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12th Local Authority Conference

Migrant Workers

*Presentation by Sean Bamford TUC
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Scope

- Benefits of migrant workers
- Profile of A8 migrants
- Migrants problems and those of the host community
- Working together

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Benefits of Migration

- Fills skill shortages and jobs existing workforce does not want to do
- Provides greater economic growth- migrant workers contributed £6 billion to output in 2006
- Migrant workers are net contributors to the Exchequer

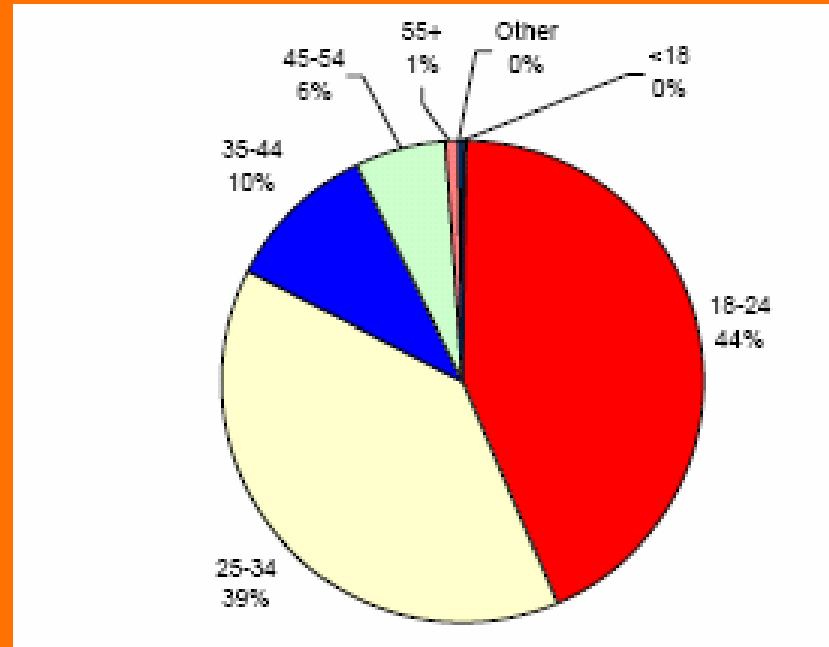
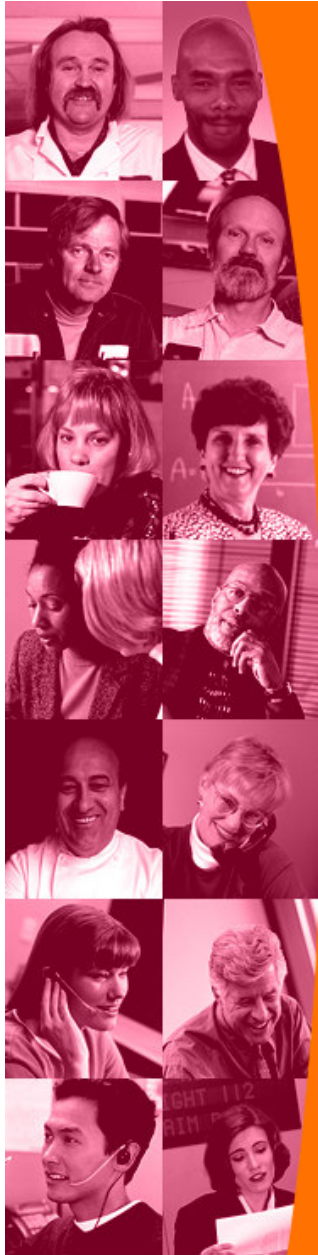
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Intended Length of Stay

- Less than 12 months 55%
- 3 – 6 months 2%
- 6 – 11 months 3%
- 1 to 2 years 5%
- More than 2 years 9%
- Do not know 26%

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Age of Registered Workers



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Dependants of Registered Workers

- 7% registered May 2004 – March 2007 declared dependants living in UK
- Number of dependants as proportion of the number of registered workers was 17% in Q1 2007 as opposed to 12% in Q1 2006



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Migration Impact Forum (MIF)

Earlier in the summer, RSCGs were written to and asked to consider five areas that A8 and A2 migration could impact on:

Health

Education

Housing

Crime

Cohesion

Within these areas, key things to focus on were **local experiences, information gaps, and local best practice**



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MIF - Housing

Impact is varied. Some areas (including the South West) emphasised little impact, and London observed that migrants form fewer households.

Four areas noted increased pressure on affordable private housing and rent levels.

Some areas presented a picture of A8 migrants living in overcrowded and poor quality housing.

Many of the areas noted migrants being accommodated in poor quality housing was due to unscrupulous landlords. It was also suggested that migrants were less likely to complain if their accommodation was tied to their work.

Social housing was not an issue in relation to A8 migrants (they have restricted access) – although there was the suggestion that it could be in the future.



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MIF - Crime and disorder

Areas noted that there had been reports of increases in certain low level crimes, such as driving offences (e.g. uninsured vehicles, driving without a seatbelt) and anti-social behaviour.

Most areas noted the increase in translation costs.

Some areas mentioned barriers to reporting crimes including language and unawareness of British law.

There are concerns of migrants as victims of unscrupulous gangmasters and landlords, often due to the migrants' poor English and lack of knowledge about their rights. The difficulty of prosecuting migrants' landlords due to the transiency of migrants was noted.

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Victims of Crime

- The Metropolitan Police advised that 4494 crimes perpetrated against victims of Polish origin in London between December 2006 and November 2007
- “The Scotsman” (27.06.07) quotes crime prevention officer, PC Kevin Lawson as stating that “there’s been a big increase in reports of racial crimes involving people from Eastern European countries, especially Poland”



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MIF - Employment was also mentioned in responses

All regions noted the economic benefits of recent migration, both directly and indirectly. They cited good attitudes to the work of migrants who were filling important skill gaps.

None of the regions noted robust evidence of wage depression caused by migration. But some emphasised that recently arrived migrant workers are paid low wages, and that some are unaware of the minimum wage.

Most regions reported exploitation of migrant workers that unfairly reduced their wages through deductions.

A8 migrants are disproportionately employed in certain sectors (e.g. agriculture, tourism, care). Areas suggested that these areas are now reliant on these people.

Most areas noted that A8 workers were overqualified for the jobs that they were doing, and there was the suggestion that these skills should be used more effectively.

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Migrant Exploitation

- Unlawful deduction for accommodation
- Deductions for travel
- Deductions for tax not passed on to Inland Revenue etc
- Overtime not paid (both in terms of time and rates)
- Non – payment of wages
- No paid holidays
- Agencies obscure employment relations
- Unsafe working

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Action

- Enforce rights
- Provide information
- Improve planning to ensure a better allocation of central resources

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Enforce Rights (1)

Need for Government, Unions and employers to work together

- The law must be upheld
- Workers rights respected
- The unscrupulous driven out of the supply chain

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Enforce Rights (2)

Need to get various enforcement Agencies need to work together e.g. HSI, GLA, Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate, LA, NMW

- Need to remove barriers to sharing information
- Put an obligation on them to share information

Need for greater resources