

The Challenges of Migration

Navigating our society

In a consultation exercise for Belfast City Council's Migrant Forum in 2010 groups of migrant workers identified some of the areas where they had experienced problems and where things could be improved. In some cases there have already been developments but the list gives an idea of the challenges that newcomers face in our complex society.

- They need more accessible information on rights and services, welfare entitlements, how to access health and education services and driving and insurance regulations.
- Local advice workers need to have a better understanding of the complexities regarding different categories of migrant workers.
- They would like more information about local culture and more opportunities to engage with people from their own country and with the local community.
- Local people should be given more information about migration.
- It is important that there is more campaigning against racism.
- They have problems paying for English classes held at times when they can attend.
- They need accessible childcare.
- They have difficulty proving where they live in order to get library tickets (important for accessing the internet) and establishing their identity in order to open bank accounts.

Local honorary consuls (see http://ca-ni.org/consular_list.html) reported similar issues and also mentioned some of the justice issues

- Ruthless landlords
- Outrageous fees for sending money home
- Employment rights issues
- Problems with employment agencies
- Lack of recognition of qualifications
- UK Border Agency holding onto documents