self-treatment, or returning home for treatment in more serious cases, was also mentioned.

The different experiences of the UK health service ranged from accessing A&E services without problems, or receiving all necessary treatment to rejected registration because of a lack of documents. Those who approached the NHS and received treatment were positive about their experience. Others were afraid of doing so because they feared they would be asked for their documents. Many abstained from approaching the NHS because they believed they have no right to

treatment, so would be rejected anyway. These latter two categories are thus effectively deterred from realising their fundamental rights to health.

Accommodation

Article 11 of the ECHR, stipulates 'the right of *everyone* to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing'. Almost all interviewees identified accommodation through social or community networks, very few rented through agencies. Their perceptions were very subjective and dependent on what sort of living conditions they are used to in their home countries.

Australians interviewed tended to be renting privately, usually apartments, and did not identify facing any issues due to their immigration status. They were generally satisfied with their housing situation though suggest rents are higher, and standards lower, than back home. Some, such as a number of Brazilians, had their accommodation arranged prior to arrival.

Most rented privately, usually subletting, typically in shared houses or even shared rooms in migrant houses. Ukrainians often lived with other EU Eastern European nationals and divided the rent. Overcrowding was occasionally mentioned as an issue. In some cases of individual crises, people were also taken in and allowed to stay for periods without being asked to pay rent.

A few rented entire apartments and then shared or sublet rooms, but few signed contracts and explained that no questions were asked. Those who held contracts used false names.

Matters were often reported to be worse at the beginning of a migrant's stay in the UK but then improved, for instance, because people moved to less crowded houses. All seemed to have access to a kitchen and bathroom and several seemed satisfied; one even wondered: *'I live here "undercover" doing the lowest paid jobs and yet my accommodation here is better than I could think of in [home town]. What a life!'* (UMa27M1).

Some also lived with relatives; this was notable among Brazilian, Turkish and Pakistanis nationals. Some lived above their workplace, sometimes in a storage space - some paid rent for this, others didn't. Some rented through agencies where no questions for papers were asked.

Cost was an important factor in accommodation choices, and lower wages, obviously, affected the ability of the interviewees to rent adequate accommodation. Those who lived outside London found accommodation better and cheaper.

Family life

Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights stipulates the 'right to respect for ...his family life', while the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 5) stipulates the 'best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration', while Article 24 stipulates, the 'right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health' and demands that signatories should 'ensure appropriate pre-natal and post-natal health care for mothers' and provide 'for every child the right to benefit from social security'. Article 28 of the Convention supports the 'right of the child to education'.

Of the sample, 29 interviewees had children in the UK who were directly affected by their parents' irregular status. All groups - apart from the 14 Australians where only one couple had one child and that was in the UK - had children in their country of origin *and* the UK. The 20 Brazilians had 10 children in the UK and 5 back home, 40 Turkish nationals had 8 in the UK and 6 back home, 60

Pakistanis had 18 children in the UK and 20 back home whilst 41 Ukrainians had only 4 in the UK and 24 back home. This suggests that in our sample Brazilians were most likely to have their children in the UK whereas Ukrainians were most likely to have them left back home. Key issues affecting parents and their children seem to be long periods of separation from children back home, no access to child benefits, and inappropriate housing.

'I'd love to see my family [but] I had no chance to fly there' (ULo13M1).

However, some also reported few problems:

'I have three children here. We didn't have any problem enrolling them at school because at that time we had our residency permit' (PRo25M3),

'my child goes to a private school, I never sent him to one of these state schools. I pay £150 a month' (PLo45M2),

'I managed to raise my children [2], my daughter was a little child and now she is a young woman' (BLo08F2, irregular for 11 years)

Immigration Enforcement in Numbers

Capacity of Immigration Enforcement

The Immigration Enforcement directorate (IE) is responsible for in-country immigration control; its constituency consists of all subjects of immigration control. In 2016, these were the 2.4 million non-British non-EU residents³², 9.4 million non-EEA visitors³³ equivalent to another 190,575 non-EU residents³⁴ and potentially 617-861,000 irregular immigrants³⁵. In addition, 3.6 million EU citizens are already targeted by Immigration Enforcement (see below); upon the UK leaving the EU this responsibility for EU nationals will be further consolidated. Hence, it can be assumed that the constituency of Immigration Enforcement consists of 6.62 – 6.86 million individuals plus up to 9.4 million visitors who, because they only stay temporarily, are equivalent to 190,575 full-time residents, hence up to a maximum of 6.78-7.06 million people.

In addition, immigration law stipulates that the hundreds of thousands of employers, landlords, educational institutions and service providers who hire or cater for immigrants also fall under the mandate of Immigration Enforcement. In total, this constituency consists of no less than another 18 million people³⁶. For policing this constituency, Immigration Enforcement has 19 teams and 5,048 staff. These include 512 agency, consultant and seconded personnel (financial quarter 3, 2016/17)³⁷. Of these, immigration officers explained³⁸, fewer than 1,000 officers were doing actual enforcement (most are office-based doing paper work, man desks, analyse intelligence etc.). They work in shifts across the entire country; therefore, it could be assumed that there are not more than 500 immigration enforcement officers out in the field at any one time. But because no less than half or rather two third of their time is devoted to paper work, in reality there could be as few as 170 to 250 enforcing the law on a combined constituency of 25 or more million people.

In comparison, the police force is responsible for all crimes and public order matters of a constituency of the 64.7 (2016) million residents of the UK (British and foreign nationals)³⁹ plus all visitors (see above). In principle, this also includes offences against immigration law; however, as this project found, the police usually only become involved if this entails criminal offences. For policing these people, the total police workforce of the UK has 230,383 staff including 148,008 police officers at their disposal⁴⁰.

³² ONS, 2017, *Population of the UK by Country of Birth and Nationality: 2016*, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/bulletins/ukpopulationbycountryofbirthandnationality/2016>

³³ This number refers to arrivals and thus included double counting of individuals arriving more than once, the number of individuals is not available. Home Office (2017), *Passenger arrivals and visitors*, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-october-to-december-2016/passenger-arrivals-and-visitors>. Other data based on admissions which includes

³⁴ The equivalent is calculated on the basis of 9.4 million non-EU visitors who stay on average 7.4 days per visit divided by 365 days (a resident is defined by the ONS as a stay/intended stay of 12 months or more), see ONS (2017), *Travel and tourism*, dataset, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/leisureandtourism/datasets/travelandtourism>. These non-EU visitors are subject to immigration controls and to restrictions with regards to the length of their stay and work and thus a source of immigration offences.

³⁵ Lemaitre, Georges (2017), *A General Method for Estimating the Number of Unauthorised Immigrants Using Standard Data Sources*

³⁶ This figure is based on the sum of employers, landlords, letting agencies, educational institutions, banks and other private service providers

³⁷ UK Visa and Immigration, 2017, *Border and immigration cross-cutting data, Feb 2017*, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/border-and-immigration-cross-cutting-data-february-2017>

³⁸ Project workshop, 'Does Immigration enforcement matter?', stakeholder workshop: Immigration Enforcement, London, 12 Oct 2017

³⁹ Usually resident meaning resident for six months or more, see ONS (2017), *Population of the UK by country of birth and nationality, 2016*, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/bulletins/ukpopulationbycountryofbirthandnationality/2016>. The 2011 census suggests that this number already includes the irregular immigrant population.

⁴⁰ England and Wales: 198,684 employees including 123,142 police officers; Scotland: 23,684 employees including 18,184 police officers; Northern Ireland: 8,015 including 6,682 police officers. See Home Office (2017), *Police Workforce, England and Wales, 31 March 2017*, *Statistical Bulletin 10/17*; Police Scotland (2017), *Police Scotland Officer Numbers, Quarterly Fact Sheets, Quarter 4 - 2016/17*,

Hence, the police workforce/population ratio is just over 1 staff to 281 individuals, and 1 police officer per 437 residents. In contrast, there is 1 Immigration Enforcement staff per 1,437 immigrants and 1 immigration officer conducting enforcement per 7,256 immigrants (this includes the equivalent of 9.4 million non-EEA visitors in residents). However, in addition they also police immigrants' employers, landlords et cetera. This raises the ratio to 1 IE staff to 4,942. Therefore, it can be assumed that the constituency of an Immigration Enforcement staff could be at least 11 times larger than the constituency of a police officer.

Staffing level and budget

Any calculation of the development of the staffing levels and budget of the immigration control directorates are obstructed by the many changes in the organisational structure, the way staffing levels and budgets are reported, the public availability of data and the reporting of the data. Since no single data source could be found which reports consistently and annually, the data shown in table 1 is a compilation and analysis of data from no less than nine reporting agencies. As a result, the data indicates trends rather than exact figures and should therefore not be considered a definitive calculation.

<http://www.scotland.police.uk/assets/pdf/138327/212520/police-officer-numbers-quarter-4-31st-march-2017?view=Standard>; Police Scotland (2017), *Police staff*, <http://www.scotland.police.uk/recruitment/police-staff/who-are-police-staff/>; and Police Service of Northern Ireland (2017), *Strength of Police Service statistics*, <https://www.psn.police.uk/inside-psni/Statistics/strength-of-police-service-statistics/>; https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/630471/hosb1017-police-workforce.pdf

Table 2: Development of staff and budget of UK immigration control agencies, 2001-2017⁴¹

Org	Year	Staff	Budget	Budget adjusted by inflation
IND	1996/97	5,868 (IND)	£213m (IND)	
IND + FCO	2001/02	11,751 (IND 10,450 (another source refers to 9,721) + UK visas 1,301)	£1,404m (incl. IND £1,304m + UK visas 102m*)	£1,898m
IND + FCO	2003/04	14,482 (incl. borders 4,004 and enforcement 3,013)	£1,890m (incl.15% spent on enforcement + 111m UK Visas)*	£2,488m
IND + FCO	2004/05	17,004 (IND 15,004 + UK Visas 2,000)	£1,922m (incl. IND £180m + UK Visas £122m)	£2,478m
IND +FCO	2005/06	17,000 (IND 15,000 + UK Visas 2,000)	£1,622m (IND £1,500m + UK visas £122m)	£2,044m
IND + FCO	2006/07	19,500 (IND 17,200 + UK visas 2,300)	£1,690m (£1,500m IND + £190m UK visas)	£1,996m
BIA	2007/08	21,237 (4,600 Border + 2,337 UK Visas +3,800 asylum +3,900 enforcement +4,100 managed migration + 2,500 corporate services)	£1,596m budget incl. capital (£229m borders + £325m UK visas + £584m asylum + £337m enforcement + £121m managed migration)	£1.897m
UKBA	2008/09	24,311	£2,440m**	£2,837m
UKBA	2009/10	23,652	£2,480m	£2,794m
UKBA	2010/11	23,426 (incl. 9,145 incl. 4,639 HMRC)	£2,615m	£2,819m
UKBA	2011/12	20,469 (incl. BF 8,269)***	£2,170m	£2,274m
UKBA	2012/13	21,475 (UKBA 13,352 + BF 8,123)	£2,193m (UKBA £1,576m + BF £617m)****	£2,242m

⁴¹ Sources: IND (2002), Bill Jeffrey appointed new Director General of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate, <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20030731061629/http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk:80/news.asp?NewsId=180&SectionId=1>; Home Office (2002), *Home Office annual report 2002-3*, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/250927/5406.pdf; UK Visas (2007), Annual report 2006/07, <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20080305145227/http://www.fco.gov.uk/Files/kfile/UKVisasAnnualReport07.pdf>; House of Commons (2005), Immigration control, Fifth report of session 2005-06; NAO (2005), Report by the Comptroller and Auditor-General Returning Failed Asylum Applicants - HC 76 - ISBN0 10 2933405 Session 2005 - 2006 14 July 2005 http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/nao_reports/05-06/050676.pdf; Parliament (2006), <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmhaff/775/775awe67.htm>; BIA (2008) Business plan for transition year April 2007 – March 2008, <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100406103935/http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/aboutus/reports/businessplan20072008/april2007march2008/businessplan0708.pdf?view=Binary>; House of Commons (2013), <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmhaff/616/616.pdf>; NAO, <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140124035949/http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/hc1213/hc04/0467/0467.pdf>; NAO (2013), <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/10201-001-Executive-Summary.pdf>; Hansard, <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2016-04-20/debates/16042035000002/BorderForceBudget2016-17>; HoC/HAC (2016), <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmselect/cmhaff/512/512.pdf>; Home Office https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315704/Additional_data_on_the_Borders_and_Immigration_on_system.pdf; NAO (2015), A short guide to the Home Office, <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Home-Office-Short-Guide1.pdf>; NAO (2017), *Home Office. Departmental Overview 2015/16*, <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Departmental-Overview-2015-16-Home-Office.pdf>; Parliament (2017), <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-18/60627/>; GOV.UK (2016), Border and immigration cross cutting data: August 2016, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/border-and-immigration-cross-cutting-data-august-2016>; NAO (2017) Home Office, <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Departmental-Overview-2015-16-Home-Office.pdf>; Home Office (2017), Civil Service People Survey, UK Immigration and Visa 2016, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/570036/UKVI0000_UK_Visas_and_Immigration.pdf, calculated from the percentage of respondents;

UKVI+BF+IE	2013/14	19,942 (UKVI 6,599 + IE 5.190 + BF 8.153)*****	£1,802m (incl. UKVI £808m + BF £513m + IE £443m + Policy)*****	£1,814m
UKVI+BF+IE	2014/2015	20,387 (UKVI/IE12,234 + BF 8,153)	£1,869.4m (incl. UKVI £837.2m + BF £525.1m + IE £466m + policy)	£1,882m
UKVI+BF+IE	2015/16	18,892 (UKVI 6,345 + IE 4,901 + BF 7,646)*****	£1,992.3m (incl. UKVI £906.4m + BF £560m + IE £463.5m + Policy)	£1,992m
UKVI+BF+IE	2016/17	19,475 (UKVI 6,791 + IE 5,062 + BF7,622)	£2,059.6m (incl. UKVI £1047.3m + BF £502.7m + IE £448m + policy)	£2,059m

* No budget could be found for UK Visas for the year 2001 but because UK Visas was self-funded and as it is known that visa applications rose by 9 per cent in 2001 and 2002 an approximate budget was calculated on that basis

** The jump in the staff and budget is explained with the integration of the customs function of HMRC

*** In 2011/12 UKBA merged with customs and 4,639 of its staff were integrated into the organisation

**** IE budget is £438 m.

***** In Q2 there were 5226 staff in IE; NAO (2014) mentions a total of 12,245 on January 2014, 400 more than listed for the entire Q1

***** The NAO lists 19,623 staff for the entire year 2016

***** The total does not represent the sum of the sub-budgets because there was no separate budget for policy to be found

IND- Immigration and Nationality Directorate

FCO- Foreign and Commonwealth Office

UKBA- UK Border Agency

UKVI- UK Visa and Immigration

BF- Border Force

IE – Immigration Enforcement

Table 2 suggests that in 2016/17 the immigration control budget was similar to the budget in 2001. However, between those years, the arrival of non-UK or EEA nationals had increased by 27 per cent (from 12m to 15.2m) whilst the immigrant- (foreign-) born population had more than doubled (from 4.6m to 9.2m). This implies that the immigration control apparatus was dealing with a much-increased caseload whereas the budget available for this task remained rather stable. Digitalisation of work which results in higher productivity will have compensated for at least some of the discrepancy. However, it seems that the migration control budget has, proportionally, decreased considerably in relation to the controlled immigrant population. Though the migration control budget has slightly gone up again after a dip in 2013/14 this is largely due increased visa fees and thus visa income; meanwhile, the immigration enforcement budget decreased further.

Immigration enforcement

There are three types of data sets currently publicly available depicting immigration enforcement in the UK. First, there is data set on 'Encountered but not Arrested between 03 January 2012 and 02 January 2017' respectively 'Encountered and Arrested between 03 January 2012 and 02 January 2017' as recently released on a FOI request. Second, there is the 'Enforcement Visit Arrests linked to information received' data available on the Home Office migration transparency data website. And third, there is the data set on 'immigration statistics, detention tables and return tables' depicting voluntary and

forced return. The first data set on encounters provides a broad overview over all encounters, though only in 11 cities and was not broken down by year. The second data set on enforcement visits only looks at a subsection of the first data set. And the third data set on returns partly overlaps with the second which also depicts return.

Encounters and arrests

The ‘Encountered and/or but not Arrested between 03 January 2012 and 02 January 2017’ FOI data suggests that of 102,552 encountered from 03 January 2012 and 02 January 2017 across 11 cities in the UK (Bristol, London, Birmingham, Cardiff, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Sheffield and Nottingham), 76,605 were not arrested, while another 29,947 were encountered and arrested (see table 1). Hence, of all these encounters 22 per cent resulted in an arrest. This data is not broken down by year, however, the average number of ‘encountered and arrested’ is 5,989. It also suggested that on average there were 72.6 encounters per day of which 16.8 per day resulted in arrests. It is, however, not possible to identify upward or downward trends in such encounters. In any case, the figures for the entire UK would be higher than this figure based on the 11 main cities.

Around 55 per cent were arrested in London, 10 per cent in Manchester and 8 per cent in Birmingham. This figure includes 35 British and 1,815 EU nationals, hence 4,174 of the total are non-UK/non-EEA nationals. This data shows that almost 30 per cent of the arrests concern EU nationals.

This data set, because it depicts events from 2012 to 2017, covers the 4-year period of our project. It shows that, of the nationalities studied in this project, at least 321 Australians were encountered (of whom 9 were arrested), as were 766 Turkish nationals (of whom 165 were arrested), 262 Ukrainians (142 arrested), 549 Brazilians (382 arrested) and 8,453 Pakistanis (6,470 arrested).

Table 3: Encounters and arrest, Jan 2012 to Jan 2017

Encountered not arrested	76605
Encountered and arrested	29947
Total	106552

Source: Bureau of Investigative Journalism, 2017, <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2017-10-09/review-homeoffice-immigration-checks>

Note: the discrepancy in the total figure is reported in the original data

Enforcement visit arrests

Over the time of this project from 2014 to 2017, Immigration Enforcement conducted 13,084 enforcement visit arrests linked to information received across the entire country (see table 4)⁴². The figure is 56 per cent lower than the annual average of 29,947 encounters and arrests figure for the 11 cities analysed above. This seems to suggest that many more people are also arrested at the occasion of unspecified ‘encounters’ which are different from ‘enforcement visit arrests linked to information received’. In 2016, such enforcement visits are thus equivalent to just under 10 visits per day (9.5) across the entire UK or 3.5 per 1 officer. As a result, over the 3½ years period, 2,896 persons were returned, 668 in 2016. From 2014 to 2016, the number of enforcement visits decreased by 22.4 per cent; also, the proportion of subsequent returns decreased by around 20 per cent. Hence not only were there fewer enforcement visits but also the effects these had in terms of return diminished. This also

⁴² Enforcement visits are different from compliance visits meaning visits of immigration officers of businesses to inform about immigration related employment restrictions.

demonstrates that the proportions of returns resulting from such enforcement operations are only 1.2 per cent of all forced and voluntary returns.

Table 4: Enforcement visits, subsequent returns, percentage of arrests with subsequent returns, 2014-17

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017 Q1+Q2
Enforcement visit arrests	4439	3652	3444	1549
Subsequent returns	1065	917	668	246
Percentage of arrests with subsequent returns	24	25.1	19.4	15.9

Source: UK Government, migration transparency data, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-transparency-data>

Returns

In total, from 2014 - 2016, an average of 40,000 people were returned per year, one third were enforced returns and two third voluntary returns (see table 5). In 2016, 12,496 or 39 per cent of the enforced returns were EU citizens, up from 21 per cent in 2014 and 28 per cent in 2015, whilst 20.5 per cent were asylum returns. Of the forced return cases 6,171 were foreign national offenders and around 51 per cent of these were EU nationals, 25 per cent of the total⁴³. This implies that EU citizens, asylum returns and non-EU FNO represent around 85 per cent of all returns whereas non-EU non-asylum and non FNO cases, in other words ordinary irregular immigrants like visa over-stayers or individuals working in breach represent around 15 per cent. This implies that between 3.5 and 4.9 per cent of the irregular immigrant population or 3-5 of 100 were returned forcefully or voluntarily in one year.

Table 5: Enforced returns

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017 Q1-Q2
Enforced returns (1)	14395	13690	12496	6300
Voluntary returns	25784	28189	27157	10071
Total	40179	41879	39653	16371

Source: Home Office, Immigration Statistics April to June 2017, Detention table dt 05 q and Returns table rt 01 q, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-april-to-june-2017/how-many-people-are-detained-or-returned>

(1) About 85 per cent are enforced returns from detention.

Exit controls

In April 2015, exit controls were introduced, and by 2017, a first set of statistics were made available to the public; 'over 130 million people leave the UK every year' whilst 'exit checks apply to over 100 million travellers a year, including British, European and others arriving by air, rail and ferry' but not accounting for the small number of departures via the Common Travel Area (CTA)⁴⁴. However, the Home Office did point out that the 'programme was designed and introduced for operational purposes, not to produce statistics' and 'a great deal of care must therefore be taken when matching these individual data sets to produce statistics, from which conclusions about the overall immigration system can be drawn'⁴⁵. The emerging data suggests that over a counting period of 2016/17 'the vast majority (96.3%) departed on time i.e. before their visa expired' leaving a maximum of 3.7 per cent of all visa holders who did not comply amounting to a maximum of 49,311 persons. This data refers to 1.33 million visa holders

⁴³ The publicly available immigration statistics do not provide a breakdown by nationality; however, there is a breakdown by nationality of foreign national offenders in prison showing that 51 per cent are EU citizens, see <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN04334/SN04334.pdf>, and we assume that the breakdown of removed FNOs will be very similar to the FNOs in prison.

⁴⁴ Home Office (2017), *Second report on statistics being collected under the exit checks programme*, p. 5

⁴⁵ Home Office (2017), *Second report on statistics being collected under the exit checks programme*, p. 5

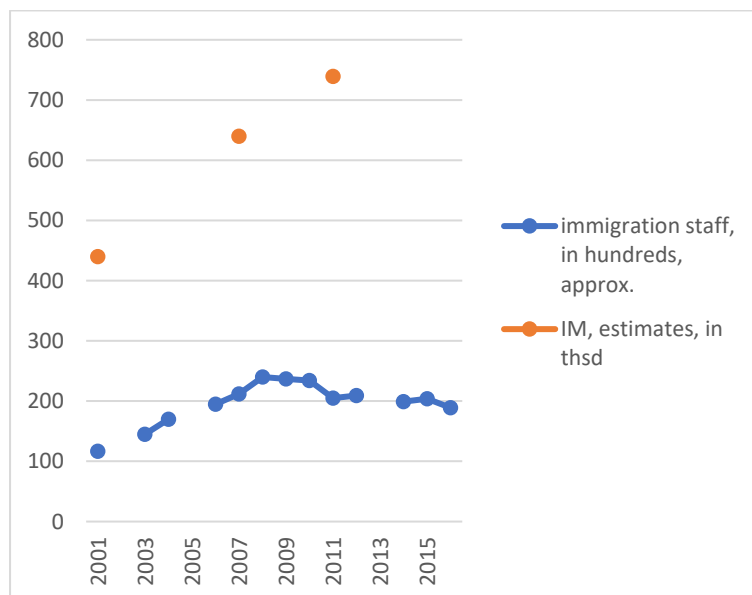
controlled representing 45 per cent of the ‘around 3 million entry clearance visas granted (and expiring) annually’⁴⁶.

The nexus between immigration enforcement and irregular immigration

It could be assumed that there is a correlation between immigration enforcement and the size of the irregular immigrant population. For instance, it seems plausible that the higher the budget and thus the more staff deployed, the lower the number of irregular immigrants. However, research in other countries has shown that this is not necessarily the case. For instance, in the US it was found that increasing budgets for border controls coincide with an increase of the number of irregular immigrants⁴⁷. The same was observed in Germany where this is explained as a ratchet effect, meaning that those immigrants who manage to navigate immigration restrictions thereby increasing the costs of migration, tend to stay longer⁴⁸. The result of this means that the numbers of irregular immigrants accumulates.

In the UK such a mechanism is difficult to prove because (a) the estimates of the irregular immigrant population are not completely reliable and only available for three years, 2001, 2007 and 2011 and (b) due to scarcity of sources and data, both the budget and staffing levels of the immigration control agencies are either not available or inconsistent. Nevertheless, analysis of the data that is available generates the following picture.

Figure 2: Nexus of irregular immigration population (estimates) and approx. number of IM staff, 2001-2016



The tabular analysis suggests that from 2001 to 2007 the stock of irregular immigrants grew even though staff levels of the immigration controls agencies, Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND)

⁴⁶ ibid.

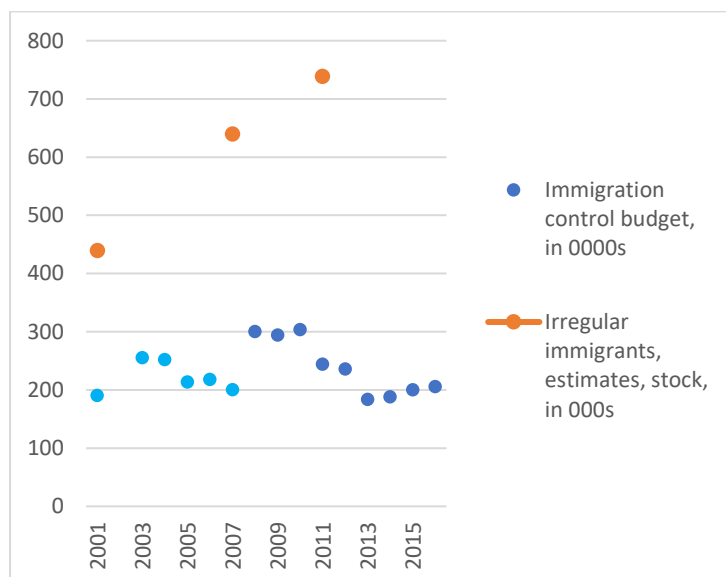
⁴⁰ Persons subject to immigration control are defined in s.13(2) of the Asylum and Immigration act 1996 as persons who require leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom, EU/EEA citizens is regulated by EU law have the right enter, work and settle (within certain limits), do not require leave to enter or remain and are thus not subject to immigration control as stipulated in the Asylum and Immigration act 1996

⁴⁷ See, for instance, Bhagwati, Jagdish (2003), Borders beyond control, *Foreign Affairs*, 82 (1): 98-104

⁴⁸ E.g. Vogel, Dita (2009), Irreguläre Migration. Sperrkliffeneffekte verstärkter Grenzkontrollen?, HWWI Insights, pp. 23-25, http://www.hwwi.org/fileadmin/hwwi/Publikationen/hwwi-insights/ausgabe-1/pdfs/HWWI_Magazin_Irregulaere-Migration.pdf

and UK Visas increased. From 2010 staff levels were decreasing at a time when it is quite possible that the stock of irregular immigrants was growing'

Figure 3: Immigration control budget and irregular migration, 2001-2016



The increase of the budget in 2008 is due to the incorporation of HMRC customs operations. The steep decrease from 2010 is a result of the impact of austerity measures due to the 2008 economic crisis. The tabular analysis suggests that, despite a significant increase in the immigration control budget, the irregular immigrant population may well have increased.

These findings are inconclusive and due to the data problems described above can only be taken as indicative. However, if broadly accurate, the analysis suggests that there is no clear correlation between irregular immigration and the resources deployed to control immigration in the UK.

Immigration Enforcement: How do our findings compare with other research?

This section summarises the results of the 2016 Civil Service People Survey (CSPS) and specifically of the Immigration Enforcement (IE) staff survey and compares the qualitative findings of the DIEM project with the quantitative research of the CSPS. The project's research was conducted from 2014 to January 2016 and thus stretched across two CSPS survey periods but because the 2016 survey was the latest and thus timelier at the time of writing we take this as point of reference.

The CSPS reflects the views of 279,708 respondents including 2,509 IE staff. Whereas 65 per cent of all civil service people responded to the survey only 50 per cent of IE did so. A response rate of 50 per cent is not without problems; it is based on self-selection and thus prone to sampling bias. Other research suggests that low response rates create a survey bias in that they may already be a reflection of dissatisfaction⁴⁹.

⁴⁹ See, for instance, Mazor, Kathleen M; Clauser, Brian E.; Field, Terry; Yood, Robert A.; Gurwitz, Jerry H. (2002), A Demonstration of the Impact of Response Bias on the Results of Patient Satisfaction Surveys, *Health Services Research* 37(5): 1403–1417

Organisational structure

The CSPS survey suggests that, in 2015/16, 79 per cent of IE staff had 'a clear understanding of Immigration Enforcement's objectives'. This result contrasts with our project's findings which suggest that people's understanding is based on perceptions rather than a clear idea of the mandate of the organisation. Further to this, in the survey, 24 per cent said they do not have 'access to the right learning and development opportunities when need to'. This was not as clear in the qualitative interviews, where lack of training was rarely mentioned.

59 per cent of staff said they 'have a choice in deciding how to do their work'. This implies that IE staff have some discretion in the implementation of their task and confirms the project's findings that 'discretion' persists on middle and higher hierarchical levels but has been diminished on lower levels.

The survey also shows that 21 per cent did not 'get the information they need to do their job well', 24 per cent disagreed with the statement that their 'manager motivates them to be more effective in their job', 35 per cent felt they were not 'involved in the decisions that affect work', 38 per cent did not 'feel that Immigration Enforcement as a whole is managed well' and that 46 per cent disagreed with the notion that they 'have the opportunity to contribute my views before decisions are made that affect me'. The responses imply that IE had been managed in a top-down fashion. The results also reinforce the DIEM findings with regards to significant levels of alienation between the diverse staff levels.

Organisational culture

According to the CSPS results, 22 per cent had experienced discrimination and 18 per cent bullying during the past 12 months at work, 24 per cent did not 'achieve a good balance between my work life and my private life', 30 per cent disagreed with the statement that their 'workload was acceptable'. This reinforces the frustration the DIEM project found with regards to the working conditions. On the other hand, 63 per cent suggested that IE is an inclusive organisation which confirms the project's findings and 79 per cent were positive about their team. This suggests that people have been frustrated not with their immediate working environment but rather with the structural conditions.

The fact that 81 per cent believed they 'have the skills they need to do their job effectively' confirms DIEM's finding of widespread professional pride.

Views of policies and relations with other actors

About 48 per cent of IE staff interviewed in the CSPS survey did not agree with the statement that 'change is well managed' whereas only 33 per cent agree. This is well below the average across all civil services where 43 per cent are positive about leadership and managing change. This supports the project's finding with regards to the omnipresent frustration with constant change and the disruption this causes to the work of IE.

Consequences

About a third (34 per cent) of all IE staff wanted to leave the job as soon as possible or within the next 12 months, whilst the average across all public services was less than a quarter (23 per cent). The National Audit Office partly refers to the same data in concluding that 'the agency's culture was characterised by low morale'⁵⁰. This reinforces the findings of this project in which interviewees mention bullying as a problem, deployment that is damaging to private life, lack of career opportunities,

⁵⁰ National Audit Office (2014), Reforming the UK border and immigration system, <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Reforming-the-UK-border-and-immigration-system.pdf>

complaints about new employment contracts and subsequent loss of income which results, as one interviewee in our project puts it, '*rock bottom*' morale.

Conclusions

Emerging findings from this study suggest that immigration enforcement operations have limited effects. In all encounters by Immigration Enforcement only 29 per cent result in arrests; in all enforcement arrests only 19.4 per cent result in return, and in all returns it can be assumed that only around 15 per cent involve “conventional” irregular immigrants. This is broadly reflected in our research data, which found that of the 175 irregular immigrants interviewed, a total of 40 had experienced enforcement operations, only 11 were arrested and only one person was removed (but returned irregularly later).

The risk of an irregular immigrant encountering an immigration officer, being arrested at the workplace or in the community and/or subsequently removed, is rather small. This is reflected by the qualitative interviews conducted for this project suggesting that feeling safe and being resilient are prominent features amongst the irregular immigrant population: *‘I’m not afraid of anything’* (ULo14F2) and also some of their employers: *‘I think that I’m not at risk’* (employer 16). Nevertheless, around half still fear immigration enforcement.

This limited level of results of enforcement operations also puts a question mark over those enforcement measures that do not result in arrests or returns. This suggests that such operations targeted regular / legal immigrants or employers and could therefore be considered disproportionate. Some of the immigration officers interviewed in this study query the quality of the underlying intelligence whilst some of the employer interviewees complained about being unnecessarily targeted.

Finally, the analysis of immigration enforcement statistics seems to suggest that EU citizens, even though they are not ‘subject to immigration control,’⁴⁰ represent 30 per cent of the ‘encountered and arrested’ persons and 39 per cent of the removed persons. They are thus an important target group attracting major resources of Immigration Enforcement.

Here we draw some conclusions in terms of sometimes overlapping groups – enforcement delivery, stakeholder groups and irregular migrants.

Enforcement Delivery

- *Austerity is a driver of change.* The impact of the funding crisis has had diverse consequences on immigration enforcement. Most notably it inspired a ‘doing more with less’ approach and facilitated alternative strategies such as: more inter-agency cooperation, a stronger focus on prevention, compliance and voluntary return, and arrests in reporting centres.
- *Mix of traditional bureaucracy and New Public Management (NPM).* Even though from the 1980s/1990s, the British public sector has been reformed and adapted to NPM (decentralisation, management devolution, abolishing targets, competition, user-orientation and new service delivery models) IE maintains many features from (neo-) classical public administration, including centralism, division of labour, bureaucratic hierarchies, remnants of planning, directions/lack of discretion whilst having an under-developed user-orientation and service element. This seems to contribute to the tensions within the organisation.
- *Conflicting organisational identities.* Prevention and compliance now complement enforcement. All units are mandated to implement this policy mix. This results in divergent

ideas of the goals, mandate, priorities, success, and organisational culture. Professional identity too is mixed as staff are neither purely enforcement nor clearly compliance officers. In particular, it is problematic to reconcile the old enforcement ethos with the new compliance ethos. The cultural change has thus not yet fully materialised and there is some resistance to change.

- *Organisation and staff under pressure.* Migration continues on high levels, the issue remains high on the policy agenda, and media attention is constantly present. Meanwhile, the agency has been constantly restructured, faced significant cuts whilst staff are confronted with new employment contracts. Staff are sometimes frustrated and alienated which reduces the capacity of IE to deliver quantity and quality alike.
- *Inconsistent implementation of integrated governance.* A new approach to inter-agency and community relations integrates many public and some civil society services into a comprehensive system. This new constellation is described as 'enforcement relationships' (IE director, 10). However, implementation was inconsistent as responses by public sector agencies ranged from cooperation to refusal; this varied from council to council and from institution to institution.
- *Individual perceptions distort organisational mandate.* Most interviewees expressed a variety of accounts illustrating some inconsistency with regards to the organisation's mandate, underlying legislation or overall policy goals. Instead, many staff seemed to be driven by individual perceptions and professional identities. This raises questions over the efficiency of induction courses, trainings, updates and control.
- *Immigration enforcement is increasingly becoming part of social policy.* There seemed some consensus across various statutory agencies about the worrying trend in addressing social problems like homelessness or scarce social services by removing people instead of addressing the cause of the problem. This reflects a classical neo-Malthusian approach known from the history of poor law.
- *The 'hostile environment' approach partly rests on flawed assumptions.* The limits of the hostile or compliant environment approach seems to be that migrants maintain the view that 'it is better to be illegal in the UK than legal in my home country'. Hence, as long as conditions for irregular immigrants in the UK are not as critical as in the countries of origin, the deterrent effect seems limited.

Stakeholder groups

Public Service Providers

- *Lack of coherent approach to Home Office –public service coordination.* The newly formed partnerships between the Home Office and public services differ from one public service organisation to another. More often than not, they are perceived to be causing tensions between an individual organisation's mandate and new enforcement demands. One of the key questions in relation to these new partnerships is: when do they cease to be optional? In the future, will the Home Office have the power to sanction public services that do not collaborate?
- *Austerity measures have affected public services significantly,* forcing them to manage down demand for their services. Immigrants without proper status are perceived by some as a group to be targeted in order to reduce this demand.

- *Lack of understanding of migrants' right.* Among public service staff there is a lack of understanding of the rights migrants are entitled to. This undermines migrants' ability to access services providing for their fundamental rights.
- *Personal attitudes affect public servants cooperation with IE.* The conclusions drawn by public service workers were closely linked to whether they see irregular migration as a problem affecting services or not. Those who see it as a problem that needs to be curbed tended to welcome the increasing presence of Immigration Enforcement in frontline services, and indeed have faith in the overall project of building a 'hostile environment' that acts as a deterrent to irregular migrants. However, those who challenged the notion that irregular migration is a problem in the first place came to very different conclusions: '*you might as well just accept they're here and allow them to get on with their lives*'. The single most recurrent recommendation, heard from people with different viewpoints on whether immigration is a 'problem' or not, is a call for a quicker and leaner process for either *supporting* irregular migrants or *removing* them.

Voluntary Sector Organisations

- *Immigration is framed as a problem.* Voluntary sector interviewees all came from organisations focussed on migrant-support whose concerns tended to highlight the need to challenge the overall framing of immigration as a 'problem' and to mitigate the negative effects of enforcement practices. VSO representatives suggested that in order to restore confidence in the government's management of migration, there could be a number of immediate changes, including: End the scapegoating of migrants and blaming society's ills on immigration; grant the right to work to migrants if their appeals are not being heard within six months; separate health services from immigration enforcement; afford more legal migration opportunities and render regularisation processes more accessible (including more flexible visas, work permits, student visas and removing the income threshold).

Employers

- *Economic pressure and legislation on small businesses generates demand for irregular migrant workers.* Most small business owners interviewed suggested that they were squeezed by (a) the economic downturn, decreasing profit margins due to rising rents, national and local taxes and intensified competition, and (b) labour market legislation. Immigration checks just add another type of control to a sector which felt already tightly regulated and beleaguered.
- *Personal relationships shape employment of irregular migrants.* Employers' responses were based on a 'business first' logic further reinforced by a 'family first' logic. In combination, this created high levels of stress but also a moral dilemma which, in several cases, drove irregular employment.
- *Some employers feel the law governing employment of irregular migrants is morally problematic.* Whereas policy and law require compliance, some employers suggest that recent policy changes undermine the compliance and thus affect the morality of the law⁵¹.

Irregular Migrants

- *Immigration Enforcement does not deter irregular migrants.* The interviews with irregular immigrants suggest that the deterrent effect of in-country immigration enforcement is limited.

⁵¹ Fuller, Lon L. (1965), *The morality of law*, New Haven CT: Yale University Press

Out of 175, only one contemplated return due to the consequences of the 'hostile' or 'compliant environment'.

- *Irregular immigrants have developed strategies to evade detection.* Most noticeable is the use of false documents. This seems to be more common than 20 years ago⁵² and implies that tighter controls provoke more criminal responses.
- *Surveillance and exclusion cause high levels of stress* while not succeeding in stimulating return.
- *Irregular migrants have different experiences, often depending on ethnicity.* While many irregular immigrants still manage to identify jobs and accommodation or access to public services, notably education for their children and health care, others experience exploitation or find access to public services restricted and thus cannot enjoy their human rights. Quality of life under conditions of an irregular immigration status is still highly ethnicised. Notably, Australians and many Ukrainians appear least affected.

In summary:

Our research provides little evidence suggesting that immigration enforcement brings down numbers of irregular immigrants. This research does however suggest that immigration enforcement has (unintended) side-effects; such as increasing human suffering whilst giving rise to criminal practices and pushing irregular immigrants further underground.

⁵² See Jordan, Bill and Duvell, Franck (2002), *Irregular migration. The dilemmas of transnational mobility*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar

Appendix 1: Methodology

‘Does Immigration Enforcement matter?’ is an ESRC-funded project on irregular migration and immigration enforcement in the UK conducted from November 2014 to October 2017. The project explores and explains why, despite increasingly strict immigration policies and enhanced law enforcement in the UK (e.g. entry screening, ID/work permit checks, workplace raids and employer sanctions), irregular migration apparently continues at significant levels. This study looks specifically at in-country immigration enforcement, notably the micro-level of organisational structure, culture and practices of in-country enforcement, an aspect that has so far received little academic attention.

The project studies the impact of increasingly tight legislation and robust enforcement measures on irregular migration and irregular immigrants.

In particular, it aims to:

- analyse the diverse actors’ perceptions of (irregular) migration;
- investigate immigration enforcement agencies and their practices;
- consider inter-agency cooperation in immigration control;
- explore the political, legal and practical limits of law enforcement;
- look at employer practices in the use of irregular migrants;
- investigate how irregular immigrants navigate and survive internal immigration controls;
- consider the impact of enforcement on irregular migrants’ access to fundamental rights;
- highlight the effects of enforcement on irregular migration.

Fieldwork and Analysis

This is a qualitative research project based on interviews with key actors across all stages of the immigration enforcement process; from managers of immigration enforcement teams to immigration officers themselves, local government officers, public service providers, voluntary organisations, employers, and irregular migrants themselves. The analysis is based on interpretative content analysis further supported by grounded theory and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA).

Several groups studied qualify as ‘hard to reach’ (irregular immigrants, employers, immigration officers).

Enforcement agencies

For researching immigration enforcement, permission was obtained from the various IE units we studied. A mix of personal contacts as well as contacts with former staff was used to subsequently identify ‘gatekeepers’ who permitted access. A purposive sample was conducted in two research areas, London and Merseyside, covering three types of regions, metropolitan, urban, and rural. Officers from a variety of units, all ranks, ages, both genders, serving and retired were sampled. In late 2015, early 2016, 28 interviews with 29 individuals were conducted. The interviewees were five police officers (two senior ranks, one retired, and one middle rank), one police committee representative (senior rank), and 23 immigration officers (eight top ranks (two former), six senior ranks and nine lower ranks (one former), 25 were serving and four former staff, 12 were female and 17 male. In addition, six days of observations were conducted covering operations in London, notably nine residential and two

commercial enforcement operations and various types of staff meetings. The interviews revealed what the interviewees did or did not know of or how they perceived the organisation and its practices.

Public Service Agencies

Public service staff were interviewed from three local authorities in the Metropolitan area and another urban area in Merseyside. Within these local authorities, 16 interviewees were sampled from those departments who are mandated by the 2014 Immigration Act (and other previous legislation) to collaborate with the Home Office. These included benefits units (No Recourse to Public Fund, NRPF), housing services, health professionals and hospital managers, children services, as well as a registry office and refugee strategy team. In addition, two interviews were undertaken with the Security Industry Authority (SIA) and the Gangmaster Licensing Authority (GLA).

Voluntary Sector Organisations (VSO)

The project sampled 19 voluntary sector organisations of different types (network organisations, community organisations, workers organisation) active in the areas relevant to immigration (legal advice, housing, health service and employment etc.) and serving the nationalities studied by this project. Of these, 16 were London-based, though three were national organisations and some had a reach beyond London; the remaining three organisations were based in Merseyside. In total, 21 interviews were conducted.

Other actors

The researchers also conducted 9 interviews with representatives of the policy sector - political advisors and MPs from the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties, and 4 with accountability agencies (the National Audit Office, the Public Accounts Committee and a member of a House of Commons unit). In addition, two interviews were conducted with representatives from the private sector, one from the banking sector (also covered by the 2014 immigration act) and one from the security business sector, another important actor in inter-agency cooperation.

Employers

We interviewed 18 employers, most were identified by the same interviewers who also interviewed the irregular migrants. However, the project did not specifically interview employers of the irregular immigrants interviewed, as this could have compromised the irregular immigrants' position.

Employers were sampled in six of the project's research areas: London, a city, and a rural location in the south of England, and two cities in the Midlands and the north of England. Key characteristics used to identify suitable candidates for interview were (a) employers in sectors targeted by immigration enforcement, (b) those operating in the same industries in which the irregular immigrant interviewees were working, and (c) those employing immigrants of the same nationalities studied in this project. In addition, the sampling took into account the type and size of the business (smaller and larger businesses).

Irregular Immigrants

In order to identify similarities and differences of irregular immigrants and the impact of immigration enforcement across the UK, interviews were conducted in three types of areas, the Metropolis (London), other urban areas in the Midlands, the South of England and Scotland, and rural areas in the

South of England, the Midlands, Northern England, and Scotland. The 2011 Census facilitated the identification of areas which host large number of immigrants of at least one of the nationalities studied by this project, and in total 16 research areas were identified. The interviewers deployed a mix of sampling techniques to identify ‘gate openers’ (such as identifying community representatives, or using their own existing contacts) and from these points of entry conducted snowball sampling. To avoid a sampling bias all interviewers used several entry points.

In the absence of sufficient data on the irregular immigrant population purposive sampling was applied taking nationality, gender, age, education, profession and pathway into irregularity as criteria.

In total, 175 immigrants were interviewed (122 men and 53 women); 60 from Pakistan, 41 from Ukraine, 40 from Turkey, 20 from Brazil and 14 from Australia. Of these, 154 were irregular and 21 had recently regularised their position.

Table 1: Sample

Irregular immigrants	175
Enforcement agencies	29
Public services	16
Voluntary sector organisations	21
Employers	18
Other actors	15
Total	272

Research

Franck Duvell, associate professor and senior researcher at COMPAS, University of Oxford was the Principal Investigator (PI) of the project. He supervised all research that Myriam Cherti conducted as co-investigator. In this capacity she conducted the stakeholder interviews and observations with Home Office Immigration Enforcement teams. He also supervised the research by Irina Lapshyna, a part-time senior researcher, who conducted some and analysed all irregular immigrant interviews. Other interviews were conducted by eleven research assistants. Where possible, the project attempted to recruit one female and one male interviewer per nationality as to avoid a gender-based sampling bias; however, in case of Australians and Brazilians this was not possible as no applications were received from men.

