

Embracing Diversity

Information Update 2014

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Selected Abbreviations

A2	EU Accession 2 countries
A8	EU Accession 8 countries
ASAP	Asylum Support Appeals Project
AVID	Association of Visitors of Immigration Detainees
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
BSO	Business Services Organisation (Health Service)
CCME	Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe
CEC	Conference of European Churches
CEDAW	UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CERD	Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CFNI	Community Foundation for Northern Ireland
COI	Country of Origin Information
CEAS	Common European Asylum System
CORI (NI)	Conference of the Religious of Ireland (Northern Ireland)
DEL	Department of Employment and Learning
EEA	European Economic Area
EAL	English as an Additional Language
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
EU	European Union
GLA	Gangmasters Licensing Authority
GRETA	Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking
HIMLO	Hate Incident and Minority Liaison Officer
IICM	Irish Inter-Church Meeting
ICTU (NI)	Irish Congress of Trade Unions (Northern Ireland)
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILR	Indefinite Leave to Remain
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITF	International Transport Workers' Federation
LLR	Limited Leave to Remain
MAC	Migration Advisory Committee
NARIC	National Academic Recognition Information Centre
NASS	National Asylum Support Service
NCADC	National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns UK
NCB	National Children's Bureau
NICCY	NI Commissioner for Children and Young People
NICEM	Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities
NICRAS	Northern Ireland Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers
NIHE	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
NISMP	Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
NRM	National Referral Mechanism (Human Trafficking)
NRPF	No Recourse to Public Funds Network
NSA	Non-Suspensive Appeals
OFMDFM	Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
PHA	Public Health Authority
PBS	Points-Based (Immigration) System
PSIC	Person Subject to Immigration Control
RAF	Refugee and Asylum Forum
RAG	Refugee Action Group
RES	Racial Equality Strategy
ROI	Republic of Ireland
STEP	South Tyrone Empowerment Programme
TBUC	Together: Building a United Community
UKBA	UK Border Agency
UKVI	UK (Home Office) Visas and Immigration
UNHCR	United Nations Refugee Agency (formerly United Nations High Commission for Refugees)

Introduction

This update gives an overview of the issues that concern minority-ethnic people, migrant workers and those who seek sanctuary in Northern Ireland. It also suggests some positive actions for Christians who want to make this a more welcoming place, where incomers are treated with dignity. As in previous years, some of the text is unchanged, but we also hope that this book will help to keep you up-to-date with new developments, such as the release of more detailed analysis of the 2011 Census figures and developments in combating human trafficking. Immigration and asylum policy, law and procedures are complex and subject to change. Although we have tried to be as accurate as possible, there is always the possibility of inaccuracy. We also keep our members updated about major changes through our newsletters, web site and links to other web sites.

Inevitably we highlight problems experienced by migrants and minority-ethnic people, such as racism and destitution. However, we do not want to emphasise problems in a way that makes it more difficult to see people as individuals, with varied gifts and strengths, as well as vulnerability, just like the rest of us. We hope that this booklet does not lead to migrants or minority-ethnic residents being seen as victims, but helps to ensure that all people are treated with respect. We need to move beyond the theology of 'welcoming the stranger' towards inclusive theologies of justice and reconciliation and love.

Recession has changed the context and nature of the debate over immigration and integration and seen a hardening of negative attitudes among some people in the established community. There has been increasing discussion about benefit and health tourism, the relationship between youth unemployment and migration, competition for social housing, and the impact on other services such as education, for example. When we give unconditional welcome to people from other countries and ethnic backgrounds, are we equally prepared to give reassurance and assistance to local people who find it difficult to live with financial austerity and an increasingly diverse society?

The EMBRACE group has now been in existence for just over a decade and its members, volunteers and staff are active in networking, providing information, leading training and workshops and giving talks to members of the Christian community and others. EMBRACE On the Street enables churches to provide practical support for destitute foreign nationals. Our Emergency Fund is used to provide vital emergency assistance to people such as destitute migrant workers and people seeking asylum who have no other means of support, either statutory or charitable. It operates by channelling the gifts of individuals and church congregations through other voluntary and statutory groups. Other practical initiatives include our resource library in Belfast, which you can consult if you phone or E-mail in advance.

Margaret McNulty
Information Officer
EMBRACE NI

EMBRACE is a voluntary group of Christians from all the main denominations in Northern Ireland. Our primary role is to provide information and resources for Churches, groups and individuals, in order to help make this a more welcoming place for minority-ethnic people, migrant workers and people who have been forced to flee from other countries. The group can provide training in migration awareness and how to start practical welcoming initiatives at local level. We want to help in the building of a community that has moved beyond racism

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Why should we care?

‘You shall not oppress the hired servant who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your brethren or one of the sojourners within the land within your towns ...’ Deut 24:14

‘The couple were paying £120 per week for a room which was cold and damp. When they complained to their employer, they were told they would be evicted and lose their jobs if they complained again.’ See page 57

‘... women are being forced to choose between extreme poverty and remaining in potentially deadly relationships.’ See page 129

‘Do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God’ Micah 6:8

‘People who used to move drugs around now move people around.’ See page 73

‘And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt’ Matthew 2:13

‘I just wanted to take my Bible, but they didn’t let me.’ See page 66

‘When I go shopping and people are driving their cars they open their windows and shout abuse.’ See page 120

‘Lord ... when did we see you a stranger and welcome you?’ Matthew 25: 38

‘Them bringing us furniture. It was wonderful.’ See page 150

‘The heart of Christianity is hospitality.’ Jean Vanier, see page 179

Migration

Over the centuries people throughout the island of Ireland became used to thinking of migration as a one-way process, with thousands of people leaving here annually, many making permanent lives in other countries. That still happens – an estimated 12,500 people left Northern Ireland to live outside the UK in the year to June 2012 and around 12,100 left to live in GB in the same period. www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/migration/Mig_Report11_12.pdf There have also always been incomers, from pre-historic times to the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in the twelfth century and the Scots and the English during the seventeenth century. Huguenots came here to escape persecution in the seventeenth century, as Jewish people did in the nineteenth. An Italian community developed here and people from the Indian sub-continent began to arrive in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Chinese people came from Hong Kong in the 1960s, as immigrants, the forerunners of our Chinese community, of 6,300 people at the time of the 2011 Census (see also pages 2 and 3). Refugees from Vietnam were settled in Craigavon around 1980. We have also traditionally welcomed numbers of people from other countries, coming to further their education or work in our hospitals and other parts of the economy.

High unemployment levels insulated N Ireland from large-scale inward migration until very recently, although, like other industrial economies, a declining birth rate had already led to a reduction in the numbers of young people available for work. The Troubles contributed to continuing outward migration in the 1970s and 1980s. Johanne Devlin Trew, in her recent study *Leaving the North; Migration and Memory, Northern Ireland 1921–2011*, p. 51, describes how ‘the 1970s witnessed the highest outward movement of population from Northern Ireland (net outflow = 111,423 or minus 7 per 1000) since the years following partition’. So, when violence reduced and the economy began to expand, there was a shortage of workers and skills gaps emerged. By the 1990s roughly the same number of people were arriving as were leaving. Immigration began to contribute very slightly to population growth for the first time in 2004. This was because companies and public employers began recruiting abroad more actively. In the next few years the numbers of incomers increased dramatically. In both 2005–6 and 2006–07 the number of people living here increased by 10,000. More recently the recession has reduced the inflow of people greatly with only 2,100 extra incomers in 2008–09. In the year to June 2010 the numbers leaving were roughly the same as those who arrived. Between July 2010 and June 2011 an estimated 3,200 more people left here than arrived here to live – 21,700 came and 24,900 went. By the year to June 2012 the NI Statistics and Research Agency estimates that 12,900 people came to live in N Ireland from outside the UK, a net gain of 400 in the population. About 10,300 people also came here to live from GB, but overall movement within the UK (see above) produced a net loss of 1,800 people. So overall, migration resulted in a reduction of 1,300 people but, because births exceeded deaths, the population continued to increase, from 1.814 million in the previous year to 1.824 million people.

‘Since the emergence of early humans from sub-Saharan Africa 500,000 years ago, humankind has been constantly on the move... Are we not all migrants or descendants of migrants to this land?’ *Our People Our Times: A History of Northern Ireland’s Cultural Diversity*, NI Museum Council

‘When the first boatload of Vietnamese arrived, they refused to get off the boat. They said, ‘you must be joking, we are coming from war-torn Vietnam.’ And so the first boatload went back to Liverpool. That is how bad it was. But now it is different. Now we are a growing society, becoming more normal, more multicultural.’

Interview with a policymaker, Community Relations Council, 14 October 2005, quoted by Peter Geoghegan, ‘The Search for Equality: Race, Religion and Public Policy in Northern Ireland’ in Shared Space, Issue 9, 2010 (See also page 48.) www.community-relations.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/chapter-32.pdf

'I decided to come here because it is better to learn English in the United Kingdom than at school, it is much easier.' (New arrival, young Polish man)

Interviewee in Dungannon in Mary Hickman, Helen Crowley and Nick Mai, Immigration and Social Cohesion in the UK, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2008 www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/2230-deprivation-cohesion-immigration.pdf

In 2009 an Oxford Economics study of the economic impacts of immigration pointed out the difficulty of identifying numbers accurately but suggested that between 33,000 and 41,000 people in the N Ireland work force in 2008 were born outside the UK or Republic of Ireland. By 2010 the Labour Force Survey suggested that there were around 80,000 people living in N Ireland who were not born here, just 4.5% of the population with 49,000 migrant workers, around 5% of the workforce. (*Labour Market Bulletin* 23, p159.) The 2011 Census confirms this estimate, indicating that only 4.51% of people living in N Ireland were born outside the UK or the Republic of Ireland (ROI): 45,407 from the rest of the European Union, and 36,046 from other countries. (These figures include young and old and long-term residents as well as newcomers.) At January–March 2013 it was estimated on the basis of Labour Force Survey statistics that there were 69,000 people here of working age who were born outside the UK or ROI. (NISRA migration statistics)

The Census gives a good snapshot of the nationality, ethnic background and religion of people living locally in April 2011 and it revealed the fastest growth in population in the last 100 years, but it should not be taken as reflecting the exact situation now. Any analysis of recent migration shows that people come and go. Another note of caution is the fact that minority-ethnic support organisations have reported informally that some migrants failed to complete census forms. This is most likely to be true if people were unaware of the language support available or were living in flats or apartments where forms were less likely to have been received and completed. (The largest number of translated forms were in Polish. Interpreters were only required 34 times. <http://nicem.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/April-Minutes-2013.pdf>) There can also be a suspicion of reporting to the authorities, which is a hangover from living in authoritarian countries before coming here.

For a useful overview of immigration during the last decade (written before the census figures were released) read the NI Assembly Research and Information Service Paper, *Migration in Northern Ireland: An Update*, by Dr Raymond Russell. www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/RaISe/Publications/2012/general/3112.pdf For the latest overview of local population change showing the recent drop in immigration see the NI Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) mid-year report, August 2013. www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/migration/Mig_Report11_12.pdf

The NI Strategic Migration Partnership (NISMP) web site (**Migration Information Portal**) is also a very useful source of statistics and analysis. www.migrationni.org/demographic-trends#DemNI A brochure accompanied its launch and gives an overview of the material covered and an analysis of the contemporary situation. www.conflictresearch.org.uk/Resources/Documents/Full%20brochure_3%20-%20NISMP%20print.pdf

The Housing Executive Equality Unit, *Black and Minority Ethnic and Migrant Worker Mapping Update*, January 2013, contains useful statistics, such as the distribution of minority-ethnic people throughout N Ireland and has useful charts and maps, some of which are based on the 2011 Census. www.nihe.gov.uk/black_and_minority_ethnic_and_migrant_worker_mapping_update_january_2013.pdf

The new **NINIS (NI Neighbourhood Information Service)** web site gives access to the census details in areas as small as electoral wards. It is possible to find out the numbers of people in your local area by country of birth, language, ethnicity and religion as well as other factors such as gender and age. A helpful start is to search for 'ethnicity' or 'country of birth'. www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk

Dr Raymond Russell of the NI Assembly Research and Information Service has published a useful paper, *Census 2011: Detailed Characteristics of Ethnicity and Country of Birth at the Northern Ireland Level*. www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/RaISe/Publications/2013/general/113813.pdf There is data on age, household size, tenure, health, education, and labour market activity. Further detail has still to be released.

People have come here primarily for the same reasons that cause local young people to leave: for education, better employment prospects and higher incomes, and also to improve their language skills. Most have found work in administration, food factories, building-sites, hospitals and nursing homes, fishing and fish processing, shops, hotels, fast food outlets and restaurants but they can be found almost anywhere in the economy. (See page 6.)

Many people come for only a short time in the hope of improving their lives, or to earn some extra money, and then leave, just as some of our young people return in time. The Government Accession Monitoring Reports up to March 2009 indicate that only 7% of central and eastern European applicants to the Worker Registration Scheme intended to stay more than two years. A 2008 Institute of Policy Research report, *Floodgates or Turnstiles?*, suggested that, of the around 1 million workers who came to the UK from central and eastern Europe in the four years since EU enlargement in 2004, roughly half had already returned to their countries of origin. A significant number, however, do make this their permanent home, and so we have an increasing number of people from other countries living here, from a rich diversity of backgrounds. It is reckoned that there are people here from at least 120 different countries. Local research shows the complex nature of migration patterns.

Whereas in the past migrant communities were considered as either permanent or temporary, it is the case that modern migrants assume a much more fluid existence. There is no sense from this pilot study that Eastern European migrants will leave the UK as a result of the economic recession – for many the situation is much worse in their own country. ... Circular migration and the existence of transnational communities seem to be a feature of modern life. Migrants retain strong (transnational) links with their country of origin. These links are played out through real connections such as visiting relatives, or accessing health services in their home country. Virtual links are maintained through modern telecommunications that give migrants access to essential emotional support.

Dr Ruth McAreevey, *Life as a Stranger: the Personal Stories of Migrants to Northern Ireland*, 2010 www.qub.ac.uk/research-centres/TheInstituteofSpatialandEnvironmentalPlanning/FileStore/Fileupload,208543,en.pdf

'I came to work for the summer in a factory to save some money to buy a stereo ... that was eight years ago!' Andrius, Lithuania

'_____ Recruitment Agency was looking for welders back in Poland ... They got a fellow recruited from a factory where I worked. He went and then few others and few more and it went like a snow ball. I came too.' Tomasz, Poland

The New Workers: Migration, Labour and Citizenship in Northern Ireland in the 21st Century edited by B. Garvey, P. Stewart, J. Kulinska and R. Campuzano [www.strath.ac.uk/media/departments/hrm/pdfs/hrm-pdf-other/Main_template_Layout_1_\(2\).pdf](http://www.strath.ac.uk/media/departments/hrm/pdfs/hrm-pdf-other/Main_template_Layout_1_(2).pdf)

'At Local Government District level, the percentage of births to mothers born outside the UK or Ireland ranged from 3% in Ballymoney (11 births) to 23% in Dungannon (228 births). Belfast, Antrim, Ballymena, Coleraine, Cookstown, Armagh and Craigavon Local Government Districts also had 10% or more of births to mothers from outside the UK or Ireland. These local areas also have higher levels of migration.'

NI Registrar General's Report for 2012 www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/publications/births_deaths/births_2012.pdf

The impact of migration on the birth rate

In 1964 there were around 34,000 live births recorded here, but the birth rate dropped dramatically during the Troubles, partly because so many young people left. By the 1990s it was below replacement level. It has been slow to recover. In 2004, N Ireland still had the lowest birth rate in the UK but by 2008 we had the highest birth rate in the UK and ROI. This is partly because mothers who delayed having their babies until their thirties were now starting families, but immigration has also had an impact. In 2011, for example, 25,273 births were registered and 10% of these were to mothers who were born outside the UK or ROI. 1,210 were to mothers born in the A8 central and eastern European countries (see page 7) and 83% of these children also had fathers from A8 countries. (In spite of these recent increases, however, it is significant that there was a 14% decrease in the number of children aged 0–15 over the previous 30 years.) In 2012 there were 4465 births to mothers from outside N Ireland, 17.7% of the total.

For more statistics and analysis read the NI Registrar General's report for 2012 www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/publications/births_deaths/births_2012.pdf

Some Reasons why Accurate Figures on Migration are Difficult to Obtain

- Foreign nationals resident in GB, who move here, may be identified as UK residents.
- Some people may register for work here while still living in the Irish Republic.
- People applying for National Insurance numbers or counted in workplace statistics only include some of the adult population.
- The numbers of unauthorised or undocumented people are impossible to assess accurately.
- Historically, there has been no legal requirement for people to register when they leave the country. (This is due to change – see page 26 margin.)
- Most figures are estimates compiled by a combination of samples and statistics from different sources including family doctor registration.

There is guidance on using the 2011 population figures on the NI Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) web site. www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/midyear/guidance.pdf

Paul Nolan also examines some of the measurement difficulties in the first *Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report*, February 2012 (before the publication of the 2011 Census figures). www.community-relations.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/publications/NIPMR_2012_new_1.pdf

The NI Strategic Migration Partnership Migration Information Portal describes the local evidence gaps. www.migrationni.org/employment#gaps It also discusses the need to improve monitoring based on ethnic and national identity in order to prevent inequalities. www.migrationni.org/monitoring

Changing Patterns of Migration

The first group of recent migrants included a substantial number of people from Portugal and its former colonies who came here since 2001 to work, mostly in the food processing industry, many of them in mid-Ulster. At the same time, staff shortages in the health sector led to people being recruited in the Philippines, South Asia and, to a lesser extent, Africa.

European Union enlargement in 2004 coincided with economic expansion here, and people from the new EU member countries, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia (the Accession 8 or A8 countries), plus Cyprus and Malta, became entitled to come here and work without having to apply for permits. It is not easy to be precise about numbers, but between April 2004 and July 2005 applications for National Insurance numbers in N Ireland were received from 12,962 people from the A8 countries, with the largest number, 6,169, from Poland and the second highest, 3,013, from Lithuania. Between April 2004 and the end of March 2009 a total of 36,550 people from the A8 countries registered for work here. Roughly 60% of these new migrants were from Poland with around 20,700 registering up to March 2009. (Between April 2003 and March 2010 40,228 Polish people were issued with National Insurance numbers.) The Worker Registration Scheme figures for May 2004–March 2009 showed that 81% of applicants were aged between 18 and 34, 55% were male and 44% female. Only 8% said that they had dependents. (Research on migrant workers in Belfast in 2006/07 revealed that there was a roughly 60/40 male/female split, most were within the 18-34 age range, and around 16% of new migrants were under the age of sixteen.)

People from outside the European Economic Area (see page 30) need permission to come here to work and a points-based system makes this increasingly difficult. The number of work permits issued to people from outside Europe was 3930 between April 2004 and March 2005. By 2009/10 permissions issued for jobs in N Ireland under the points-based immigration scheme (see pages 27 and 30–3) totalled less than 769, as a result of stricter policies, as much as because of the recession. In 2010/11 there were 775 approvals and in 2011/12, 723 main applicants, with 308 dependents. Romania and Bulgaria joined the European Union in 2007 but, until January 2014 their citizens were given limited access to our labour market (see pages 7 and 9).

In the year to June 2010 the number of people coming to live here, according to their last country of residence was as follows: 8,400 from England and Wales, 2,300 from Poland, 2,200 from Scotland; 1,700 from the Irish Republic; 1,400 from Lithuania; 700 from Latvia; 500 from India; 500 from China; 400 from Slovakia; 400 from the USA; 400 from other EU Accession countries and 3,600 from all other countries. (Bear in mind that these figures do not identify people's nationality. People from other countries might come here from GB, for example, and some figures might include local people returning from working abroad.)

In the past, immigrants tended to come to our cities and urban areas. While many still arrive in Belfast, the latest migrants often move on, and the jobs they fill are much more widely spread. Most country towns and rural areas now have some foreign nationals working there. An indication

‘NISRA’s [NI Statistics and Research Agency] most recent estimate (2011) is that almost 122,000 international migrants arrived in Northern Ireland during the decade, July 2000 to June 2010. With an estimated 97,000 leaving during the same period, this leaves a net total of 25,000 international migrants.

The various migrant populations who have arrived in Northern Ireland since the millennium have brought with them, not only their skills and experience, but also their traditions, music, food and language. Ten years ago, Northern Ireland was a relatively insular and inward-looking country. Today, it is a vibrant and culturally diverse society.’

Raymond Russell
Migration in Northern Ireland: An Update, 2012

of this wide distribution can be grasped from the numbers of people from central and eastern Europe in local government districts in 2009, as a percentage of the total population. These are the top ten:

Dungannon 4,400, (7.7%); Craigavon 4,000 (4.4%); Newry and Mourne 4,000 (4.0%); Ballymena 2,200 (3.4%); Cookstown 1,200, (3.3%); Antrim 1,700 (3.2%); Armagh 1,900 (3.2%); Omagh 1,600 (3.0%); Magherafelt 1,200 (2.6%); Belfast 6,600 (2.5%).

www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/migration/Migration%20Report%202009.pdf

(The 2011 Census bears these figures out, with Dungannon local authority district having the highest number of people from the EU Accession States, 6.8% of the total resident population.)

International migration in the past has often seen countries relying on the labour of incomers from a small number of source countries. Immigration in the island of Ireland over the last decade has been very varied, with people coming here from a huge number of countries and diverse cultures and speaking well over 100 languages.

While we are likely to be entering a period of net emigration rather than immigration, the last decade of unusual inward migration has brought about a permanent change, with N Ireland now a place inhabited by people from different nationalities and cultures. In his second Peace Monitoring Report in 2013, Paul Nolan said that ‘Northern Ireland has become, irreversibly, a society with different ethnicities and this has been accepted as the “new normal”.’ http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/peace/docs/nipmr_2013-04_full.pdf

The final Home Office monitoring report on central and eastern European workers, up to March 2009, indicated the sectors where they worked.

Administration, business and management	10,840
Manufacturing	6,000
Food/fish/meat processing	5,025
Hospitality and catering	3,805
Construction and land	3,740
Agriculture	2,240
Retail	1,480
Health and medical	1,460
Transport	855
Entertainment and leisure	145
Others/not stated	535
.....	
Total	36,155

(A word of caution. These figures may not be as useful as they seem as agencies may enrol workers in the administration, business and management category, for example, who go on to work in other areas of the economy.)

The NI Strategic Migration Partnership (NISMP), *Mapping the Deployment of Migrant Labour in Northern Ireland* in April 2013, gives a good overview

of where people are working and in what sectors. The report indicates, however, that

There are huge gaps in migrant data for Northern Ireland, most notably in regards to labour market statistics. There is little to no data verifying how many migrant workers are currently resident in Northern Ireland, and even less regarding the occupational or sectoral employment of migrants.

www.migrationni.org/DatabaseDocs/new_6420381__mapping-the-deployment-of-migrant-labour-in-ni.pdf

Who is Entitled to Come Here to Work?

- People from the **European Economic Area (EEA)** do not need permission to come here and work. In the same way, anyone with a British or Irish passport can go freely to Spain or Germany, for example, to seek work. (The EEA is comprised of the European Union States plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Switzerland is treated as if it is part of the EEA.)
- This includes people from the **A8 countries** that joined the EU in 2004 – Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia and in 2007, Romania and Bulgaria.
- Croatia joined the EU in July 2013 but under transitional arrangements its nationals have very restricted access to our jobs market, see page 9 and www.gov.uk/croatian-national
- Under the **Points-Based System (PBS)** (see pages 32–3) employers must register as sponsors and apply for permission to employ skilled people from outside the EEA and demonstrate that they cannot fill the post from the domestic labour force. Entrepreneurs and very highly skilled people also apply through the PBS.
- **Foreign Students** from outside the EEA or from Croatia, who are studying in university or publicly-funded colleges may work part-time.
- **Permit-Free Workers** include some temporary staff, such as diplomats and representatives of foreign firms.
- Some, but not all, of the categories listed above allow for the worker’s dependents to work in the UK as well.

Transitional Arrangements for New EU States

The UK Government placed temporary restrictions on nationals from some of the states that joined the EU in 2004. Under the **Worker Registration Scheme (WRS)** (2004–2011) migrant workers from the A8 accession countries (the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) had to pay £90 to register with the Home Office and needed one year’s uninterrupted work before they could be considered for entitlement to full welfare and medical benefits here. These arrangements ended in May 2011 and so A8 nationals are now treated exactly the same as the ‘old’ EU countries. They have to pass a Habitual Residence Test before becoming eligible for out-of-work benefits. (See pages 61–3.)

Prior to 2014, people newly arriving from the A2 Accession states, Bulgaria and Romania, were subject to more stringent temporary

Unauthorised or Undocumented Workers/Irregular Migrants

It is impossible to tell how many people come here or remain here without proper documentation. Some years ago the Immigration Service gave a guesstimate of around 2000. Some enter the country legally and overstay work permits or visitors’ visas. Some become undocumented if they lose their employment. Others may be tricked by promises of legal employment. When people are arrested here for working illegally it makes the news but the numbers do not seem to be large (see also page 68). www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100617/text/100617w0015.htm

It is common to hear people use the controversial term ‘illegal immigrants’. How can a human being be illegal? In 2013 the Associated Press encouraged journalists to use more acceptable terms. <http://blog.ap.org/2013/04/02/illegal-immigrant-no-more/>

Roma People

People are curious about the newcomers they see on the streets. Some are Roma people who are thought to descend from groups who left northern India in the tenth to fourteenth centuries. They came to Europe where they were regarded with suspicion and have been persecuted for centuries. The Nazis regarded them as subhuman and up to half a million Roma people died in the extermination camps. Today they live in most European countries and, while very diverse, form the largest European minority-ethnic group.

Roma people in Ireland are mostly from countries in central and eastern Europe, such as the Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia. The majority in Belfast are from Romania although there are some from other European countries. Under Communism in Romania there were attempts to enforce assimilation but work was freely available. With the fall of Ceausescu there was less access to unskilled work. In Romania they may still get casual agricultural work in the summer but other times of year are difficult, so additional people move to cities in the winter. Those who come here may speak a Romani dialect but most also use Romanian. They usually have little education and most do not speak fluent English. Many are Christian and those who live in the Belfast area tend to be Pentecostal.

When Romania and Bulgaria joined the EU their nationals were free to travel but not given access to the jobs market (see pages 7 and 9). They were also excluded from welfare entitlements and social housing. As many Romanian Roma people are not highly skilled, the main legal option was to do self-employed work. This is why they have often been seen in car washes or selling magazines. Their income is precarious and they are on the streets in all weathers, resulting in poor health. They tend to come here in extended family groups and may live in over-crowded conditions. From January 2014 they have had full access to the labour market but without education and training, they are limited to a narrow range of jobs.

Roma people often experience harassment. Over 100 Romanian Roma people were affected by intimidation in the Lisburn Road area of Belfast in 2009 (see pages 120–1). They may be resented by local people, partly because family groups live closely together. There have been accusations of anti-social behaviour in some areas but relationships are probably better here than in many parts of Europe. Roma people generally don't like publicity and do not make special demands. They say, of themselves, that they are hard workers and just want a chance to work. In the past schoolchildren were not entitled to support towards transport and uniforms. EMBRACE and other charities helped with funding these needs. For a more comprehensive account of the challenges faced by some Roma people in Belfast read pages 44–50 in *Forced Labour in Northern Ireland* by Les Allamby et al, 2011. www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/forced-labour-Northern-Ireland-full.pdf

Some Romanian Roma people used to have limited access to the health service but could get nurse-led health assessment and advice as part of the NI New Entrant Scheme (NINES) (see page 60). (For an overview of Roma health issues see a 2011 conference contribution on Roma Health and Wellbeing Issues in N Ireland by Denise Wright. www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/Denise%20Wright%20-%20Roma.pdf) From January 2014 they have been entitled to access NHS services, including family doctors. There is a bi-lingual Roma Health Liaison Officer as part of the Roma Health Project at Bryson Intercultural (see page 45), which aims to provide general support for the Roma community and encourage access to medical services and education. E-mail tomahealthworker@brysonintercultural.org (028) 9032 5835, Ext. 231, Mobile 0771507 9968.

In Belfast there have been a number of other liaison and integration initiatives and funding aimed at helping the children to make the most of educational opportunities. The **I am Roma** initiative included a youth project with local people and a women's social enterprise project in

2012, and certificates presented at a Roma National Day celebration marked the achievements of Roma people in these activities.

Mediation NI appointed Denis Long as Community Development Coordinator with the Romanian Roma community in Belfast, in late 2013. Tel. (028) 9043 8614 Mobile 077 3009 5904. A part-time support worker and two volunteers have also been recruited from within the Roma community. Learning English, connecting into the wider community and developing employability skills are the priority needs identified by the Community Development Project. The project is a partnership between Mediation NI, the South Belfast Round Table on Racism and City Church. www.mediationnorthernireland.org/cms/files/Media-tion%2036.pdf

Research by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust into the needs of Hungarian and Slovakian Roma identified their most common concerns in the following order: language, trying to find work, finance, difficulties with interpreters (including hurtful and arrogant attitudes and behaviour), health and racism (see also pages 60 and 108).

For further general information see the EMBRACE Information Sheet, *Roma People*. www.embrace-ni.org/category/about-us/embrace-resources/

restrictions excluding them from the mainstream labour market. (For the social consequences of treating the A2 states differently, see pages 62 and 64). They could do self-employed work without restriction but for other occupations, their employers needed advance approval from the UK Border Agency (UKBA). A few people from Romania and Bulgaria also used to get permission to work for 6-month periods on the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS) and in the Sectors Based Scheme (SBS) for longer periods. In 2012 there were 67,000 seasonal workers in the UK, of which around 8,300 were in N Ireland and there were 935 (of a total of 4,029 in the UK) working locally in the SBS. (These schemes ended in 2013.) If they had been working legally in the UK for 12 months they were no longer required to be authorised to work and could change jobs without getting advance permission. In 2010–11 145 authorisation cards were issued to people from Romania and 630 for people from Bulgaria and in 2011–12 the numbers were 10 and 180. Some A2 nationals who met the 'highly skilled migrant' criteria (see pages 30–1) were also able to apply for a work permit themselves (rather than through their employers). From January 2014, A2 nationals attained the same rights as citizens of other EU members. (For the controversy surrounding the full access of Bulgarians and Romanians to the workplace and benefits, see page 19.)

Croatia joined the EU in July 2013 and transitional arrangements restricting access to the labour market will apply to Croatians for a number of years. www.gov.uk/croatian-national

Some of the Languages now Spoken in Northern Ireland include:

Akan, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bedawiye, Bengali (or Bangla), Bosnian, Bulgarian, Cantonese, some Creole languages, Croatian, Czech, Dutch, Edo, Estonian, Éwé, French, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hakka, Hausa, Hindi, Hungarian, Igbo, Italian, Japanese, Kannada, Korean, Kachchi, Latvian, Lithuanian, Malayo, Mandarin, Marati, Mina, Min Nan, Nepali, Ndebele, Oriya, Pashto, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Potwari, Punjabi, Romani, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Shona, Sindhi, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Sylheti, Tagalog, Tamazight, Tamil, Telugu, Tetum, Thai, Turkish, Urdu, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, Xhosa, Yiddish and Yoruba.

'All these restrictions applied to the Romanians and Bulgarians by the British Government ... when you're coming to this country, you don't know what to do ... what are you allowed to do or not you get really confused. The law is not clear.'

A Roma interviewee in Forced Labour in Northern Ireland by Les Allamby et al, 2011

Translation services

The top 12 languages requested from the NI Health and Social Care Interpreting Service (NIHSCIS), between October and December 2013, in numerical order were Polish, Lithuanian, Portuguese, Mandarin Chinese, Slovak, Tetum (East Timor), Hungarian, Cantonese Chinese, Russian, Latvian, Arabic and Romanian. EMBRACE runs a translation service for church notices (see page 165).

Language diversity

'Surveys of linguistic competence show that the United Kingdom and Ireland have the lowest levels of language skills in a survey of 28 European countries.'

N Ireland Languages Strategy Fact Sheet March 2008

Pupils needing **English as an Additional Language (EAL)** support are termed **Newcomer** children. (Not everyone is happy with this terminology, as it seems to ignore the needs of children from resident minority-ethnic backgrounds.) Numbers rose from 1,366 in 2001/2002 to 9,417 in 2012/13 in all schools, including pre-schools. In 2001/2002, 6,481 were in primary and 2,518 in post-primary schools. www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg/32-statistics_and_research_statistics_on_education_pg/32_statistics_and_research-numbersofschoolsandpupils_pg/32_statistics_and_research-northernirelandsummarydata_pg.htm Language support is costly, but these children have the potential to be a wonderful resource for helping local children to begin to learn other languages. Some Polish and Lithuanian Saturday schools have been set up to ensure that children retain the language and learn about their parents' country of origin. The Department of Education has online advice and resources relating to 'Newcomer' pupils. www.deni.gov.uk/index/21-pupils-parents-pg/newcomer/newcomer-pupils.htm Schools can draw down extra funding for each Newcomer child for use on additional learning resources such as language support. This can only be accessed if the child is enrolled at the school at the time the school census is conducted.

There is further information on Newcomer Children and the challenges they face on the NI Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) web site. www.niccy.org/Makeitright/NewcomerChildren

The Impact of the Recession

When migration was at its height in July 2007, Northern Ireland had its lowest recorded unemployment figures, 3.7%. Since then the recession has caused unemployment to rise, so there has been speculation as to whether migrant worker numbers would reduce. Some people have left and the numbers arriving have decreased dramatically (see page 1). In 2010–2011 N Ireland had the second lowest number of applications for National Insurance numbers from overseas nationals of any UK region at around 9,390. In 2012–13 there has been a slight continued reduction in applications for National Insurance numbers and health cards. www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/migration/Mig_Report11_12.pdf The reduction in job opportunities here is not the only reason for declining numbers of incomers. Other countries opened up their doors to workers from the EU accession states and the decline in the value of sterling made the UK a less attractive place to work. Local employers began to complain that they could not get people with the right skills (see also pages 12 and 13) and that there was a need to recruit and train young people from the established community. <http://blogs.bis.gov.uk/ukces/2012/10/09/northern-irelands-employers-called-to-action/>

Until recently the Polish economy was expanding and the Polish Embassy was urging new migrants to think twice about travelling to UK during the recession. (*Guardian*, 18 September 2009.) www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/

sep/18/polish-jobseekers-britain-recession-unemployment Locally, research found that Polish people here were much more likely to have lost their jobs during the downturn, than local people ('*Za Chlebem*': *The Impact of the Economic Downturn on the Polish Community in Northern Ireland*). Evidence for the whole of the UK, however, showed that unemployment rates for A8 workers remained lower than those for local people in 2009, probably because migrant people had the possibility of going home if they lost their jobs.

Explaining the situation is not simple.

There is little doubt that the position in relation to migrant numbers is changing, not least due to the deteriorating economic and labour market situation – but the changes are not as straightforward as might be expected. The years immediately following accession saw very substantial inflows of migrant workers into NI. Even without recession there are reasons to believe that flows could not have continued on the scale of the early years. Chief among these are the fact that other EU countries are opening up their labour markets to the new accession countries, thus widening the scope of workers from the accession countries for work. ...

Taken together, the migration data from NISRA [NI Statistics and Research Agency] and the WRS [Worker Registration Scheme] data from the Home Office suggest that there have been substantial falls in the numbers of migrants and migrant workers entering NI over the past two years. However this does not seem to have been translated into sizeable falls in the number of migrant workers here, according to information from the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

'Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland: An Update' by Dave Rogers, Analytical Services, DEL in Dave Rodgers Ed. *Labour Market Bulletin* March 2012

As with most theories relating to immigration here, there is controversy over the extent to which migrants automatically go home as unemployment rises. The Oxford Economics report published by the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL) in December 2009 cited evidence that migrant movement (particularly inflows) is driven by market conditions, but other evidence tends to show that this recession is different and families are staying. (There is a discussion of the relevant studies prior to 2009 see '*Za Chlebem*', see above. <http://nicem.org.uk/files?category=Publications>)

The Government Accession Monitoring Report 2004–09 found that 'while nationals from the A8 countries were continuing to come into the country to work and contributing to the economy they were still making few demands on the welfare system'. Although increasing because of the economic climate, the numbers of A8 nationals applying for tax-funded, income-related benefits and housing support, remained low in comparison to the total number of claimants in the UK, and proportionately lower in relation to their numbers in the population. Research by the Department of Work and Pensions in GB found that by February 2011, of the 5.5million people receiving working age benefits in England, Scotland and Wales, only 6.4% were born outside the UK. While 17% of all British born people in GB were in receipt of these benefits, only 7% of people, who were classed as non-UK nationals when they arrived, were represented among the

'So I had this wee piece of paper that read "I am looking for job". I showed it to a man and he said something. I didn't know what he is saying so he written on the same piece of paper, "Come in tomorrow about 8". So I was looking for work for three hours. It is harder now. I can't imagine coming now and trying the same. It is impossible. They want the ones that can speak English. They are choosing now.'

Karol, Poland in *The New Workers*

'All too often, migrants are only seen as a problem – migrant children underperforming at school or adult migrants with only a minimal command of the language of the host country. What is often overlooked is the fact that migrants constitute a valuable language resource.'

EU Commission Communication, 2005

'It's wonderful educationally when any culture presents itself at your door. ... We believe that bilingualism and multilingualism should be valued as a special achievement.'

Vijay Tandon, *English as an Additional Language teacher in Botanic Primary School, Belfast in Minority Rights Now! Issue 5 Spring-Summer 2011* <http://nicem.org.uk/files?category=Minority%20Rights%20Now>

'The region saw a big change in the proportion of vacancies that were hard-to-fill due to skills between 2008 and 2011, rising from 14 to 42 per cent of vacancies and the overall number of skills shortage vacancies increasing from 900 to 3,500.'

UK Commission's Employer Skills Survey 2011: Northern Ireland National Report, UK Commission for Employment and Skills, 2012 www.ukces.org.uk/assets/ukces/docs/publications/evidence-report-60-employer-skills-survey-11-ni.pdf

'50% of respondents stated that their wages had been reduced as a result of the economic downturn. In addition, 79% of the survey respondents regularly send money back to the Philippines. Since the 2007 crash sterling has fallen by 27% relative to the Philippine peso, leading many Filipinos to send more money home, thus leaving them with less to live on.'

Survey among Filipinos, Bayanihan; The Filipino Community in Northern Ireland, NICEM, 2012

claimants. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-16643677 There is no reason to believe that the situation in N Ireland was different.

Factors other than the recession affect the numbers of people coming here from outside Europe. The more restrictive, points-based immigration system has contributed to a reduction in numbers (see pages 30–3). The NI Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) reported that the numbers of work permits issued here to people from countries where advance permission is needed, dropped from 3,930 in 2004–05, to 1,800 in 2007–08. Of the 2007–08 figures, the largest numbers were for 450 people from India, 190 from the USA, 180 from the Philippines, and 135 from China. Some existing work permit holders have been leaving because of new rules prolonging the time that it takes to get residency or citizenship (see pages 64–5). By 2010, work permits issued for jobs in N Ireland under Tier 2 and Tier 5 of the points-based immigration scheme (see pages 30–3) totalled less than 1,000.

As the rules have become tighter still, numbers have reduced further and by 2011–12 there were only 227 applications. These were for 100 people from India, 40 from China, 25 from the Philippines, 25 from the USA, 10 from Malaysia and 10 from Pakistan and the rest from countries with less than 10 applicants. www.nisra.gov.uk/demography/default.asp18.htm It is likely that some employers were finding it increasingly difficult to fill vacancies for skilled staff (see also page 13).

In winter 2013, NICEM's *Minority Rights Now* magazine, Issue 11, was titled on 'How the recession is affecting ethnic minorities'. http://lissuu.com/nicemni/docs/nicem_winter13_final Much of this is focussed on rights issues, such as poverty and austerity; challenges which will be discussed later (see pages 124–30). An article by Max Petrushkin outlining initial findings of NICEM research in the North West described how, while there was concern among minority-ethnic people about retaining employment, nearly 90% of people wanted to stay in N Ireland and 'surprisingly over 73 per cent of people suggested that the economic downturn had very little impact on them and their families.'

For some migrants personal necessity has combined with market forces. For example, many southern European migrants have been drawn away from their stagnant economies to countries such as Germany, whose recovery can only be sustained by many new workers. www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-21137326?ns_source=PublicRSS20-sa

International Consequences of World Recession

The world economic downturn was bound to have impacts on migration. The **International Organization for Migration (IOM)** highlighted the potential consequences in a policy briefing in 2009. The paper outlined the likely human damage because of job losses, the erosion of wages and working conditions, the risk of discrimination and xenophobia as migrants are mistakenly perceived as 'taking the jobs of local workers' (see page 104), declining remittances to developing countries (see pages 16–17), restrictive immigration policies and an increase in irregular migration and people trafficking. www.egypt.iom.int/Doc/IOM%20Policy%20Brief%20Financial%20Crisis.pdf

Local labour shortages

The NI Strategic Migration Partnership (NISMP) published *Mapping the Deployment of Migrant Labour in Northern Ireland* in April 2013, which gives a good overview of where foreign nationals are working, and in what jobs. The authors state that

In Northern Ireland the agriculture, food processing, hospitality and private healthcare sectors rely disproportionately on a migrant labour workforce. Non-skills related reasons such as low pay, unattractive work and shift work may go some way towards explaining why there are large numbers of A8 [central and eastern-European] migrants rather than indigenous workers employed in these sectors.

There is anxiety that as European economies expand it may be difficult to continue to fill job vacancies. Employers were reporting that even those with university degrees were not well prepared for work. Among the recommendations, the authors suggest that employers and government departments should develop strategies to address factors other than skills, such as low pay and difficult working conditions, while continuing to counter skills shortages through education and training. www.migrationni.org/DatabaseDocs/new_6420381___mapping-the-deployment-of-migrant-labour-in-ni.pdf

In response to a Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) call for evidence on labour shortages NISMP cited continued difficulty in 2012 in recruiting sufficient nurses throughout the health sector, partly because so many students in the UK fail to complete their training. They also reported that it was impossible for a local mining company to recruit geologists and mining engineers from inside Europe. There were continuing needs in the IT sector. Significantly they note that in the important agri-food sector European workers 'are no longer travelling as far as the UK for employment'. Our aging workforce was significant throughout the NISMP response. www.migrationni.org/consultations

For groups living on the fringes of society the impacts of recession have been particularly grave. The co-ordinator of the European Roma Policy Coalition observed European far right groups growing in strength, with attacks on Roma people in a number of countries, at the same time as there was an increase in long-term unemployment and poverty for these people. euobserver.com/851/27250 (For more on Roma people living here see page 8.) In 2009 Hannah Grene, researcher with the International Human Rights Network, outlined how international recession incentivises states with declining economies to lower the standard of human rights in the workplace. (One of the current arguments for altering the UK's relationship with the European Union has been the desirability of reducing regulations relating to workers' rights.)

Director General of IOM, William Lacy Swing reiterated the need for developed countries to help migrants to 'weather the storm'.

As job markets in the developed world have contracted, a perception has emerged of migrants as the unwanted flotsam and jetsam of globalization, a reserve army of surplus labour that can be jettisoned or rehired with the ebb and flow of the global economy. ...

... developed countries cannot afford to turn their backs on migrants. Highly skilled migrants can bring the knowledge and innovation they need to emerge from recession. The low skilled can also contribute by taking essential jobs that host country nationals shun. ... If rich country governments do not resist the short term political expediency of closing the door to migrants and retreat into xenophobia, they, together with migrant sending countries, the migrants and their

' "It's like we've lost half of our salary because of the conversion ... I still give her [i.e. her mother] 15 thousand [pesos] whether the pound is down or up" (Female, fast food sector)'

Bayanihan <http://nicem.org.uk/files?category=Publications>

families will all lose out as will the host countries and communities that depend on and benefit from their contributions.

'Why Host Countries Must Help Migrants Weather the Economic Storm',
September 2009 www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/about_iom/docs/DGs_OpED.pdf

IOM's 2010 briefing continued to highlight the danger of the 'mismatch between rising emigration pressures and dwindling opportunities for legal entry' as states 'continued to follow mostly reactive and inward-looking policies':

This has produced a string of perverse results: human and economic costs have risen sharply, while the opportunities for enhancing world stability and welfare gains have been largely forgone. The current economic crisis has worsened the situation. If joblessness and poverty continue to rise or remain at a high level in the coming years, derailing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) timetable and if, instead of strengthening their cooperation, nations become more inward-looking and reactive in their migration policies, it would be difficult to avoid domestic and inter-State tension; world recovery, too, would be delayed.

http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/WMR2010_economic_crisis_human_mobility.pdf

The theme was continued in 2011

Despite a temporary dip in migration flows during the height of the global economic crisis, labour mobility is expected to resume worldwide and even to exceed prior levels as demographic disparities between origin and destination countries widen. Now more than ever, there is a need to better match labour supply and demand at both regional and global levels.

IOM web post September 2011

www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/news-and-views/press-briefing-notes/pbn-2011/pbn-listing/tackling-migration-challenges-in-the-wak.html

'The income Marta Dobrowolska earned in Poland working three jobs didn't allow her to be financially independent. She was a graphic designer, a teacher, and a fine-art painter who made €350 per month. She left Poland in 2005 and came to Ireland, where she worked in a pub, easily surpassing her previous monthly income. Marta's story is familiar. Despite the economic calamity that has befallen Ireland, many Poles agree it still beats going home.'
Irish Times 14 October 2013

Reporting on Asylum, Immigration and Ethnicity Issues

Reporting on Refugees: Guidance by & for Journalists, has been produced in the Irish Republic by the UNHCR, the National Union of Journalists (NUJ), and the Irish Refugee Council. www.unhcr.ie/images/uploads/pictures/pdf/reportingonrefugees.pdf

The NUJ has also produced a further leaflet, *Guidelines on Race Reporting*. www.nuj.org.uk/documents/guidelines-on-race-reporting/

Locally, the Refugee Action Group produced the 3rd edition of *Forced to Flee, Forced to Flee: Frequently Asked Questions about Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Northern Ireland in 2007*. This booklet was distributed to journalists and other people who help to form public opinion. www.embraceni.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/10/forced-to-flee-3rd-edition.pdf

The Scottish Refugee Council, NUJ and Oxfam published *Fair Play: Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Scotland, a guide for Journalists*. www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0000/0408/Fair_Play_Journalist_Guide_2007.pdf

The Causes and Effects of Mass Migration

For thousands of years, human beings have migrated in search of a better life. Migration is the result of numerous factors; many migrate in search of greater opportunities – to earn a better living, to live in a more agreeable environment or to join family or friends abroad. Of course, a considerable portion of migrants do not choose to move but are forced to flee their homes against their will – refugees escaping persecution, people devastated by conflict or natural disaster, or victims of trafficking. But for those who do choose to migrate, the most fundamental issues are whether they will be happier if they migrate and whether life will be better than it was before.

World Migration Report 2013: Migrant Well-Being and Development, International Organisation for Migration (IOM), 2013

Migrant numbers have risen rapidly in the last decade. There are now around 232 million international migrants in the world, around 3% of the global population. A Pew Research Centre report, published in 2013, indicates that these are not the poorest people in the world with growing numbers moving from regions of medium income into richer countries. One in five of the world's migrants live in the USA. www.migrantsrights.org.uk/news/2013/pew-research-sets-out-global-picture-migration-2013

Pull Factors

Migrants are drawn increasingly to countries such as UK and Ireland by the following factors:

- Developed countries, or industrialised city areas within countries, draw labour from countries or areas where income is lower and jobs are scarce.
- International transport has never been easier and is cheaper than ever, relative to incomes.
- The telephone and internet age make it easier to access information.
- Falling birth rates in developed countries contribute to labour shortages and skills gaps.
- People are drawn to stable democracies where human rights and religious freedoms are more likely to be respected.
- Many people in other parts of the world speak English or want to study the language in the UK.
- People are drawn here because of family, social and cultural connections.

For an analysis of the 'levers' that influence UK immigration read the Migration Observatory briefing *Determinants of Migration to the UK*, updated in January 2014. www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/briefings/determinants-migration-uk

'... Never lose the hope that you too are facing a more secure future, that on your journey you will encounter an outstretched hand, and that you can experience fraternal solidarity and the warmth of friendship! ...'

Pope Francis, *World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 2014*, which had the theme 'Towards a Better World' www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20130805_world-migrants-day_en.html

'... the majority of workers who come to Northern Ireland do so not to escape unemployment in their own country, but rather to improve their income situation or to gain work experience abroad. ... 65% had been employed in their country of origin prior to coming to Northern Ireland, with a further 19% stating that they were studying just before their arrival here.'

John Bell, et al, '...Easy Life, Great People, Bad Weather' A Report on the Experiences of Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland, 2009

The Mushroom Orphans

'The children live with their grandparents or are shuffled back and forth from Latvia to Ireland. In Riga, more than 100 children aged 14 or younger are living alone or with family friends ... There was a national outcry when a seven-year old girl got lost on her way home from school and it was discovered that her parents were living in Ireland.'

Embracing Difference: the Church of Ireland in a Plural Society by Patrick Comerford, 2007 http://ireland.anglican.org/cmsfiles/pdf/Information/Resources/Ch_Soc/SJT_RI/Immigr_08.pdf

Push Factors

Negative factors at home add to the reasons why people feel compelled to move.

- Lack of prospects for career advancement
- Poverty and low incomes
- High unemployment rates
- Persecution and poor human rights
- Internal conflict and war
- Natural disasters, climate change and famine

Impacts on Countries of Origin

Economic disadvantage

Countries are hampered in their own economic development by the loss of skilled people and those of working age.

Loss of highly trained people, especially health workers

In the last decade the drain of highly skilled healthcare professionals from developing to developed countries has increased dramatically causing access to health care to become more unequal. The World Health Organization (WHO) developed a 2010 Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel to encourage ethical recruitment and discourage the loss of workers where there are critical shortages. www.who.int/hrh/migration/en/

'Brain drain' can be two-edged, as those who leave may still provide an access route for skills, knowledge and contacts built up abroad. See a Migration Observatory briefing. www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/policy-primers/migration-and-development Over 10% of nurses in N Ireland are recent migrants and this rises to 40% of nurses caring for older adults (See page 13, NISMP consultation response).

Social problems for children

In the last decade access to jobs in Irish agriculture, for example, on both sides of the border, with higher pay than at home, meant that the many children, left behind in Latvia by both parents, became known as the 'mushroom orphans'. Because its population is small, Latvia has been forced to attract workers from other countries to fill the labour shortages created by people going to work abroad. Migrant children lose the benefit of a wider family circle. See http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/4998796.stm

Developing countries benefit from remittances

Payments sent home by migrants are reckoned to have reached around three times the value of official international development aid and are an important source of foreign currency, particularly in South Asia. They have remained resilient in spite of the international financial crisis, and the World Bank indicates that remittance flows to developing countries will have reached \$414 billion in 2013 (\$550 worldwide) and are expected to grow by over 8% between 2013–16 to reach around \$700 billion worldwide in 2016. For more details including the receipts for each country see the *World Bank Migration and Development Brief 21*. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1288990760745/>

Migration and Development Brief 21.pdf (One concern of commentators is the increasing cost of sending money home, see also pages 35 and 58.) The UK has an inflow as well as an outflow of remittances. It is not possible to provide conclusive figures but a Migration Observatory briefing includes the following World Bank estimates: 'Data suggest that in 2011 inflows of remittances to the UK were valued at £5,040 million and outflows were valued at £2,031 million.' <http://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/briefings/migrant-remittances-and-uk>

Returning migrants bring back savings, skills and international contacts

'The return of highly skilled migrants with specialised knowledge and skills (e.g. engineers and scientists) can help improve research and development programs [sic] in the home country. These migrants may include ... those who obtain additional education abroad and return back home.'

Migration Observatory briefing on 'Migration and Development', 2011 www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/policy-primers/migration-and-development

The Immigration Debate

For the New Labour government migration from the new EU states was seen as tool for promoting economic expansion, but the consistently high levels of immigration during the last decade were followed by increasingly negative and strident attitudes in the UK, which accelerated during the recession. Politicians have tended to follow rather than lead the debate and in some circles there was a deliberate absence of discussion as it was thought to be racist to question the level of immigration.

The 2008 House of Lords Select Committee of Economic Affairs report, *The Economic Impact of Immigration* was a serious contribution to the debate. www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200708/ldselect/ldselect/ldselect/82/8202.htm It found Government claims of major economic benefit to be exaggerated. While immigration was helping employers and migrants it might be making it harder for jobless local people to be brought back into the job market. The report disputed the claim that immigration solves the problem of jobs and skills shortages, as immigration itself creates new demands for labour. Meanwhile, there was a need for increased infrastructure expenditure in some areas and pressure on the housing market. The authors argued for better statistics and assessment; that we should help immigrants with language proficiency; and the need for better enforcement of workers' rights. The report did not look at the cultural benefits of immigration.

Just as people in GB were protesting about 'British jobs for British Workers' in March 2009, the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) said that there was no evidence to suggest that immigration was having any substantial negative effect on either wages or employment. (See a *Guardian* article on the findings of *The Economic Impacts of Migration on the UK Labour Market* by Howard Reed and Maria Latorre, IPPR, February 2009.) www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/feb/26/immigration-eastern-europe-jobs In July 2009, Professor Christian Dustmann said that during the 2008-09 fiscal year migrant workers paid 37% more in taxes than they claimed in benefit. (The *Independent*, 24 July 2009 www.hrreview.co.uk/articles/

'The nurses I was in contact with took great pride in being able to send money back to the Philippines, and the material benefits to the family were clearly obvious in photographs of home. Remittances not only help educate and train other family members, but also provide new homes and security for the entire family.'

Dympna McElhinney, 'Filipino Nurses in Altnagelvin Area Hospital: A Pilot Case-Study' in *Shared Space Issue 5*, 2008 www.community-relations.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/shared-space-issue-chapter3-31-44-web.pdf

'... the immigration debate is about statistics. If the statistics are not right and we are unable to get the proper data, we cannot have an effective debate about what is happening. Keith Vaz MP ... The right Hon. Gentleman mentioned that immigration is an issue of statistics. It may not be popular to say so, but does he agree that it is also an issue about the lives of individual people? In managing the statistics, we should not lose sight – no matter what the tabloids say – of the fact that we are talking about people who may have made a commitment to come here and who may have gone through extremely difficult circumstances to get here.'

Richard Fuller MP,
House of Commons
Debate 4 July, 2012
www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=2012-07-04a.939.2

hrreview-articles/recruitment/migrant-workers-improve-uk-fiscal-position/3509) For more studies on the fiscal impact of immigration in the UK see <http://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/briefings/fiscal-impact-immigration-uk>

In 2009 the Royal Geographical Society published a briefing, *UK Migration Controversies: A Simple Guide*, in response to ten contentious arguments in circulation in the UK. www.21stcenturychallenges.org/focus/uk-migration-controversies-a-simple-guide/

Some arguments have centred round whether migration increases unemployment, especially among our young people. A Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) report in 2012, found that while skilled migrants tend to be net contributors to the public finances in the recent depressed economic times, some UK-born workers had probably been displaced by migrants. The National Institute for Economic and Social Research, however, reported that they had looked at regional data and could find no impact on joblessness from migration. While youth unemployment had risen in parallel with greater migrant numbers, this trend had started well before the rapid increase in migration following EU enlargement. A BBC web article gave links to both sides of this debate. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-16484918 John Grayson wrote about the 'numbers game around immigration statistics', which he saw as an attempt to deflect attention from record unemployment figures and welfare reform. www.irr.org.uk/2012/february/ha000011.html

Most research has found little or no displacement affect but one study asserted that, during the recession, for every 100 non-European migrants there might have been an increase of 23 unemployed local people with intermediate qualifications, but no affect on highly qualified or unskilled local people. www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/257235/analysis-of-the-impacts.pdf This was used to justify stricter UK immigration policies. There was controversy in early 2014 when the publication a civil service study research findings showing a lesser impact seemed to have been withheld for political reasons. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-26435000

The MAC report stated that it was difficult to reach definitive conclusions, that there were likely to be temporary affects on lower skilled native workers at periods of high levels of immigration and that there was evidence of some displacement during the recession. However,

Prior to 2008 the bulk of the evidence suggested little impact of net migration on labour market outcomes for UK natives. Typically, estimated impacts were small in magnitude and not statistically significant, even in those studies covering the post accession period from 2004 onwards.

Impacts of Migration on UK native employment: An Analytical Review of the Evidence by Ciaran Devlin et al, 2014 www.gov.uk/government/publications/impacts-of-migration-on-uk-native-employment-an-analytical-review-of-the-evidence

As recession continued, practical issues such as growing unemployment and pressure on resources have combined with more visceral issues. There have been stories about lax border control, foreign national prisoners at liberty, the failure of multiculturalism to ensure social cohesion, and security fears about further Islamist attacks within the UK. Both Labour

and Conservative parties have felt it necessary to acknowledge earlier failures and support more restrictive immigration policies. Controversy over EU membership and rising support for the UK Independence Party (UKIP) is partly fuelled by a desire to stop the free movement of people from Europe into the UK. Emotions were raised about the prospect of large numbers of Bulgarians and Romanians arriving in the UK when the A2 countries gained full access to our labour market in January 2014 (see also below). Migration Watch suggested that around 50,000 Bulgarians and Romanians would arrive each year, while different commentators argued that other European countries would now be more attractive to migrants (see page 11). www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-21039087 It was suggested that they were attracted by the prospects of benefits. The *Independent* newspaper felt forced into an editorial entitled 'Stop all the demonising of new EU migrants. Contrary to popular scare stories, immigration is, on balance, good for the economy.' www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/editorial-stop-all-the-demonising-of-new-eu-migrants-8456428.html

By the end of 2012 several surveys had indicated that public opinion was hardening. The 29th Social Attitude survey found that three out of four people surveyed wanted a reduction in immigration and in a YouGov poll 70% approved a cap on overseas students. www.ukimmigration.com/news/2012-09-19/surveys-show-uk-antipathy-towards-immigration-is-growing In another YouGov poll over 70% of Conservative voters and large numbers of Labour supporters and Liberal Democrats said they would support a party that promised to stop all immigration. www.ukimmigration.com/news/2012-09-20/younger-britons-less-likely-to-oppose-immigration An opinion poll highlighted in the *Daily Express* in February 2013 said that 79% of people surveyed wanted to continue restricting A2 nationals from the labour market. www.immigrationmatters.co.uk/179-want-to-ban-eu-migrants-from-uk-poll-suggests.html At around the same time the Prime Minister hinted at measures to limit immigration from the European Union and the BBC announced an investigation as to whether its coverage of immigration has failed to reflect all viewpoints impartially.

Throughout 2013 the negative public discourse grew. In response to severe criticism about poor performance the Home Secretary abolished the UK Border Agency and returned the delivery of all border and immigration functions to the main Home Office. There were various other reactive Government initiatives and statements. New rules made it harder to bring foreign spouses to the UK. In spite a lack of hard evidence on 'health tourism' there was a review of the rules on access to NHS healthcare and charges were introduced for some services from January 2014 for non European people in England, including students (see pages 59–61 for the situation regarding health entitlements).

There was talk of capping immigration from the European Union in spite of treaty rights to free movement for the purposes of work. As an attempt to appeal to a public panicked about the possibility of large scale migration from Bulgaria and Romania (see above), the rules were changed to prevent access to benefits for at least three months from arrival for all EEA nationals and the criteria were tightened (see also pages 61–4) but even so, some politicians have called for transitional arrangements to be reinstated. Some commentators saw this as an invented crisis. Writing

'The most common descriptor for the word IMMIGRANTS across all newspaper types is ILLEGAL ...'

Migration in the News: Portrayals of Immigrants, Migrants, Asylum Seekers and Refugees in National British Newspapers, 2010-2012, *Migration Observatory*, 2013 www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/reports/migration-news

Public Opinion and Immigration

Migration is seldom out of the newspapers in GB, with a number of daily papers taking a strongly anti-immigration stance. Politicians appear to court popularity by taking more extreme stances on limiting the numbers of new arrivals. Some surveys reveal that people are more influenced by what they have heard than by what they experience. An All Party Parliamentary Group on Migration briefing paper in 2011 said the following:

1. Although opinion on immigration among British voters is broadly negative, it is based on low levels of knowledge about immigration, and generally not connected to direct experience of immigration impacts.
2. Political messages influence public opinion on immigration, meaning that negative policy messages are likely to reinforce negative perceptions. ...

When voters are asked if migrants have a negative impact *nationally* (on jobs, crime, local services), around 60-70% say yes. When asked about the same impacts locally only around 10-20% report a problem ...

www.appgmigration.org.uk/sites/default/files/APPG_migration-Public_opinion-June_2011.pdf

The Migration Observatory 2011 report, *Thinking Behind the Numbers*, revealed the public lack of knowledge about migration. For example when 62% of people surveyed were asked about migrants they thought about asylum seekers, in spite of the fact that they comprised only 4% of people coming to the UK at that time. <http://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/migobs/Report%20-%20Public%20Opinion.pdf> The *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration 2011* survey revealed that UK respondents, on average, estimated the foreign-born population to be 31.8%, when the reality was 11.3%.

Among all the countries surveyed, the UK had the greatest number of respondents (65%) who saw immigration as more of a problem than an opportunity. http://trends.gmfus.org/files/archived/immigration/doc/TTI2010_English_Key.pdf

An Ipsos MORI survey in 2013 confirms this ignorance, with the average guess for the number of foreign-born people in the UK as 31%, rather than the reality of 14% (the latter figure includes an estimate for undocumented immigrants). They also found that the reasons for the opinions bear little relation to reality. While culture may be significant for some people,

... the focus on the negative fiscal and public service impact of immigration ... is more widespread than economic or even labour market concerns. This bears little relationship to objective assessments of the impact of immigration – immigrants are almost certainly net fiscal contributors ...

The report authors are clear that choice of newspaper says a lot about attitudes to immigration although it is not proven to be the cause.

... newspaper readership is much more likely to be significantly related to concern about immigration, after controlling for other demographic differences, than any other issue measured ... Indeed, the four most important predictors of concern about immigration were all whether people read particular newspapers.

Bobby Duffy and Tom Frere-Smith, *Perceptions and Reality:*

10 Things We Should Know about Attitudes to Immigration in the UK, Ipsos MORI, 2014

www.ipsos-mori.com/Assets/Docs/Publications/sri-perceptions-and-reality-immigration-report-summary-2013.pdf

They point out the irony that people supporting the Government pledge to reduce immigration to 'tens of thousands' have high expectations that can only be met currently by reducing aspects of immigration that are of relatively lower concern to people or that they positively support (and that have positive economic benefits), such as foreign students and skilled migrant workers.

They had found that younger respondents were more likely to acknowledge the economic benefits of immigration. The mismatch of facts and perceptions make it important to challenge myths that are untrue (see pages 98–105).

In the 2013 Transatlantic Trends survey the UK, out of 13 countries surveyed, continues to show the greatest unease with immigration: 64% seeing it as more of a problem than an opportunity; 41% (highest again) were concerned about legal immigration, up 6% since 2008; 80% (not quite the highest) were worried about illegal immigration; the UK respondents showed the greatest concern about migrant numbers (55%); 72% felt that the Government was doing a bad job of managing immigration; and the highest numbers of people agreeing that immigrants are a threat to national culture were found in Turkey (55%) and the UK (46%). 48% of respondents in the UK reckoned that immigrants were integrating well, 38% that migrant children were integrating well (up 9% from 2008) and 52% felt that migrants help to 'create jobs as they set up new businesses'. <http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2013/09/TTrends-2013-Key-Findings-Report.pdf>

in the *Guardian*, Jonathan Portes, while agreeing that the benefits system was relatively generous to migrants because it was non-contributory, demonstrated that it was 'far from the most generous social security system in Europe' and that the most comprehensive study of the subject had shown EU migrants to be net contributors to the public purse (see page 11). www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/mar/06/uk-benefits-eu-migrants-what-crisis

A low point came in July 2013 when Home Office advertising vans toured parts of GB with the message 'In the UK illegally? Go home or face arrest.' Not only were the accompanying statistics declared to be misleading and therefore illegal, but even anti-immigration commentators and politicians (including UKIP) felt the vans were tasteless and 'un-British'. Immigration minister Mark Harper fronted the campaign. It was ironic that he resigned that position in February 2014, having realised that the cleaner he had employed for a number of years did not have a valid visa. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-26101442

The debate had hardened, with the predominant view on one side that numbers of international migrants had been too great for the UK social infrastructure. On the other hand there were fears that the limits being placed on immigration were dangerous for business. In September 2013 the UK's Business Minister Vince Cable told an audience of activists at the Liberal Democrat Party conference that 'toxic' public opinion in the UK made it difficult for politicians to make a sensible, business-based case for immigration. (He was also among those who made their concerns known about increased barriers for foreign students, see also page 27.) The *Economist* magazine also accused Government immigration policies of having a negative affect on business. www.ukimmigration.com/news/2012-10-22/the-economist-attacks-uk-immigration-policy

This view was reinforced by an Institute for Economic and Social Research report which said that if net immigration was reduced to the Government's stated aims of 100,000 per year instead of 200,000 per year, the economy would be 11% smaller in 2060, the GDP per head would be 2.7% lower, average income tax would need to be 2.2% higher and average household income would decline by 3.3%. <http://niesr.ac.uk/media/long-term-economic->

'since the immigration laws were tightened up two or three years ago, we are finding it harder and harder to hire staff, especially in London and the south-east ... We could fill 1,000 jobs across the UK tomorrow if we could get the candidates to apply for them.'

Lance Batchelor, Chief Executive of Domino's Pizza, 8 December 2013 www.ukimmigration.com/news/2013-12-11/senior-businessmen-ask-for-more-immigration-to-uk

'If you look at food processing, if it wasn't for inward migration ... the factories would have closed. Everyone in them would have lost their jobs, most of the farmers on which the rural economy depends would also have lost their jobs ... which eventually will have a knock-on effect in terms of public services ... So the economic impact of inward migration has effectively been to save the rural economy (Key informant, Dungannon)' ...

'In Dungannon, the arrival of new migrant groups exerted pressure on local educational settings, but also contributed to the revitalisation of depopulated local schools.' (Report authors)

Immigration and Social Cohesion in the UK, by Mary Hickman, Helen Crowley and Nick Mai, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2008

impacts-reducing-migration-11737#.UxXQQPL_uDs The chair of the Office for Budget Responsibility also said that letting more immigrants come tends to be good for the public purse. www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/jan/14/immigration-beneficial-uk-economy-treasury-independent-advisers

Don Flynn of the Migrant Rights Network reflected in January 2014 on the failure of large numbers of Romanians and Bulgarians to arrive, as scaremongers had feared. He called for more truth and clarity in the conversations around migration and for improvement in the quality of political debate. www.migrantsrights.org.uk/blog/2014/01/wanted-truth-and-clarity-about-migration-uk-today

The NatCen Social Research's British Social Attitudes survey for 2013 was published in January 2014. It indicated that 77% of the public wanted to see a reduction in immigration and an increased number wanted immigration reduced 'a lot', a rise of 51% in 2011 to 56% in 2013. Slightly fewer people, however, felt that immigration was bad for the economy. www.natcen.ac.uk/news-media/press-releases/2014/january/more-than-3-in-4-want-reduction-in-immigration/

Many of the arguments about the level of immigration are irrelevant in Northern Ireland where migrant numbers are so much smaller than in parts of GB. (According to the 2011 Census, we have only 4.5% of people resident here who were born outside the UK or Republic of Ireland as against 13% born outside the UK in England and Wales, and just over half of these had arrived in the last ten years.) www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/key-statistics-for-local-authorities-in-england-and-wales/stb-2011-census-key-statistics-for-england-and-wales.html Public attitudes here are also a little less negative (see page 97).

Locally, a 2009 Oxford Economics research study published by the Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) concluded that migrant workers had helped maintain an adequate labour supply to fuel the 2004–2008 economic boom. The availability of migrant labour seems to have made the difference between some businesses surviving, or, in the case of food processing, relocating abroad. (They quoted a survey of 600 businesses where 31% said that migrants were important in the survival of their organisation and this rose to 50% in health and social care and agriculture.) Read more from the *Economic, Labour Market and Skills Impacts of Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland*. www.delni.gov.uk/skillsimpacts/migrantworkers

The devolved areas continue to lose more people through emigration and so are more aware of the benefits of immigration and increasingly concerned to see if the UK immigration policy framework can be tweaked to fulfil local needs in a better way. For example, the Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership (NISMP) (see page 145) responded to the UKBA call for evidence on the points based system:

There is a need for improved and more targeted evidence base on Tier 2 migration and its impact on the workforce in Northern Ireland; and there should be consideration given to the economic and skills development in the region in the post-conflict period, and the role skilled migration plays in those developments.

NISMP December 2011

Devolution in Scotland and Immigration

In 2011 The Migration Observatory web site stated that 'Without net immigration Scotland's population would stagnate over the next two decades and decrease in the longer term.' www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/briefings/impact-migration-uk-population-growth In a devolved Scotland, discussions about immigration are coloured by the fact that their population numbers are in decline and they feel the need to attract and retain migrant workers. This is contrary to the UK policy of discouraging settlement for migrant workers in the lower tiers of the points-based system (see page 31). Scotland recognises that, although immigration is a reserved matter, with decisions taken in Westminster, it has competence in other areas relating to immigration including social services, children's policies, housing, policing etc. Consequently, immigration legislation can be applied differently and this has resulted in some progressive changes. Scotland has negotiated its own Shortage Occupation List (see page 28 and 32) within the points-based immigration system and also grants wider access to education and training initiatives, and takes a more holistic view of access to health services. A Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) Strategic Migration Partnership briefing note for elected members on migration gives a helpful overview of the issues raised by immigration in the UK and in Scotland. www.migrationscotland.org.uk/sites/smp/files/documents/briefing_note_on_migration.pdf Whether Scotland votes for independence or not in 2014, it seems clear that there will be continued pressure for greater devolved powers and that these may involve more say on immigration issues.

Given our specific employment needs and conditions, they have concerns about the income criteria required for permanent settlement (see page 64) and have been discussing the pros and cons of a possible regional Shortage Occupations List (see pages 28 and 32).

The precise statutory boundaries of devolved powers and responsibilities relating to immigration were discussed at a NI Strategic Migration Partnership seminar at Queen's University Belfast in November 2013 (see page 148). Some would like to see change. Professor Colin Harvey of Queen's University Belfast has suggested that consideration should be given to creating a separate immigration and asylum policy for N Ireland (see page 55). www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-26212043

Positive impacts of immigration

- Economic growth can be sustained. Having had a more liberal immigration policy than other European countries was a factor in enabling the Irish and British economies to have one of the longest periods of sustained economic growth in their histories. Before the recession began, UK employment was at a record high at 29.46 million in February 2008. www.hrmagazine.co.uk/hr/news/1014483/uk-employment-figures-hit-dizzy-heights
- Job vacancies and skills gaps can be filled.
- The pension gap can be filled by the contributions of greater numbers of new young workers.
- Immigrants bring energy and innovation. The Centre for Entrepreneurs reported in 2014 that migrant entrepreneurs were behind the creation of one in seven UK companies. www.centreforentrepreneurs.org/
- Services to ageing populations can be maintained despite low birth rates.
- Host countries benefit from cultural diversity.
- Young foreign workers can enhance their life prospects.

'We ... conclude that the recent wave of immigrants, those who arrived to the UK since 2000 ... contributed far more in taxes than they received in benefits. Further, by sharing the cost of fixed public expenditures (which account for 23% of total public expenditure), they reduced the financial burden of these fixed public obligations for natives. These findings place the UK in a far more favourable position than its European neighbours.'

The Fiscal Effects of Immigration to the UK by Christian Dustmann and Tommaso Frattini, 2013 http://cream-migration.org/publ_uploads/CDP_22_13.pdf

'All the best-performing regions in the long term are expected to be those currently displaying the highest concentrations of migrants, including London, the South East of England and Northern Ireland.'

The Lord Mayor of Belfast Councillor Pat Convery, from the introduction to the Belfast OPENCities Action Plan, May 2011

- Failing schools (and those about to close because of falling rolls) can be transformed by numbers of highly motivated migrant children.

Migration also has the potential to bring peoples together culturally. There is the possibility that in the long term, migration will have an equalising effect both in terms of the world economy and in the development of universal human rights. Making the nation state less important may ultimately contribute to economic equality and world peace.

While not entirely positive, the local Oxford Economics study (see pages 2, 11, 22 and 24) indicated that migrants had not only facilitated growth in the economy but also brought:

- Benefits to the tourism industry through the development of new air routes
- Positive spillover effects on the productivity or efficiency of native workers
- Fresh ideas for businesses
- Greater cultural links with developing nations that will prove useful in growing international trade.

The Economic, Labour Market and Skills Impacts of Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland, December 2009

Negative impacts

- Depression of wages may occur, although research tends to show that any reduction in pay is temporary (see pages 17, 98–9).
- Access to workers who are willing to work for relatively low pay may encourage employers to ignore the need to become more competitive in other ways (e.g. by improved production methods).
- Financial benefits may be overstated. (See the House of Lords Report, page 17.)
- Immigration may serve employers more than the local population.
- Migrants may be exploited in the workplace and in housing (see pages 57 and 84–94).
- Increases in population put pressure on public services such as healthcare, housing and education.
- Unemployment may rise if there are too many incomers. Within the UK this has been a cause for dispute (see page 98–9).
- Although job vacancies are filled, migration can create the need for additional workers. When immigration was at its height the UK had consistently high levels of unfilled jobs – up to 500,000.
- Employers may fail to put proper training and apprenticeships in place if they are able to import workers who have skills already.
- A large pool of eager young capable foreign workers may make it more difficult to motivate local people off benefits and back to work. (The UK had around 5.5 million working-age people on welfare benefits in 2012.)
- There may be difficulties with cultural integration and friction with local people.

- At a time of heightened international terrorism, large movements of people lead to more security monitoring.
- There is anxiety about increased crime and anti-social behaviour when large numbers of young incomers are thrown together without being given a sense of community. Increased movement of people may bring new difficulties, such as organised crime, including human trafficking (see pages 73–85).

It is clear that immigration can be beneficial for migrants, but only if their rights are protected properly. It can also be economically beneficial for both countries of origin and host countries; however, with present economic and trading structures it is the rich and powerful countries that benefit most. Migration brings social and cultural pressures that need to be taken into account in planning for future services. Where the economic preconditions exist, migration is inevitable. If it is banned, it just goes underground.

'The CBI and Business for New Europe (BNE) endorsed the Government's highly positive assessment, emphasising that immigration has been of "great economic benefit" to the economy ... The Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) suggested that increased diversity brings "huge economic benefits" ... The assessment of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) was also positive though more cautious: "Overall, immigration has been good for this country. We have more jobs, higher wages, better services and lower taxes than we would have had without immigration ... it is important not to overstate these benefits ... but it is not negligible either".'

Summary of evidence given before the House of Lords Select Committee on Economic Affairs in The Economic Impact of Immigration Volume I: Report, April 2008

Immigration Policy and Legislation

Countries seek to protect and monitor their borders. Most developed or developing economies also need additional workers. Immigration policy is a power retained by Westminster and recent successive governments have put an emphasis on security and having the right people to fill labour and skills shortages. Continual legislative change has focussed on tightening regulations as the media and public opinion press for a reduction in immigration (see pages 17–22). In *The Coalition: Our Programme for Government*, May 2010, it was stated that

The Government believes that immigration has enriched our culture and strengthened our economy, but that it must be controlled so that people have confidence in the system. We also recognise that to ensure cohesion and protect our public services, we need to introduce a cap on immigration and reduce the number of non-EU immigrants.

Other stated intentions included ending the detention of children for immigration purposes, the creating of a dedicated Border Police Force, as part of a refocussed Serious Organised Crime Agency, 'to enhance national security, improve immigration controls and crack down on the trafficking of people, weapons and drugs'. They also proposed to reintroduce exit checks, apply transitional controls to all new EU Member States and try to speedup the asylum application process. www.direct.gov.uk/prod_consum_dg/groups/dg_digitalassets/@dg/@en/documents/digitalasset/dg_187876.pdf

With the exception of the cap on non-European migrants, this was a continuation of the 'tightening up' trend set by the previous government. During 2010 modifications to immigration rules included a new English language requirement for people applying for leave to remain or enter the UK as the spouse or civil partner of a British resident or citizen. In some cases this means long separations where there is difficulty in mastering the language (see also pages 121–4). www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-20550262 There were also to be minimum qualifications for people who wanted to come here to study.

In 2011 the Home Secretary reiterated the goal of reducing net immigration to 'tens of thousands each year, not hundreds of thousands' during the life of this parliament. She said, 'We can attract more of the brightest and the best at the same time as we reduce the overall number.' www.homeoffice.gov.uk/media-centre/speeches/immigration-speech In 2012 Immigration Minister, Damien Green, described how one of the mechanisms for measuring the positive contribution of migrants would be the salary they attain and the plans to limit permanent residence for anyone from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) to those who could prove they command a salary of between £31,000 and £49,000 (see also page 64). www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-16850563

Under the rules of the European free market most people from the EEA (see page 7) have the freedom to come here to work. The EU continues to expand – Croatia became the 28th Member State of the European Union on 1 July 2013 (see also pages 7, 9 and 63). So, in spite of recent statements about introducing a cap on European migrants, in order to

reduce net immigration the Government has had to look elsewhere. The points-based system introduced by the previous government has been retained but with further restrictions within some of its five tiers. An overall cap on the numbers of people coming here from outside Europe has been applied since April 2011. (In the year from 6 April 2013 to 5 April 2014, a maximum of 20,700 such skilled workers can come to the UK under Tier 2 of the points based system (see page 31) to do jobs with an annual salary below £152,100.)

The likely short-term effects of the new policy were described in an Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) briefing, *Migration Review 2010/11*. www.ippr.org/publications/55/8431/migration-review-2011/2012

Foreign students

Numbers of foreign students had trebled in the previous decade and entry on a student visa was seen by some policy makers as a way of avoiding more stringent immigration controls and coming here to work. In March 2011 restrictions on non-EEA students were announced (see page 31) and in June 2011 the Home Secretary, Theresa May, said that the curb on overseas student numbers would cut immigration by 230,000 between that date and 2015. The changes included tighter regulations for accrediting private colleges which sponsor overseas students, in order to eliminate 'bogus' colleges; tougher English language requirements; restrictions on students working part-time, who can bring dependants with them; limiting the length of courses studied to between three and five years; and making it much more difficult to stay on to work after completing one's studies. (In 2012, around 180,000 people migrated to the UK for study, which is significantly lower than the 232,000 who arrived to study in the previous year. In 2013 the figures rose again to 218,773.) In October 2008 a representative of the UK Border Agency (UKBA) had told the **Migration Impacts Forum (MIF)** that the 358,000 non-EEA students who were granted entry to the UK to study had contributed an estimated £2.5 billion a year to the UK economy in tuition fees and they had been estimated to bring a total value of nearly £8.5 billion. At a time of cuts in government support for higher education, university vice-chancellors have expressed concern about restricting numbers of foreign students and have increased the rates of fees for people from abroad. Some people feel it is a mistake to count students in the migration statistics in the first place. Restricting student entry will also have little permanent effect on the impact immigration has on society as few foreign students stay in the UK on a long-term basis.

In February 2014 a BBC Panorama programme claimed that there was still a considerable level of fraud in the student visa system. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-26113986

UK immigration statistics

Net migration to the UK reached its height in the calendar year 2010 at 252,000, but not because inward migration had risen. It remained steady at 591,000. The increase was because of a drop in outward migration to 339,000 in 2010 (the lowest figure since 2001), with fewer people finding jobs abroad. The incomers included 238,000 who came to the UK to study. www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/migration/migration-statistics-quarterly-report/november-2011/misqr.html The estimated figures for inward migration have

The E Borders

plan, conceived in 2003, provides for electronic collection of information about all passengers entering or leaving the UK. This was due to be implemented by 2014 but there are logistical difficulties for both carriers and the Home Office. (11.1 million journeys were made by people entering the UK in 2013.) In 2012 new contractors were appointed for this much-delayed project. It is unclear if the new target date of 2015 will be met. It is hoped to reintroduce exit checks at that time. http://lifeintheuk.net/index.php/news/home_affairs_committee_finds_ukba_failing_to_control_immigration/ As of 2012/13, only 65% of exits and entries were being documented. <http://icinspector.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Annual-report-2012-13-Final-Web-Version.pdf>

'Immigration soars 20% in a year' *Daily Express*

'While readers of this morning's papers may have been left with the impression that there has been a large increase in the number of people arriving on these shores, this is not actually the case, as there has been little change here for some years.

Instead, the rise in net migration is being driven by fewer people leaving the country, which the ONS [Office for National Statistics] notes "is at its lowest since June 2005".

Fullfact web site, 26 August 2011 http://fullfact.org/blog/immigration_figures_headlines_net_migration-2942 See also www.leftfootforward.org/2011/08/daily-express-daily-mail-fail-the-migration-stats-test/

dropped to 566,000 in 2011 and 497,000 in 2012. (In 2011 an estimated 351,000 people left the UK and in 2012 the figure was 321,000 and this left the figures for net migration in these years at 215,000 and 176,000 respectively.) www.ons.gov.uk/ons/re/migration/migration-statistics-quarterly-report/august-2013/sty-migration.html Provisional estimates show that net migration had another slight rise, from 167,000 in the year to June 2012, to 182,000 in the year to June 2013, mostly again because a result of falling emigration, which is at its lowest level since 2001. Immigration fell from 517,000 to 503,000. 48% of the immigrants were non-EU citizens. www.ons.gov.uk/ons/re/migration/migration-statistics-quarterly-report/november-2013/sty-emigrating.html

The Office of National Statistics quarterly release in February 2014 revealed that there had been an estimated rise in net migration in the year to September 2013, up 58,000 to 212,000: 532,000 people arrived and 320,000 left. Around 209,000 EU citizens arrived, including an increase in numbers from Poland, Spain, Italy and Portugal. Immigration from outside Europe decreased to 244,000 from 269,000 the previous year. www.ons.gov.uk/ons/re/migration/migration-statistics-quarterly-report/february-2014/index.html

The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) migration review for 2012/13 forecast the continued decline in net migration in 2013 but said that net migration will rise again in subsequent years. They also expressed the fear that immigration policy would keep out migrants who could be making a significant economic contribution. www.ippr.org/publication/5510111/migration-review-201213

Forecasts for net migration depend on a number of estimates, including how many local people choose to leave each year. Another important factor is how many migrants choose to settle in the UK permanently. In 2010 the Home Office revealed that only 40% of people who were granted work visas that lead to citizenship, and 63% of people entering on family visas, were still in the country after five years. This reduced to 21% for those with working visas not leading to citizenship, and only 11% of people with study visas were still in the UK after the same period. www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/immigration-asylum-research/horr43/

In February 2014 the Home Office published its fourth 'Migrant Journey' report examining the most common paths chosen by migrants. Only 25% of those who were granted skilled work visas in 2007, for example, had been granted permanent settlement by 2012 and only a further 9% still had leave to remain. www.gov.uk/government/publications/migrant-journey-fourth-report

In view of the Government's stated aim to continue reducing migration, the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) (see also page 32) recommended, in February 2013, that the number of occupations that can be filled by specialist non-European workers (the Shortage Occupation List) should be reduced. They argued that this would encourage employers to up-skill local workers. One of the ways in which this may be happening is an increase of training in the UK in the skills of Asian cuisine. It has become difficult to bring in foreign chefs under the present immigration regime because they must be paid at least £29,570 per year. (But in somewhat of

a contradiction the Prime Minister promised, in November 2013, to work with the industry to ensure that they could bring in chefs with sufficient experience to ease their difficulties. www.bighospitality.co.uk/In-the-Spotlight/Guides-awards/David-Cameron-promises-to-ease-immigration-rules-for-ethnic-restaurants)

The IPPR published a briefing in January 2013, setting out the basis for a *Fair and Democratic Migration Policy*. The authors recognised the genuine public concerns about the high level of immigration to the UK but suggested a more rational conversation about the issue and questioned how much Government could control.

...migration policy should be based on a realistic assessment of the degree of control that government can have over migration, and migration politics should be based on communicating that same assessment to the public; resisting the temptation to make unachievable promises or commitments, or to score short-term political points at the expense of building a healthier public debate.

Matt Cavanagh and Sarah Mulley, *Fair and Democratic Migration Policy; A Principled Framework for the UK*, IPPR, 2013
www.ippr.org/publication/5510188/fair-and-democratic-migration-policy-a-principled-framework-for-the-uk

Immigration Bill 2013

The latest immigration legislation is making its way through Parliament. It is aimed at tackling irregular migration, partly by making it difficult for people to avoid being removed from the country and denying access to private housing, bank accounts, driving licences etc. Landlords would also be required to check the immigration status of tenants and could face fines for failing to do so and fines for employers who use illegal labour would be doubled.

Access to public services for temporary migrants (mostly non European visa holders) would also be regulated to ensure those accessing the NHS and other services are making a contribution.

The **Migrant Rights Network** has issued a briefing that indicates some difficulties with the bill, including the fact that the checks involved will raise people's suspicions about all migrants. www.migrantsrights.org.uk/files/publications/MRN-Immigration-Bill-briefing-Oct-2013.pdf

Others have been equally critical.

Given persistently high levels of public and political concern about migration, it is crucial that any further reforms to the UK's immigration [system] are principled, effective and capable of securing public consent. It is reasonable and indeed right to expect immigrants to make a substantial contribution and play by the rules, but in return, those who do should expect to be treated fairly and not all lumped together as scroungers intent on coming to the UK as 'benefit tourists', an image which does not represent the majority of migrants who come to the UK prepared to put in as much as they get out. ...

As it stands, the new Immigration Bill will do little to shift the UK's migration policy or national conversation in this direction. If its proposals prove to be unworkable or unenforceable, it will only reinforce the impression of government incompetence in this area,

'...the reasons why the UK is an attractive destination for migrants – either asylum-seekers or economic migrants – include factors entirely beyond any government's control, including our history and the global role of the English language, as well as factors like the state of our economy, our flexible labour market, and the rule of law. None of these are things that any government would want to change for the sake of the effect on migration.

A more realistic sense of how much power government has to control migration flows would help break the vicious circle of politicians over-promising and under-delivering, a dynamic which at present undermines public trust in politics and government, and risks feeding alienation and resentment among those who are most concerned about immigration.'

Fair and Democratic Migration Policy; A Principled Framework for the UK, 2013
www.ippr.org/images/media/files/publication/2013/01/fair-democratic-migration-policy_Jan2013_10188.pdf

and increase public distrust of all migrants.’

Alex Glennie, ‘The Immigration Bill is a triumph of symbolism over substance’,
New Statesman, Staggers blog
www.ippr.org/articles/56/11385/the-immigration-bill-is-a-triumph-of-symbolism-over-substance

The charity, Refugee Action, also fears that the legislation will increase hostility towards migrants.

The hostile environment that the Government pursues with such vigour will not encourage people to leave the UK but will instead result in a significant proportion of people struggling to find somewhere to sleep, something to eat and the healthcare they need.

Refugee Action policy briefing: ‘The Immigration Bill’, October 2013
www.refugee-action.org.uk/assets/0000/8560/Refugee_Action_briefing_Immigration_Bill_18_October_2013.pdf

The Catholic Church in England and Wales has also expressed fears that the legislation will put vulnerable people at risk if they are denied healthcare and that more people will become homeless if irregular migrants cannot access privately rented accommodation. www.catholicnews.org.uk/Home/News/Immigration-Bill-warning#.UvPCulYkOKI.gmail (For access to healthcare in N Ireland see page 59–61.)

Even the UN Refugee Agency has expressed fears that the legislation could create a ‘climate of ethnic profiling’. www.europe-post.com/index.php/politics/item/360-un-condemns-cameron-over-immigration-law

The bill completed its committee stage on 19 November, 2013 but there have been rumours that ministers are having second thought about aspects of the legislation and that it may be delayed. www.migrantsrights.org.uk/blog/2014/01/tory-mps-line-defend-eu-migration-immigration-bill-put-backburner-nervous-ministers

Who is Entitled to Come Here from Outside the European Economic Area (EEA)?

People from outside the EEA who want to work or study in the UK must apply for permission through the **Points-Based System (PBS)**. This is made up of five **Tiers**, with different eligibility requirements. It is based on the assumption that most gaps in employment will be filled by people from the EEA (see page 7 for a list of these countries). People entering the country under Tiers 2, 4, or 5, must be sponsored in advance by an employer, and the numbers allowed to enter are limited each year. (Tier 3 is suspended at present.) Most now need to be either highly skilled or very wealthy.

Tier 1 (highly skilled migrants)

This includes professionals such as doctors, scientists, self-employed workers, entrepreneurs and investors ‘who can contribute to growth and productivity’. To be eligible for Tier 1 you do not need to have a job offer, but must accumulate points by demonstrating that you are highly qualified, have been able to command high earnings previously, have experience of the UK, your age, English language skills and ability to support yourself financially. Entrepreneurs need to be able to demonstrate that they can make a substantial investment in the UK. In August 2011 a new

‘exceptional talent’ category was added to Tier 1 for talented people who are recognised as ‘world-leading or potentially world-leading’ in science or the arts.

Tier 2 (skilled people with job offers)

This tier includes people who ‘fill gaps in the United Kingdom workforce’ and can include elite sports people, ministers of religion and employees transferring within multinational companies. Employers must adhere to the ‘resident labour test’ and demonstrate, by advertising locally for four weeks, that no suitably qualified ‘settled’ worker can do the job. This does not apply if the job is on the ‘shortage occupation list’ (see page 32). There are also a couple of other exceptions such as certain categories of graduates. Points are gained for qualifications; future expected earnings; English language skills; and the money you have for maintenance. Tier 2 is subject to an annual limit of 20,700. Graduates who used to be able to apply under Tier 1 for a post-study work visa (PSW) now apply under Tier 2.

Tier 3 (low-skilled workers)

This would include people such as contract workers in catering and construction, ‘to fill temporary labour shortages’, but this Tier has been suspended indefinitely, to ensure that low-skilled job vacancies are filled solely by workers from the EEA. People will no longer be able to gain citizenship by this route.

Tier 4 (students)

For non-European students, colleges and universities must register as a licensed sponsor. There is a strong emphasis on documentation and record keeping by the sponsors and the speedy reporting of students who withdraw or interrupt their studies. Students must meet a number of criteria and cannot transfer between different academic institutions (see also page 27). Since April 2011 colleges must become ‘highly trusted sponsors’. Other visa requirements have changed: for example, students entering university need a higher level of English language skills; only people studying in university or colleges that are publicly funded retain the right to work part-time; and visas are time-limited.

Tier 5: (youth mobility and temporary workers)

Sports people, professional musicians, cultural exchanges, charity workers, religious workers and working holidays for young people are included in Tier 5.

For additional information on the PBS read the online guide: www.gov.uk/uk-visa-sponsorship-employers The UK Border Agency (UKBA) was abolished in 2013 and its responsibilities transferred back to the Home Office, **UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI)**. www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration

The Home Office published a ‘Statement of Intent: Codes of Practice for Skilled Workers’ in March 2013 setting out which occupations have the necessary level of skill to qualify for Tier 2 of the Points-Based System, minimum appropriate rates of pay, and how employers should carry out a Resident Labour Market Test to see if a suitable settled worker is available before they offer a job to a migrant worker. www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/immigration/soi-cop-skilled-workers?view=Binary

The words we use...

In some countries the term 'Third Country Nationals' is used when foreign contractors use employees from a country other than their own, but in the EU, a 'third country' is one that is not a member of the Union. Locally, the term 'third country national' is used to describe migrant workers from outside the European Economic Area. They are treated differently for immigration purposes (see pages 30–3) and in terms of working, welfare, and citizenship. Under Article 31 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, however, 'Every worker has the right to working conditions that respect his or her health, safety and dignity.' www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/industrialrelations/dictionary/definitions/thirdcountrynationals.htm

A survey of users of the PBS in 2011 found a reasonably high level of satisfaction at the application process. People liked the online process for checking eligibility but there were indications that some UK Border Agency staff felt the need for more training and that our borders were less secure. www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/immigration-asylum-research/horr49a/horr49-summary?view=Binary The independent chief inspector within the UKBA was critical of the standard of decision making and put that down to inadequate resources. www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/lcm201012/cmselect/cmhaff/929192903.htm#a6 (Reports on the work of immigration officials can be found on the web site of the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration.) <http://licinspector.independent.gov.uk/>

The **Migration Advisory Committee (MAC)** advises government so that PBS entry points can be adjusted to reflect skills and labour shortages and consults about the appropriate level of cap on non-EEA workers (see pages 26–7). A **Shortage Occupation List** exists for some jobs and this changes from time to time with some occupations added and others withdrawn. As part of new control measures, some short-term workers have to lodge a bond on entry, refundable on exit, and employers face large fines for each illegal worker. A **Migration Impacts Forum (MIF)** was put in place to examine the social impacts and benefits of migration as experienced at local level. The MIF was disbanded in 2010 and the MAC now provides evidence about the impact of immigration. www.gov.uk/government/organisations/migration-advisory-committee

Sponsorship (Tier 2 and Tier 5)

Employers bringing in staff from outside the European Economic Area under Tier 2 must sponsor them, and this involves considerable obligations. An employer who wants to act as a sponsor, must apply for a licence and be added to the register of sponsors. Applications for sponsorship are complex and sponsors have to comply with the Home Office in keeping records such as copies of passports and contact details. They also have to report to the Home Office events such as delays in the applicant taking up work or absences of more than 10 days. Organisations are subject to checks to see if they are legitimate and to ensure that they have the administrative ability to carry out their sponsorship duties. A sponsorship licence can cost between £515 and £1,545 for a new sponsor and needs to be renewed annually. Licences can be suspended.

Tier 2 has a number of categories: skilled worker, intra-company transfer, elite sports people and ministers of religion.

Tier 5 categories include temporary workers – creative and sporting; government authorised temporary exchanges and diplomats; and religious and charity workers. Members of a religious order who are studying or training in an institution, not looked after by their order, need to apply as a student under Tier 4. Working full-time as a teacher in a school run by a church or missionary organisation does not count as missionary work. Teachers must apply under the sponsored skilled worker category.

Implications for churches and charities

Churches with substantial administrative capacity, who have regular migrant staff members, interns, or students, are finding ways to cope

with the extra burden of sponsorship, but the system does not suit most Christian groups. Ministers of religion in the main denominations tend to be technically self-employed, and used to be responsible for their own immigration status. The expense and complexity of the paperwork will be a deterrent to bringing people here to work for relatively short periods. Daniel Webster of Evangelical Alliance told *Christianity Today* in 2009 that

While drawing up our guidelines for the new system, it became clear that the Border Agency hasn't taken into account the way Christian activities work in practice. ... Some of the problems we have seen are due to churches not being aware of their new responsibilities, while on other occasions immigration officials have wrongly banned people from the country because they haven't understood their own rules.

It was reported in 2009 that the Christian singer, Don Francisco, was refused entry into the UK because immigration officials did not believe he was going to give a free performance. www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/immigration.rules.throw.churches.into.confusion.says.evangelical.alliance/23091.htm The new regime has caused problems for some local organisations. The late Dr David Stevens, then Leader of the Corrymeela Community, said that while they had successfully negotiated the 'huge bureaucratic hassle' there remained 'The danger ... that small organisations will not be able to meet the demands of the legislation and therefore won't be able to have international volunteers.'

UK Visas and Immigration published a step-by-step guide for sponsors in December 2013. www.gov.uk/uk-visa-sponsorship-employers

The Home Office has also released the latest version of the *Full Guide for Employers on Preventing Illegal Working in the UK* in October 2013 It outlines the law relating to different categories of migrant workers, the duties of the employer (including sponsorship), the documents required and the civil penalties, including a fine of £10,000 for each person employed illegally. www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-illegal-working-in-the-uk

ID cards for foreign students and others

Critics of high levels of immigration have focussed on visas for foreign students as a loophole in the immigration system because students may overstay their visas or register with bogus educational institutions as a backdoor entry to the UK (see also page 27). On top of registration and sponsorship, it was announced in 2008 that the first compulsory ID cards in the UK since the post-war period would be issued to some foreign nationals. Applicants are photographed and fingerprinted. The details on the card indicate whether a person is entitled to access state benefits and services. (The categories of people requiring ID cards have been extended. The Home Office expects that by 2015, 90% of nationals from outside the European Economic Area will have cards.) Further restrictions followed in 2010. The introduction of ID cards for foreign students caused discomfort in university circles because the measures were seen as discriminatory and university staff were being asked to monitor compliance as if they were part of the UKBA. www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=3698 The University and College Union provided a briefing document for universities and colleges. www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/q/3/PBS_briefing_final_v2.pdf

The introduction of ID cards for all British citizens was scrapped under the Identity Documents Act 2010, but this did not affect the identity

Permission to marry

Immigrants from outside the European Economic Area no longer require a Certificate of Approval from the Secretary of State, before they get married or register a civil partnership. People permanently resident here, and not subject to immigration control, no longer need approval to marry or register a civil partnership, but if one of the parties lives abroad both parties must now be over 21 years of age in order that the non-resident person may enter the country as a spouse or partner of a person who is settled here. There are also language requirements for the foreign partner/spouse. This was partly intended to address the issue of forced marriage (see also page 80). www.gov.uk/marriage-visa

Life in the UK Test

Anyone who wants to become a British citizen or someone from outside Europe who wants to settle permanently in the UK has to either pass the **Life in the UK Test** or take a combined **English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)** course along with citizenship classes. www.lifeintheuktest.gov.uk/ To find out more about the test, or where you can access classes phone the **UK Test Helpline: 0800 0154245**

Migrants in N Ireland face particular difficulties in complying with these requirements due to problems with the availability of appropriate language courses. There are **Life in the UK Test** centres in Belfast and Dungannon.

cards for foreign nationals. They are now described as **Biometric Residence Permits (BRP)**. Employers would be able to check their employees' BRPs online. If your BRP is lost or stolen you must report it immediately or face a fine of up to £1,000. The permits are now issued by specified post offices, including one in Belfast and one in Ballymena. From December 2012 anyone in the UK, from outside the European Economic Area or Switzerland who is granted permission to stay for more than six months, must apply for a BRP.

The Cost of Being a Migrant

Anyone moving to another country has additional costs and these are some of the expense involved when moving to the UK.

Visas

Home Office charges are increasing by an average of 4% from April 2014. Visa fees vary depending on country of origin and duration of stay, but these are some examples, for applications made outside the UK; **£83** for short-term visitors; **£514** to **£1,028** (three years limited leave to remain) for a skilled migrant worker from outside Europe (Tier 2), and **£874** for entrepreneurs or highly skilled migrants. www.gov.uk/government/publications/visa-regulations-revised-table

Application for Indefinite Leave to Remain

Standard application **£1,093** for the main applicant and **£1,093** for all dependents.

Application for Naturalisation/Citizenship

£906 for a single person and **£1,652** for a joint application. www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1277106/VisaRegulations.pdf

Sponsoring a foreign spouse or partner

From July 2012 anyone wishing to sponsor a non-European partner or spouse to enter and settle in the UK is supposed to have a gross income of **£18,600**. A person can make up low income by providing evidence of substantial savings – cash savings above £16,000 can be taken into account. Some exceptions apply. The spouse or partner also has to pass the **Life in the UK Test** and demonstrate their ability in English when they apply to settle here which they can do after five years. www.nicem.org.uk/userFiles/File/IMMIGRATION%20UPDATE%20JULY%202012%20-%20for%20web.pdf For an overview of recent changes in family immigration law see *Frontline 85*, Autumn 2012. www.lawcentreni.org/Publications/Frontline/Frontline85.pdf The Law Centre NI wrote to the First and Deputy First Ministers to highlight the adverse impact in N Ireland of increasing the minimum income threshold because income levels in N Ireland are proportionately lower than in Britain. This is likely to preventing migrants here from bringing their family members to live with them. www.lawcentreni.org/Publications/Policy-Bulletins/Policy-Bulletin-March-2013.pdf

These rules were put on hold when a judge found the new rules to be disproportionate, in July 2013, and urged the Home Secretary to adjust them. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-23198144 Legal proceedings will take some time. www.migrantsrights.org.uk/news/2014/court-appeal-hears-family-migration-appeal

Other costs are in the pipeline. The Health Minister announced that the Government would be introducing an upfront health levy of **£200** per year up to a maximum of **£1000** for people on five-year contracts. <http://welfarenewsservice.com/immigrants-face-1000-healthcare-levy/>

Economists who want to see money moving freely and those who support migrants are concerned at the increasing cost of sending money back to families overseas. (See also pages 17 and 58). The G20 world leaders had hoped that the cost of sending \$200 could have stabilised at 5% but it actually seems to be around 9% on average. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1288990760745/MigrationandDevelopmentBrief21.pdf> Honorary consuls locally have complained about the level of fees for transferring money (see also page 58).

If people wish to appeal against immigration decisions to the **Tribunals Service for Immigration and Asylum** they may be required to pay a fee of **£80** for a paper consideration and **£140** for an oral hearing. www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/tribunals/immigration-and-asylum/lower/online-fees-guidance.pdf

Home Office UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) Public Enquiry Office

Drumkeen House at Galwally in South Belfast opened in July 2009, to provide a range of immigration services including:

- immigration law enforcement
- enrolment of foreign nationals onto the identity card scheme
- asylum claim-handling and decision-making
- sharing of intelligence to help tackle criminality linked to the immigration system
- a reporting centre, for foreign nationals on bail in the community
- a public enquiry office

The office originally housed 60 staff, including representatives from organisations such as the Gangmasters Licensing Authority (see also pages 89–92). There are members of staff with specialist training in human trafficking. Most people who are seeking asylum, and have to report to the authorities, now do so at Drumkeen House.

All the services are available by appointment only
Tel: 028 9019 1005 (This number was only available on Mondays and Wednesdays, as at January 2014, but these hours may be extended.)

The words we use...

Controversies have arisen relating to the employment, pay and conditions of some foreign workers and these issues have introduced some unfamiliar terminology into news reports.

Posted Workers

An EU Directive concerning the free movement of workers in the EU allows companies to employ their own workers when they carry out work in another country. A European Court of Justice ruling interpreted the **Posted Workers Directive (1999)** as meaning that employers are only required to apply the equivalent minimum wage and working conditions that workers would experience in their home country.

Transit Visas

If someone is passing through the UK on the way to another country they may need a 'visitor in transit' visa. In the case of the fishing and shipping or oil industries, transit visas were designed for temporary use to allow workers to join ships that are about to leave UK waters. In fact they are sometimes used on a long-term basis, to avoid the work permit regime for non-EU workers. Such workers have been found in the Co. Down fishing industry, with evidence of exploitation in terms of both pay and conditions (see also page 93).

People Seeking Asylum and Refugees

'On this, World Refugee Day, I ask you to help us help refugees find a place to call home.'

High Commissioner António Guterres, UN High Commissioner for Refugees World Refugee Day 2010 www.unhcr.org/pages/4bf4f2616.html

'... we recognize that it is becoming more and more difficult for people to cross borders to seek a place of refuge. Simply put, their story is often not believed and they are turned back. The coming among us of Jesus, as part of the human family, reminds us that no one is excluded from God's family. Building up this family is our task as individual Christians, as communities and as a country.'

Sr Joan Roddy, then Director of the Bishops' Refugee & Migrant Project, Maynooth, 14 January, 2007 speaking about the World Day of Migrants and Refugees

'A shrinking world and growing global labour market, signs of our economic interdependence, have been a boon for many. But they have also fed anxieties. And when stoked by populist rhetoric, concern about rising migration and national cohesion can easily become intolerance and exclusion. The result, too often, is a rejection of anyone who is different, whether they are looking for opportunity or pleading for protection.'

Statement by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres, World Refugee Day, 20 June 2007 www.unhcr.org/admin/ADMIN/4678dfd34.html

Many people in Northern Ireland have never met a refugee or a person seeking asylum here but they may have misleading impressions caused by newspaper headlines and they do not know where to get answers to basic questions.

Q Who is an asylum seeker?

A A person who is looking for a safe place outside her/his own country. People seek asylum if they fear persecution in their own country because of their ethnicity, nationality, religion, social group or political opinion.

Q What is our obligation to people seeking asylum?

A The UK signed the 1951 UN Convention Relating to Refugees and has agreed to allow people to enter the country to apply for asylum here. They have a legal right to be here while their application is considered. Equally, anyone from this country may seek asylum in any other country that has signed the convention.

Q Who is a refugee?

A Someone who applies for asylum, and is successful in being granted refugee status. 'Refugee' is also sometimes used as a general term for people who have been displaced from their homes through persecution, civil unrest and war.

For more facts about seeking asylum in the UK see the Refugee Council online Q and A. www.unhcr.org.uk/about-us/the-uk-and-asylum.html and www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/policy_research/the_truth_about_asylum/facts_about_asylum_-_page_3

For an insight into coming to N Ireland to seek safety, view the short BBC film about Lume Podrimaj, an Albanian refugee in Belfast. www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone/clips/a-refugee-in-northern-ireland/13250.html

The press has helped to turn the words 'asylum seeker' into a term of abuse and ensured that people think that we have too many refugees. Politicians have also not always been careful with their language. The then House of Commons leader, Jack Straw, was quoted in 2006 as claiming that the problems at the Home Office were less to do with the staff than the people they deal with, 'dysfunctional individuals many of them: criminals, asylum seekers, people who do not wish to be subject to

social control ...'. news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/5017028.stm The needs of vulnerable people become secondary in an emotionally charged climate where politicians compete to appear firmer on controlling numbers of people entering the country and do little to explain the difference between people who are forced to flee and others who have a different set of choices.

So, there have been many restrictive changes in the law. This, rather than the fact that the world is safer, accounts for a steep drop in applications for asylum in the UK. The **UNHCR (United Nation High Commission for Refugees, now known as the United Nations Refugee Agency)** reported in June 2007 that the numbers of refugees in the world had risen for the first time since 2002, yet, at the end of February 2008 the Home Office announced that asylum applications in 2007 were at their lowest level for 14 years, at 23,430.

There are an unprecedented number of refugees in the world today. In its 2012 Global Trends Report the UNHCR reported that there were 45 million refugees and internally displaced people, the highest number for 18 years. www.unhcr.org/id/images/pdf/publications/gtr13final.pdf During 2012 a total of 7.6 million people were newly displaced by war or persecution and the situation has not improved. More than half of refugees worldwide, at that time, were from five countries; Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq, Syria, and Sudan.

On World Refugee Day, 20 June 2013, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees visited Jordan and said

In all the years I have worked on behalf of refugees, this is the most worrying I have ever witnessed. The needs of these people are overwhelming; their anguish is unbearable. Today, there are over 1.6 million registered Syrian refugees. More than one million of them arrived just in the last six months, and thousands more come every day, seeking places to stay, sustenance, someone who will listen and help them heal. www.unhcr.org/51c2f1ba6.html

The situation is not improving. Syria is still in turmoil and there are new conflicts in South Sudan and the Central African Republic. During 2013 the UNHCR stated that, along with its partners, it was addressing the concerns of 2,373,973 refugees who were affected by the consequences of the conflict in Syria alone. They estimated that there would be 3 million Syrian refugees by the end of the year. Most, at that time, were hosted in the region, 868,224 in Lebanon, 576,354 in Jordan, 565,776 in Turkey, 212,918 in Iraq and 132,356 in Egypt. http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/syria.php?_ga=1.214139283.566172997548317000.1241861104

There were only 23,507 applications for asylum in the UK, excluding dependants in 2013, a rise of 1,664 from 2012. www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-october-to-december-2013/immigration-statistics-october-to-december-2013#asylum-1 This is still a marked contrast to 2002 when there were 84,130 applications. The UK figures do not reflect the magnitude of the world situation. Four out of five refugees flee to neighbouring countries as can be seen in the large numbers in countries around Syria, for example (see above). The UNHCR reported that developing countries were hosting over 80% of the world's refugees at the end of 2012, in contrast to 70% ten years earlier. www.unhcr.org/id/images/pdf/publications/gtr13final.pdf At that time Pakistan hosted the

'The UK hosts less than 2% of the world's refugees. Yet an opinion poll in 2002 showed that the public thought the figure to be around 26%. Reporting and commentary about asylum seekers and refugees is often hostile, unbalanced and factually incorrect. Hostile and misleading media coverage fosters and re-enforces public antagonism towards refugees and asylum seekers.'

Refugee Week: The Heritage and Contributions of Refugees to the UK – a Credit to the Nation www.refugeeweek.org.uk/Resources/Refugee%20Week/Documents/HistoryofContributions.pdf

'The global dynamics of asylum are changing. Asylum claims in the industrialized world are much lower than a decade ago while year-on-year levels are up in only a handful of countries ... We need to study the root causes to see if the decline is because of fewer push factors in areas of origin, or tighter migration control in countries of asylum. ... Overall, it's still the developing world that is carrying the lion's share of responsibility for hosting refugees.'

UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres, March 2011 www.unhcr.org/4d8cc18a530.html

'I lost my whole adult life in misery in this country. I was not poor in Iran – I did not come here for your money but I was seeking refuge. I ask those in the Home Office to think, if you were to spend one day in my shoes how would you like to be treated?'

Independent Asylum Commission hearing in Manchester. Published in Fit for Purpose Yet, IAC interim findings, 2008 www.independentasylumcommission.org.uk/ For full testimonies visit www.humanrightstv.com

largest number, 1.6 million people. For an overview of the UK situation set in an international context read the Refugee Council's briefing, September 2013, *The UK's Role in the International Refugee Protection System*. www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0002/9706/Sep_2013_The_UK_s_Role_in_the_international_refugee_protection_system.pdf

(Escape to developed countries is not easy. The UNHCR reckons that more than 15,000 people drowned or went missing in 2011 while trying to cross the Mediterranean to reach Europe and these tragedies have not decreased. www.unhcr.org/4f27e01f9.html Pope Francis visited the tiny island of Lampedusa, south of Italy in July 2013 and condemned the world for its indifference to the plight of the many people who have arrived there by boat. www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-23224010)

It is not easy to be granted refugee status in the UK. In 2012, 16,918 initial decisions were made and 64% of these were refusals: 30% of applicants were granted asylum and 5% were given **Humanitarian Protection (HP)** or **Discretionary Leave** to remain (**DL**) (see pages 38, 40, 75 and 134). During 2012, 27% of appeals were allowed, while 66% were dismissed and 8,764 people who had applied for asylum were removed or departed voluntarily, a 13% decrease from 2011. From April 2011 **Refugee Action** has been assisting the UK Government through their **Choices Assisted Voluntary Return Service**. www.refugee-action.org.uk/ourwork/assistedvoluntaryreturn.aspx Phone Freephone 0808 800 0007 or email choices@refugee-action.org.uk The following programmes are available: **VARRP** (Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme) for asylum applicants and those who have been refused asylum; **AVRFC** (Assisted Voluntary Return for Families and Children); and **AVRIM** (Assisted Voluntary Return for Irregular Migrants) – for visa overstayers and other undocumented/irregular migrants. There were 2,524 assisted voluntary returns (asylum applicants and dependents) from the UK in 2012. www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0002/7887/Asylum_Statistics_May_2013.pdf

The New Asylum Model (NAM) 2007–13

From March 2007 to April 2013 new applicants were processed through the Government's **New Asylum Model (NAM)**. It aimed to ensure that asylum cases were concluded within six months. This was partly achieved by categorising applicants at an initial screening process called Segmentation, where cases were divided into five categories.

Each applicant had a single **Case Owner**, a Home Office official who should be responsible for the interview; making the decision on the application; managing support entitlement; providing documentation; representing the UK Border Agency if there was a legal appeal; and arranging integration into life in the UK, or return to country of origin. Complex cases should have more flexibility in the time-scale, so that people's claims could be properly presented. In general, however, the Refugee Council felt that the timings are too short for proper evidence to be sought. Vulnerable people such as abused women, children, and victims of torture, may find it difficult to disclose sensitive information within the time allowed. Under NAM people had no guarantee that they would see a legal representative before their substantive interview.

Why Do People Apply for Asylum in the UK?

Refugee Council research, *Chance or Choice? Understanding Why Asylum Seekers Come to the UK*, published in January 2010, dispelled a number of myths.

- Over two thirds did not choose to come to the UK.
- Most only discovered they were going to the UK after leaving their country of origin.
- The primary objective for all those interviewed was reaching a place of safety.
- Around three quarters had no knowledge of welfare benefits and support before coming to the UK – most had no expectation they would be given financial support.
- 90% were working in their country of origin and very few were aware they would not be allowed to work when they arrived in the UK.

Speaking on the BBC Radio Ulster documentary, 'Nowhere to Go', broadcast on 16 February 2014, Jo Marley, Director of Bryson Intercultural, said that people who turn up at the Bryson One Stop Service for Asylum Seekers (see page 44) mostly think that they are in London, Dublin or Europe when they first arrive, and have never thought of such a thing as a welfare state.

'I am not Muslim, I am a Sabian Mandaean. You either have to leave Iraq or change your religion. I went with my parents to stay with a Christian friend but this was not safe. While we were staying with our friend, many Christians were killed. My parents considered this to be a very dangerous situation and began planning for me to leave.' (Iraq, male, 25-34)

'The only thing in my mind was to be safe. I didn't make any choice to leave my country.' (Democratic Republic of Congo, male, 35-44)

'I didn't want to come to the UK. I was working. I had a nice house in Zimbabwe and my own business. I was involved with the church. I never had a plan to leave.' (Zimbabwe, female, 35-44)

Interviewees talk about their lack of choice in leaving their home country in *Chance or Choice? Understanding Why Asylum Seekers come to the UK, 2010* www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/5702/rcchance.pdf

Read some stories about why people flee their home countries and seek refuge in the UK on the Red Cross web site. www.redcross.org.uk/What-we-do/Refugee-support/Refugees-true-stories

In the past it was common for the application process to last for several years, but with the introduction of NAM, the Government made strenuous efforts at streamlining and also to remove a greater number of people whose applications failed. By 2009 the Home Office was able to conclude 60% of new asylum cases within six months. Recently, however this trend has reversed and during 2012 there was a 63% increase in people having to wait more than six months for an initial decision. Ironically, current delays may be partly caused by the attempts to clear earlier backlogs. Applications made prior to 2007 are called **Legacy Cases**. The

'I arrived in Belfast by bus. I didn't know where I was.'

Jamilla's story in Conversations Around the Kitchen Table compiled by Stephanie Mitchell, 2012 www.communitydialogue.org/publications

'As border controls have become more sophisticated and more widespread, legal and safe routes to protection in Europe have been cut off. Routes have become more dangerous, more circuitous and more crowded as refugees are driven to more desperate means to reach safety in another country. ... Border controls have become not only a mechanism for preventing entry, but the secondary effects they cause, including the threat of exploitation, physical danger and interception, are now used to communicate a deterrent message ...'

Refugee Council, Remote Controls: How UK Border Controls are Endangering the Lives of Refugees, which describes the increased number of UK border officials (8,000) who worked in other countries in 2008 www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/7043/Remote_Controls.pdf

'We are frequently dismayed by the apparent stance of the Home Office in assuming that our clients are lying to gain asylum. Sometimes they look for inconsistencies as proof of this but we know from our understanding of the nature of trauma that memories can easily become fragmented, particularly when under pressure ... Feelings of shame are prevalent among people who have been tortured, particularly if this involved their sexual organs. Having to air this as part of an asylum claim is very distressing.'

Submission from The Bath Centre for Psychotherapy and Counselling to the Independent Asylum Commission, IAC interim findings, Fit for Purpose Yet

'A Zimbabwean friend, a fluent English speaker, read the transcription of his screening interview on the return journey to Manchester. In five instances, the caseworker had written the exact opposite of what he had said. He challenged the statement, and these errors were corrected.'

Evidence of Cath Maffia to Independent Asylum Commission, published in Fit for Purpose Yet

UKBA created a **Case Resolution Directorate (CRD)** to deal with the backlog of between 400,000–450,000 cases. By March 2011 they said that all had been reviewed and a **Case Assurance and Audit Unit (CAAU)** was set up to manage 23,000 remaining difficult cases. A further 98,000 asylum applicants and 26,000 people with older migration cases could not be found. (Some of these may well have left the country.) A report by the **Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration**, in November 2012, identified continuing difficulties but also some progress and commented that young people were particularly disadvantaged by the delays. Some applicants had been waiting for up to 17 years. <http://icinspector.independent.gov.uk/the-independent-chief-inspector-publishes-a-report-on-the-uk-border-agencys-handling-of-legacy-asylum-and-migration-cases/> Many legacy cases used to be given Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) but from July 2011 it was decided that where removal was inappropriate, only 3 years Discretionary Leave (DL) would be given. This is said to be in line with the fact that new applicants who get positive asylum decisions are now only given 5 years leave to remain in the first instance. At the end of March 2013 there were still around 32,600 outstanding legacy cases. www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmhaff/1717104.htm#a2

Asylum Operating Model

In April 2013 the Government introduced the new **Asylum Operating Model**. Applications are allocated green, red or amber 'decision pathways', based on how long it is likely to take to resolve the cases. Some applicants will be offered their Substantive Interview on the same day as their Screening Interview (see page 44). Not all elements of the new system were brought in straight away, but will become operational in 2014. For more information read the Immigration Law Practitioners' Association information sheet. www.ilpa.org.uk/resources.php/17810/asylum-operating-model-information-sheet

Monitoring the Asylum System

In the years when asylum applications were decreasing, the Home Office **Quality Initiative project** (2004–09) aimed to expedite the process, improve the assessment of cases and get more decisions right at the first stage. The **UNHCR** worked with the Government and felt that despite genuine efforts, improvements were still required. Over the years they stressed the importance of improving the way in which facts are gathered and the need for good research and up-to-date information on the situation in countries of origin. The use of **Country of Origin (COI)** information (see page 46) was criticised because of over-reliance on Home Office information, while additional sources in the public domain are ignored. They noted that the information often failed to take into account human rights violations such as prison conditions, forced labour, and female genital mutilation. They suggested that an independent body should monitor the COI content. Their sixth report for the year 2008–09 continued to recommend improved training especially on 'credibility assessment' and had an emphasis on how children are treated in the asylum system. Following the end of the Quality Initiative project the UNHCR continues to work with the Home Office **Quality Integration** project. Their report in June 2013, *Untold Stories ... Families in the Asylum Process*, found examples of good practice and progress in the treatment of women

in the asylum process. On the other hand, they identified shortcomings, including the lack of opportunities for family members other than the main applicant to give evidence, and inadequate consideration of additional corroborative evidence in 'swap over' cases where formerly dependent family members become applicants in their own right. One of their recommendations was that all family members be interviewed separately. www.unhcr.org.uk/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/aUNHCR_Report_Untold_Stories.pdf The UNHCR reports are available online. www.unhcr.org.uk/what-we-do-in-the-uk/quality-initiative-and-integration.html

The **Independent Asylum Commission (IAC)** was set up by the **Citizen Organising Foundation** and undertook a comprehensive review of the UK asylum system between 2006 and 2008. www.independentasylumcommission.org.uk/ The interim report, published in March 2008, found that 'the UK asylum system is improved and improving, but is not yet fit for purpose. It concluded that the system still denied sanctuary to some who genuinely need it and ought to be entitled to it; was not firm enough in returning those whose claims are refused; and was marred by inhumanity in its treatment of the vulnerable.' www.citizensforsanctuary.org.uk/pages/reports/InterimFindings.pdf

The Commission made over 180 recommendations about how applications were being processed, how people were treated within the system, and what happens if they are refused sanctuary. The IAC's critical findings resulted in a campaign, **Citizens for Sanctuary**, which tried to bring the recommendations about. www.citizensforsanctuary.org.uk/ One of their key aims was to re-establish public confidence in the system. They found that people have extremely negative reactions to the term 'asylum', while the word 'sanctuary' produces very positive responses (see page 107).

Citizens for Sanctuary also produced the **Sanctuary Pledge** which was backed by many religious groups in GB such as the Baptist Union of Great Britain, Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, the Church of England, Evangelical Alliance, Jewish Council for Racial Equality, the Methodist Church, the Muslim Council of Britain and the United Reformed Church.

Other evidence has emerged from staff. A *Guardian* article raised great concern about how cases are assessed. Whistleblower, Louise Perrett, who had worked as a case owner with the UKBA spoke about indifference and rudeness to clients and that anyone who approved an asylum application had a stuffed gorilla put on their desk as a 'badge of shame'. 'Border staff humiliate and trick asylum seekers – whistleblower', *Guardian*, 2 February 2010. www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/feb/02/border-staff-asylum-seekers-whistleblower An internal inquiry found that most of her claims could not be substantiated but recommended changes including reminding staff about the appropriate tests that can be used when assessing claims. www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/aug/08/uk-border-agency-investigation-concerns It was also the *Guardian* that revealed further disturbing news in January 2014, after discovering that Home Office officials were being rewarded by gift vouchers if they were successful in helping to ensure that asylum appeals failed at tribunal. www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/jan/14/home-office-asylum-seekers-gift-vouchers

Citizens for Sanctuary has produced *10 Ways for Citizens to Save Sanctuary*. www.citizensforsanctuary.org.uk/pages/ten%20ways.html This is described as 'a toolkit for action'. This group also initiated the work of the **Independent Asylum Commission**.

The words we use...
The term 'asylum seeker' is often used as a depersonalising term of abuse, associated with the word 'bogus'. EMBRACE uses the phrase, 'person seeking asylum' or 'asylum applicant' instead. Some people in GB have been trying to replace the abused word 'asylum' with the word 'sanctuary', which gets a much more positive reaction from members of the public.

'Providing sanctuary to the stranger has always been a core Christian value and many churches up and down the UK are a place of safety and warmth to some of the most vulnerable people in our society. Refugee Week is an important time to reflect and support these brave individuals.'

Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury supports Refugee Action in asking faith groups to support people who have been forced to flee, in Refugee Week, 2014. They provide a Faith Groups' Pack containing prayers, sermon notes and podcasts. www.refugee-action.org.uk/churches

'It makes me feel desperate not to know where my mother is and that she does not know where I am, that she might be dead. I cry and cry when I think about this ... If I remember I'm always depressed ... If I see police or immigration I am always crazy. It's affecting me. It's always giving me distress.'

An anonymous Nigerian woman, seeking asylum here, quoted in Distant Voices Shaken Lives Shaken Lives; Human Stories of Immigration Detention from Northern Ireland which contains the experiences of immigration detainees.

A House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee report on human rights in 2012 was critical of the removal of refused asylum applicants who might be subject to torture on return to their country of origin. www.migrationni.org/DataEditorUploads/Removal%20of%20Asylum%20Seekers%20House%20of%20Commons%20Report.pdf

The House of Commons Home Affairs Committee also monitors the system. In their Seventh Report on Asylum in October 2013, they were particularly concerned about the time taken to make decisions and stated that

The task of staff examining claims for asylum is to judge fairly, not to make it as difficult as possible for asylum claims to be made. While staff should be rigorous in considering the merits of a case, and reject those which are not meritorious, it is not their role to aim to reject cases, and the culture of disbelief that has raised has no place in fair judgements.

They also highlighted the damage caused by the delayed decisions (see page 40) and confirmed the existence of a 'culture of disbelief' (see above), the use of speculative arguments to undermine credibility, a lack of understanding of human rights law and a tendency to 'apply an inappropriately high burden of proof'. Translation difficulties were identified. There was concern about the Detained Fast Track system (see page 44) where it appears that around a third of cases were wrongly allocated, including victims of torture. Overall there was concern about a lack of consideration for applicants. Regarding the Asylum Operating Model (see page 40), they felt it was too early to judge its effectiveness but acknowledged the fear that damaging decisions may be made too early on the basis of mistaken assumptions, especially as people may be particularly 'distressed, fearful, tired or confused' during their screening interview. Anxiety was also expressed about the sub-standard quality of some asylum accommodation under the sub-contracts awarded to large companies under the framework of **COMPASS** (Commercial and Operational Managers Procuring Asylum Support Services) (see also page 46). www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmhaff/7117104.htm#a2

There was a report by the Audit Office in January 2014, which criticised the performance of some of the providers of asylum accommodation. The providers had said, however, that inadequate information was supplied by the Home Office about the level of demand for the service. www.nao.org.uk/report/compass-contracts-provision-accommodation-asylum-seekers/

How Many People Apply for Asylum Locally?

Regional data is sparse and most of the published UK Border Agency figures do not include Northern Ireland as a separate category and the figures that are available are sometimes inconsistent. (The Law Centre NI has asked the Home Office to make regional data more readily available. www.lawcentreni.org/policy/consultation-responses/684.htm)

Most people who flee to the UK arrive in London or the South-East of England. When the UK adopted the policy of dispersing asylum applicants to other parts of the country, over a decade ago, N Ireland was excluded from the scheme. So, of the people who seek sanctuary in the UK, only a

tiny number apply in N Ireland and this can make them particularly isolated and vulnerable, especially as some will have few people from their own ethnic and cultural backgrounds to help them through the experience.

The Belfast-based **Bryson One Stop Service for Asylum Seekers** which channels support services (see page 44), forwarded 194 support applications, from individuals or people with dependents, to the Home Office in the period from April 2008 to the end of March 2009. The figure for people supported in accommodation at the end of December 2009 was 265 (250 in Belfast, 10 in Lisburn and 5 in Newtownabbey), with 15 people on subsistence only support. www.homeoffice.gov.uk/lrds/pdfs/10/immig409.pdf?version=1 From April 2010 to the end of March 2011 there were 202 main applications (137 male and 65 female) with 91 dependents processed by Bryson. They processed the paperwork for 286 applicants and 84 dependents in the calendar year 2012, figures that are considerably higher than the UKBA figures (see margin). It is possible that not all the preliminary applications proceeded. In 2013 Bryson processed applications from 232 main applicants and 68 dependents.

In 2012–13 the NI Housing Executive received 250 referrals for new households, an increase of 66 from the previous year. At March 2013 they were housing 416 people who were in the asylum system and entitled to accommodation and cash support. This included 110 single people and 105 families, from 26 countries. www.nihe.gov.uk/the_thirteenth_annual_progress_report_to_the_equality_commission_-_august_2013.pdf

In January 2013 most of the family members (270) and 90 of the single people had been in receipt of Section 95 financial support (see page 45). Forty family members and 20 individuals were in receipt of Section 4 hardship support (see pages 47–8). Section 4 is increasingly difficult to get and there are an unknown number of people here with no state support (see also page 132).

(A UKBA breakdown of the statistics, in October 2012, when the total number of supported asylum applicants in Belfast was 375, indicates that five countries of origin made up just under 80% of the total: China (147), Zimbabwe (34), Nigeria (35), Sudan (36) and Somalia (38).)

There are an additional number of young people, unaccompanied minors, who are the responsibility of Social Services.

No figures are available for the number of people living locally who have been granted refugee status.

The Application Process in Northern Ireland

People seeking asylum are expected to submit their application at the 'first available possibility', which is normally deemed to be on arrival at a port or airport. This is not always possible in N Ireland because Immigration Officers are not always stationed at the ports, so it can be difficult to have an application recorded. A late claim may affect the credibility of the application and eligibility to receive asylum support. In May 2007 the **Bryson One Stop Service for Asylum Seekers** took over from the **NI Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM)** as the group sub-contracted to facilitate advice and emergency assistance for asylum applicants who are over 18. Children and young adults are the responsibility of the appropriate **Health and Social Care Trust**.

Top countries of origin of main asylum applicants in N Ireland in 2012:

48 Somalia
30 China
13 Sudan
9 Zimbabwe
8 Syria
6 Iran
5 Nigeria
4 India
3 Kuwait
2 Palestine
2 Sri Lanka

There were single applications from Algeria, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, and two were stateless, making up a total of 140, up 25 applications from 2011.

Source: UK Border Agency www.migrationni.org/demographic-trends

Advice for People Applying for Asylum

For advice and support services for people seeking asylum, people should be advised to contact:

Bryson One Stop Service for Asylum Seekers

Bryson House

28 Bedford Street

Belfast BT2 7FE

Tel: (028) 9043 9226

E-mail: info@brysononestopservice.com

www.brysongroup.org/index.php?option=com_alphacontent§ion=1&cat=1&task=view&id=139&Itemid=72

The Home Office has allocated the **Consolidated Advice and Guidance Service Contract (CAGS)** to provide advice services to people seeking asylum in the UK, from April 2014, to **Migrant Help**, a charity based in England. Migrant Help has reallocated the delivery of this service to Bryson Intercultural who currently provide this support. The **Bryson One Stop Service for Asylum Seekers** will complete and process all the necessary documentation to the Home Office and offer advice on services within N Ireland. The Bryson Service forwards applications to the Home Office at **Drumkeen House**, in South Belfast (see page 35). During the term of the new contract it is planned to introduce online submission of all completed applications.

There is online Home Office guidance on applicants' rights and responsibilities www.gov.uk/government/publications/asylum-applicants-rights-and-responsibilities/asylum-applicants-rights-and-responsibilities and an information leaflet about the application process in 15 languages. www.gov.uk/government/publications/information-leaflet-for-asylum-applications

A **Case Worker** from Drumkeen House will invite the applicant to a **Screening Interview** to establish their identity and nationality, and check if another country should be considering their case. This process includes fingerprinting as a check of identity against an international database. Applicants should be told about their rights and responsibilities. They are then issued with an identity number. Under a process, known informally as **Fast Track**, some people, from countries thought to be 'safe', are immediately detained and transferred to GB while their cases are considered (see also page 42). This is referred to as **Detained Fast Track**. If it is thought that the case could not be argued successfully, the person may be removed swiftly from the country or they may be sent to parts of GB under Home Office dispersal arrangements. People from countries that are presumed to be safe have no right of appeal in this country. They can appeal when they arrive home. These are known as **Non-Suspensive Appeals (NSA)**.

People are supposed to apply for asylum in the first safe country they come to (the Dublin Regulation see also page 173). It is not unusual for people to try to apply for asylum in N Ireland but be returned to the Republic of Ireland if they had been there previously. In a landmark decision in August 2013, however, the Belfast High Court ruled that a Sudanese family should

not be returned to Dublin because there was a risk that they would be returned to Sudan which the UK regards as unsafe for non-Arab Darfuris. The family also cited the deficiencies in the asylum system in the Republic of Ireland. Law Centre NI director, Les Allamby said 'The sooner the Irish government signs up to and meets the European Council directive on minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers the better'. www.lawcentreni.org/news/recent-news/11-news/1030-law-centre-welcomes-judgement-preventing-return-of-sudanese-family-from-belfast-to-dublin.html

If people seeking asylum cannot support themselves the **National Asylum Support Service (NASS)** can provide accommodation and cash support, which used to be 70% of Income Support but has not kept pace with benefits increases. www.gov.uk/asylum-support/what-youll-get

The weekly allowances (known as **Section 95 Support**) at February 2014 were as follows:

A couple	£72.52
A lone parent	£43.94
A single person aged 18, or over	£36.62
A young person at least 16, but under 18	£39.80
A person under 16	£52.96

On top of these allowances there are additional payments: £3 per week for a pregnant woman and children between the age of one and three, for the purchase of healthy food; and £5 per week for a child under 1 year. The UK charity **Refugee Action** continues to campaign for the reinstatement of asylum support at the equivalent of 70% of Income Support, arguing that the inability to afford transport or telephone leaves people socially isolated and poverty contributes to poor mental and physical health. www.refugee-action.org.uk/assets/000016676/Refugee_Actions_response_to_the_HASC_inquiry_on_asylum_April_2013.pdf

Most asylum applicants in N Ireland live in the community while they are waiting to have their claims assessed, but they may be detained at any time. The majority are not allowed to undertake paid employment. If the applicant has had to wait for more than 12 months for an initial asylum decision s/he is entitled to apply for permission to work, but this is difficult as they are only allowed to take up a job which is included on the list of 'shortage occupations' (see page 32) and cannot work as self-employed. Throughout the application process people may be asked to report to the immigration officials at Drumkeen House (see page 35). At any time during the application process people can ask for help to return to their home country voluntarily. Assisted voluntary returns are organised by the GB charity **Refugee Action Choices Programme** (see page 38) and administered locally by **Bryson Intercultural**. www.refugee-action.org.uk/about/what_we_do/432_helping_people_return_with_dignity

(Bryson Intercultural works with people from many countries to promote integration and good relations with local communities. They access funds to pay for language classes and translators for people seeking asylum, refugees and vulnerable families. They also challenge racism, help incomers with information and offer volunteering opportunities for their clients and for local people. If you want to volunteer with Bryson Intercultural, telephone **(028) 9024 4639**.)

Accommodation for people seeking asylum

The Government contracts out the provision of accommodation (see also page 42). The Home Office **Compass** project (see page 42) is responsible for contracting out the provision of accommodation, transport and related services. In April 2012 the contracts for housing UK asylum applicants were awarded to the international companies **Serco** and **G4S** for five years in the first instance. (Serco was already running some Immigration Removal Centres (see page 66).) Serco's contract includes the Scottish Home Office region, of which N Ireland is a part for contractual and immigration law purposes, and they have sub-contracted the accommodation work to **Orchard-Shipman** property management services, who facilitate the emergency accommodation when people first arrive. Follow-on accommodation in N Ireland is still organised through the **NI Housing Executive (NIHE)** and is sourced from private landlords and housing associations. NIHE has an induction pack for people in the asylum system, *Housing for Refugees in Belfast*.

Each new application is allocated a **Case Owner** who is responsible for interviewing and assessing the application and making arrangements for either integration or removal. At the first meeting people should be told how to get a solicitor to help them and asked if they need an interpreter. Applicants complete a **Statement of Evidence Form (SEF)** in English.

At the **Asylum Interview/Substantive Interview** people need to explain why they fear returning to their own country and to provide what proof they can, including medical reports, if they are available. It is now a criminal offence to lie to an immigration officer and if the answers to questions are not accurate and comprehensive it may harm the credibility of the applicant. This can be difficult if people are traumatised by what they have seen or experienced.

The case officer must **Assess the Claim** and make an **Initial Decision**, by looking at the consistency of the evidence and relating this to background information on the country of origin, supplied by the Home Office **Country of Origin Information Service (COI Service)**. The claim may be allowed under the **1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees**, or on human rights grounds under the **European Convention on Human Rights**, or the **European Union Qualification Directive** relating to the qualifications required for international protection.

Changes in asylum legislation have tended to be increasingly restrictive. Since 2005, new applicants who are successful in gaining **Refugee Status** are only granted permission to stay in the UK for 5 years. This is called **Limited Leave to Remain (LLR)**. They have rights to family reunion, access to benefits and the right to work at this stage. After 5 years they can apply for **Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR)**. At this stage they will be subject to **Active Review** and could be asked to leave if, for example, conditions have changed in their country of origin, or they are found to have deceived the authorities at an earlier date. www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/asylum/outcomes/successfulapplications/activereview/ It remains to be seen if this will be rigorously enforced. The Refugee Council has found that limited leave has had a stressful impact on refugees making it more difficult for them to get jobs, buy houses or commit to long-term study. www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/latest/news/606_limited_leave_creates_barriers_for_those_wanting_to_rebuild_their_lives

'When you're watching your village burn to the ground, getting proof isn't the first thing on your mind.'

'Being raped didn't hurt as much as being told it never happened.'

Medical Justice Network booklet, 2007 www.medicaljustice.org.uk/images/documents/medical-justice-booklet-july-2007.pdf Read about more medical concerns within the UK asylum system: www.medicaljustice.org.uk/

The new Immigration Bill, 2013 (see also pages 29–30) is causing concern. In its evidence to the House of Commons Public Bill Committee the charity **Asylum Aid** claimed that 'The government is tightening restrictions for asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants while removing access to justice from those who most need it.' Its gravest concerns are around the limitation of appeal rights, exacerbated by the proposed cuts in Legal Aid. www.asylumaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Asylum-Aid-Immigration-Bill-Scrutiny-Committee.pdf

Most unsuccessful applicants have a right of appeal to a tribunal before an immigration judge. This takes place in a court setting in N Ireland. Applicants who fail at the **First Tier Appeal** stage may seek permission to appeal the immigration judge's decision, if the earlier decision was wrong in law, and the error would have made a difference. Where the appeal is unsuccessful, and the application for permission to appeal has been refused, applicants can seek the **Upper Tribunal's** permission to appeal the first-tier immigration judge's decision. Usually a person cannot be deported if they have an outstanding legal matter, although there are exceptions to this rule. Previously, some people who could not demonstrate that they fulfilled the criteria under the Refugee Convention, but who needed protection, could be given **Exceptional Leave to Remain**. This has been replaced by the more restrictive categories of **Humanitarian Protection** or **Discretionary Leave**, both of which are rarely given.

When applications fail, people are expected to leave, and if they do not, they may be taken into detention (see pages 66–73) prior to **Forced Removal**. People who are willing to risk going home have the option of **Voluntary Assisted Return**. From April 2011 **Refugee Action** has had the contract for the **Choices Assisted Voluntary Return Service** for people who feel that they have no alternative but to return home. Once home, they can be assisted further by grants, help for small business start-ups, vocational training and further education. In Belfast the scheme is administered locally by **Bryson Intercultural** (see also page 45). (The address is the same as the Bryson One Stop Service (see page 44) and the phone number is **9024 4639**.) People need to be made aware that an application for voluntary return will result in their asylum application being withdrawn and may result in a re-entry ban to the UK for up to five years. For further information see www.refugee-action.org.uk/about/what_we_do/432_helping_people_return_with_dignity

Some people who are seeking asylum cannot be removed because they are too ill, because they could not make the journey safely, or because their own country will not allow them to return. In these cases, if they are co-operating with the authorities, and meet the destitution criteria, they may receive **Hardship Support**, commonly known as **Section 4 Support**, which can include emergency accommodation and a contribution towards their food and other purchases, through pre-paid cards that can only be used in a limited number of shops. The cards allow £35 of purchases per person per week. There is information about the conditions for receiving this support on the Refugee Council web site. www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/5899/1011_Azure_card_briefing.pdf People often experience difficulty proving that they are destitute enough

Show Racism the Red Card produces resources addressing issues and attitudes about refugees and people seeking asylum with contributions from top footballers. www.theredcard.org/resources

'It was horrible. Sometimes I wanted to kill myself. Just walked around, went to the park or mosque to pray. Slept there sometimes. All day visit friends. Watch TV if they're in a good mood. If not go into town and try to forget. Clear my mind.'

A destitute failed asylum applicant quoted in Not Gone but Forgotten

Peace and Development Issues

Remember that international conflict, trade and justice issues, and climate change interact directly with migration and refugee issues. Campaigning around these issues and support for development organisations will help to prevent the misery of people having to flee from their homes or move because of extreme poverty.

to receive support. For more information about this, and the hardship experienced see pages 47–8 and 130–5.

The Refugee Council has produced an online *Brief Guide to Asylum*, February 2013. www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/000215610/Asylum_Briefing_2013.pdf

A very small number of refugees, up to 750 per year, can be brought to the UK under the **Gateway Protection Programme**, run jointly with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). These people from very troubled areas of the world apply in camps abroad and are interviewed there by British immigration officials. The successful applicants are then brought to the UK, with the agreement of local authorities that are prepared to participate in their integration. No such refugees have been settled locally to date, but a number of Vietnamese refugees came to Craigavon around 1980 under similar arrangements. The UNHCR has begged industrialised countries to resettle 30,000 of the most vulnerable of the large number of Syrian refugees, presently living in neighbouring countries (see page 37). www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/13/syrian-refugee-catastrophe-european-union-united-nations (Just 625 asylum applications from Syria were successful in the UK in 2012.) On 22 January David Cameron said that the UK would take some vulnerable Syrian refugees, but not through the UNHCR quota scheme. www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/10589608/Britain-may-take-Syrian-refugees.html

A Refugee Integration and Employment Service (RIES) used to be available for some people over the age of 18 whose applications were successful. As a consequence of cuts in Home Office funding, this service ended in September 2011. In December 2011 the refugee support groups in GB expressed concern about this and other severe cuts in advice and support funding and the presumption that volunteers could be relied upon to take over already overstretched services.

When people are granted refugee status they have to move out of their accommodation and claim benefits or find work, and this can be an additional period of adjustment and stress, especially if they do not get timely advice. (See also the Refugee and Asylum Forum pages 50 and 53.) In a positive development, the Belfast City Council is funding the Law Centre to develop a **Move On Guide** for asylum applicants who have just received a positive decision, explaining to them how to negotiate the next stage including how to access jobs advice, open a bank account, apply for benefits, find accommodation and arrange for their family to join them (see also page 49).

The refugee-led **NI Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (NICRAS)** offers an advice service and supports the integration of those who receive leave to remain (see pages 53–4). The **Red Cross** also gives practical assistance and has published *Welcome to Belfast; An Information Guide for Refugees and Asylum Seekers* booklet in English and Arabic.

The **NI Housing Executive** works closely with the Refugee and Asylum Forum to improve the housing support and other services offered to people granted leave to remain and leaving Home Office supported accommodation. Following research with users, in February 2014 the Housing Executive through Supporting People, allocated additional funding to the **Extern** organisation for the enhancement of the **Multi-Disciplinary Homeless Support Team Floating Support**

Service. This is specifically to meet the needs of vulnerable former asylum applicants who have been granted leave to remain in Northern Ireland. The Floating Support Service plays an important role in the often difficult transitional process for those individuals given 28 days to leave Home Office supported housing (see page 44), and for up to two years afterwards, if needed, to support independent living. The service will recruit an additional two staff (or full time equivalent) in 2014 to support this service.

People with refugee status are entitled to be joined by their close family members (**Family Reunion**) but it can be a lengthy and difficult process to get people out of countries of origin or refugee camps elsewhere. People coming from war zones such as Somalia, often lack official documents such as birth certificates and passports. The **Red Cross** has made its concerns known about the complexity of the forms and the process, and about the withdrawal of legal aid from family reunion cases. (See the Home Affairs Committee, Seventh Report – Asylum: www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmhaff/7117104.htm#a2) The Red Cross in Belfast can help to trace family members and also process applications for travel assistance and assisted two families with six dependents in 2012. These cases took about six weeks to process. In 2013 there were 6 cases with 14 family members arriving. The Red Cross can handle the forms quickly but when they are forwarded to the host country they have no control over how long the process will take. Anyone interested must have refugee status and a visa for travel for their family members and they should contact Neil McKittrick at the Red Cross, (028) 9073 5350 for assistance. Many families have been financing family reunion themselves, often incurring large debts.

The Red Cross migration service in Belfast also has volunteering opportunities, assisting in tracing relatives, and in helping new asylum applicants to adjust to life here, for contact details see above. People can also help with the work of providing practical assistance such as clothes and other necessities for people who are seeking sanctuary.

Problems for People Seeking Asylum

A successful six-week dialogue programme for members of NICRAS brought out many of the issues which asylum applicants find challenging. Many of those who took part were originally from African countries. One of the **Community Dialogue** facilitators, Seamus Farrell said 'It was like pushing an open door.' The Community Dialogue web site stated: 'The process met the participants' desperate need just to be listened to – with respect and with no agenda. For those for whom belonging is at the root of personal identity, this being with others and sharing in safety and mutual respect was huge.' These are some of the issues that emerged.

- Anxiety and a sense of isolation among many of the participants
- Separation from families and concern about loved ones living far away
- Lack of a common language with those sharing the same hostel which potentially creates a climate of suspicion and mutual distrust
- Difficulty in accessing medical services

'Human beings are social animals. They depend on others. Their family, or extended family, is the group on which many people most heavily depend, socially, emotionally and often financially. There comes a point at which, for some, prolonged and unavoidable separation from this group seriously inhibits their ability to live full and fulfilling lives.'

Lord Bingham quoted on the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns web site, April 2007 www.ncadc.org.uk/

' "Because you're not allowed to work, you always think about what is going to happen in your case." ... Halima found fulfilling work by volunteering at GP surgeries, in hospitals and various community organisations where her language skills, interpreting for fellow nationals, were in demand.'

Conversations Around the Kitchen Table

'I can't stay in England – nothing to do, morning till night, just sleeping, going to the park, sometimes make people crazy.'

Anonymous failed asylum applicant speaking on Nick Broomfield's film on destitution, Still Human Still Here www.amnesty.org.uk/content.asp?CategoryID=10398

'I was persecuted in my country for my journalism and it was not safe for me there. But claiming asylum in the UK was like jumping out of the frying pan and into the fire.'

Fit for Purpose Yet?, Independent Asylum Commission interim findings, 2008 www.independentasylumcommission.org.uk

'...please, I need an answer; I have been waiting too long.'

A message to UKBA from Hanad, who has been waiting three years for a decision, in Conversations Around the Kitchen Table

- Coming to Belfast from a different culture where cultural norms are different e.g. in various countries in Africa it is very normal to greet a stranger and make that person feel welcome which is not always the reality here.
- Fear of detention/deportation – 'who will be next?'
- Anxiety about the outcome of their asylum claims
- Inactivity – not allowed to work, time hangs heavily, compounding anxiety (see also page 137)
- Poverty – those seeking asylum live on £5 per day ... to cover food, clothing, transport etc

In 2012 Community Dialogue published a collection of personal histories reflecting the experiences, emotions, hopes and fears of people seeking asylum locally. Partnership between NICRAS (see pages 53–4), Community Dialogue and City Church, Belfast allowed the conversations to take place and Stephanie Mitchell has recorded these rarely heard voices in *Conversations Around the Kitchen Table*. www.communitydialogue.org/content/conversations-around-kitchen-table-stories-asylum-seekers-northern-ireland

The problems do not stop when people's applications are successful. Members of the Refugee and Asylum Forum (see page 53) have identified the following problems for people who have been granted leave to remain;

- Letters issued from the Home Office not being understood/received
- Mistakes made by solicitors
- Lack of joined up working among key agencies
- Lack of a specific refugee case worker
- Delays in issuing the biometric residence permit (see pages 33–4)
- The requirement to produce documentary evidence of leave to remain to access other services

Accessing jobs or benefits can be difficult. Bank accounts may be required for receipt of benefits but some banks do not accept the Biometric Residence Permit (see pages 33–4) for identity purposes. (The Law Centre has been lobbying to ensure that refugees do not lose their supported Home Office accommodation until their cards are available, in order to avoid cases of destitution.) Finding the deposit for accommodation is hard. (See also page 53.) If people get Housing Executive accommodation it is often far from where they have been living and children are uprooted from their schools. Some may be allocated accommodation, only to find that there are no school places in the area. The enforced idleness during the application process does not help new refugees when they come to try to find employment.

We have seen professionals who have been de-skilled because they were not allowed to work for eight years. We have seen women stuck in abusive marriages, unable to leave their husbands because they were the principal applicants ... We have seen victims of torture whose mental health has further deteriorated through years of uncertainty while waiting for the outcome of their claim. We have seen families torn apart and those left behind suffering yet more as they are unable to join their loved ones who have no family reunion rights for the

years that they are stuck in the asylum application system.

Information from the Migrant and Refugee Community Forum given to the Parliamentary Home Affairs Committee, Seventh Report – Asylum, October 2013

It can also be very difficult to get information from their home countries about their previous work record. Young refugees, too old to go to school, but with poor English and little or no previous education, can find it hard to find either work or appropriate training.

When a person arrives here as a refugee, and we want to rent a private (house) they want a guarantor and I'm new here and I can't fulfil this and this is a big problem.

Interviewee in The Horn of Africa In Belfast: A Needs Assessment by Orna Young, 2012 www.conflictresearch.org.uk/Resources/Documents/HAPANIapril12.pdf

Refugee Support and Community Integration

...when people flee persecution, the flight to safety is only the first part of their journey. The second stage - rebuilding life in a strange land – is equally important. Sometimes settling here can be as hard or harder than the original flight from tyranny. Integration is not about 'fitting in', or about refugees becoming 'more like us'. It is, rather, about equality and inclusion, and ensuring that refugees have equal chances to live full, safe and productive lives.

Donna Covey, Refugee Council
Integration: Building a Life in the UK
(Refugee Council Conference Report) London, 2009
www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/training_conferences/conferences/191_2009_conference_-_integration_building_a_life_in_uk

These are some of the things that refugees in Birmingham felt were most important for them as they settle in. Some are very practical:

Having a job
Speaking English
Going to school or university
Having accommodation and money
Having a national insurance number
Health care
Obeying laws

Others are about belonging, acceptance and equality:

Mixing with local people
Speaking English
Feeling accepted
Feeling safe
Staying in the same place
Knowing how to do things
Having the same opportunities as British people
Having the same status as British people
Being the same as British people

'To be a refugee in Northern Ireland is not easy, it's difficult. You have to go through procedures – stressful – especially when you have children.

But now I'm through it I'm glad. I'm enjoying being a part of everything.'

Marie Clautide Makougang, who was a chef in the Cameroon and is now the proprietor of a hairdressing business here. From Refugee, a 2012 NICRAS Refugee week publication

" 'Tamar', whose 6 year-old child has cerebral palsy and is unable to walk, see or speak is frightened that 'if we were deported back to our home country, my daughter will be killed because people in my tribal group view my daughter and her illness as a curse.'"

Joan McGovern, Wat Ho Meas and Mary Anne Webb, Supporting Refugee and Asylum Seeking Families Living in Northern Ireland, 2011 www.barnardos.org.uk/8886_-_tuar_ceatha.pdf

Living a 'normal' life

Being listened to

Refugee Experiences of Integration, by Gaby Atfield, Kavita Brahmabhatt and Therese O'Toole, (Refugee Council and Birmingham University) 2007
www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/7066/Integration_research_report

Following consultation in 2009, a needs analysis was compiled in Belfast for the **Inclusive Neighbourhood Project** (see page 54), concerning integration between the refugee and host community. The refugee interviewees expressed less reluctance about integration and a smaller range of needs. These included a sense of security through gaining the right to remain here, language support and local information. They also showed concern about their personal safety, racism, hostility and the constant questioning of local people.

Interviewees from within the host community had anxieties about sharing resources and the perceived reluctance of refugees to integrate, a desire that refugees should understand local history and culture, and obey the rules. There was no stark contrast, however, with both groups agreeing that integration meant 'sharing in community life' and each group showed a desire and willingness to meet the other group.

In June 2011 **Barnardo's Tuar Ceatha Black, Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BMER) Project**, produced a report, *Supporting Refugee and Asylum Seeking Families Living in Northern Ireland*, outlining the main difficulties facing the children and families that they support. www.barnardos.org.uk/8886_-_tuar_ceatha.pdf The families, randomly selected for study, included some where children had disabilities. Of the 11 families, eight were waiting for a decision on their claim for asylum and the average waiting time across the families was four years. One family had been waiting for seven years. The report states

Some of the organisations interviewed provide summer activities, day-trips and other events when funding is available. This is very much welcomed by families ... Parents talked positively about the Black, Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BMER) service provided by Barnardo's Tuar Ceatha to help with the integration process, including help with identifying early developmental delays and fast track access to diagnostic services, bilingual staff support in accessing direct medical and other specialist services, culturally specific parenting programmes, and information on accessing benefits and accommodation.

The report recommended that specially trained case officers should deal with the applications for asylum of families with children.

An evaluation report of Barnardo's Tuar Ceatha services also pointed out how

... concern over legal status may precede concerns over welfare and protection. Although asylum seeking and ethnic minority families often have relatively high levels of need, they tend to have a very low level of service use.

Tuar Ceatha Services Believe in Children Barnardo's Northern Ireland Evaluation Report by Dr Benny McDaniel and Dr Hannah-Jane Braiden, 2012
www.barnardos.org.uk/9188_tuar_ceatha_evaluation_final.pdf

Tuar Ceatha (rainbow in Irish) continues to give valuable support to families and also runs a number of weekly support groups. The service worked with 480 people, including adults and children in 2013–14 and 40% of those were seeking asylum or refugees. One support worker was involved solely with families from mainland China, and there were 84 adults and children in 2013. 97% of these were seeking asylum. (See page 43 margin for statistics on the nationalities of people seeking asylum here.)

Refugee and Asylum Forum

Groups such as the NI Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (NICRAS) and the Inclusive Neighbourhood Project (see page 54) and Barnardo's have worked to further refugee integration here, and there is a lot of good will in other agencies. There is, however, no properly integrated approach to supporting people who are seeking asylum and especially those whose world changes dramatically when they are given leave to remain. They then acquire much the same rights as local people but the sudden loss of NASS support and accommodation (see page 50) and the transition into new accommodation and either work or benefits can be very difficult. Since December 2011 EMBRACE has been involved with other groups who provide practical support in coming together as an informal **Refugee and Asylum Forum** to identify gaps in provision, network, and support each other in sharing good practice. (See also page 55 concerning the need for a Refugee Strategy here.)

Refugee-led support

The **NI Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (NICRAS)** is the only local refugee-led support organisation. This community group for refugees and people seeking asylum aims to support the integration process by raising awareness, advising people who are seeking asylum, or have received leave to remain, and organising social and fundraising events. In early 2014 the group had over 300 members from around 30 countries, the largest numbers being 96 from Somalia, 75 Sudan, 31 Zimbabwe, 18 Nigeria, and 6 each from Eritrea, Ethiopia and Kuwait. Most of the other countries are represented by one or two people.

NICRAS has two main areas of work: an Advice & Support Service, which includes advice on welfare benefits, accommodation and accessing funding for education and welfare needs and an Activities, Events and Training programme (including youth provision) to assist with integration. NICRAS also has the assistance of a barrister. The volunteering programme has two aspects. People applying for asylum here are usually not allowed to undertake paid work and so doing useful work in the community is important. At the moment this includes work in charity shops, with Common Grounds café, short-term volunteering with the Corrymeela Community in Ballycastle and volunteering with NICRAS itself. A NICRAS team has also been volunteering at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, on activities such as cleaning and repainting, decoration, photocopying, and as guides for visitors.

Local people who support the aims of NICRAS can also volunteer in a number of ways, such as assisting with English and IT classes, translation and interpreting, doing research for information packs, administration and office work, helping at social events, advocacy, updating the web site and

'I like people here. They like to help me ... I want to say thank you to all the people of Belfast.'

Jamilla's story in Conversations Around the Kitchen Table

City of Sanctuary

Belfast, the Coleraine area and Derry~Londonderry have all set up City of Sanctuary working groups. Rev. Dr Inderjit Bhogal (recently Leader of the Corrymeela Community) initiated the City of Sanctuary movement in the north of England. It aims to create a network of towns and cities that are proud to be places of safety for people escaping war and persecution by encouraging good neighbourliness, hospitality, eradicating hatred and making everyone feel safe. www.cityofsanctuary.com/

The City of Sanctuary Handbook, *Becoming a City of Sanctuary: a Practical Handbook for Inspiring Examples*, by Craig Barnett and Inderjit Bhogal is available on the internet. www.cityofsanctuary.org/resources/handbook

'... it is a project that is definitely going to build a unity between the host community groups and the ethnic minority groups as refugees or asylum seekers ...' Teurayi Rugoyne, INP Community Facilitator www.inclusive-neighbourhood.org/index.html

'I have learned about the day-to-day realities refugees face. I am now more compassionate towards them.' INP Community Training Participant, quoted in Inclusive Neighbourhood Project March 2009–September 2011: An Evaluation Report by Nora Greer

'I have learned that it is really very important to know how to live together.'

Reaction to INP Real Lives, Real People dialogue quoted in Inclusive Neighbourhood Project March 2009–September 2011: An Evaluation Report

In March 2009 the Refugee Council held a conference, 'Integration: Building a Life in the UK.' The conference reports and recommendations to the UKBA are available online. www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/training_conferences/conferences/191_2009_conference_-_integration_building_a_life_in_uk

assisting asylum applicants in accessing funding for education and welfare needs. NICRAS also welcomes donations of money, clothing, toiletries etc. – but they have very little storage space so it is important to contact them to check on current needs. www.nicras.btck.co.uk/SupportUs

The current chair of NICRAS, Justin Kouame from Côte D'Ivoire, who is claiming asylum here, is one of two people from N Ireland to win the Community Foundation's Stephen Pittam Social Justice Award for 'outstanding work in lobbying and advocacy for little-known but vital causes', in 2014, because of his voluntary work on behalf of the refugee community. www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/northern-ireland/he-fled-here-from-the-ivory-coast-now-justin-kouame-is-helping-other-refugees-to-build-a-new-life-in-northern-ireland-29743000.html

NICRAS: The Northern Ireland Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

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Corrymeela/NICRAS Refugee and Inclusive Neighbourhood Project (INP) 2009–2011

The INP project ran between 2009 and 2011 to encourage positive relationships between the local community or host community and the small but growing numbers of refugees here. It developed mutual understanding and common action between the host and refugee community, through formal and informal training, and worked equally with both local people and refugees. It promoted ways of dealing with difference that reduce the likelihood of friction and increase the potential for integration and was active in three areas where refugees and people seeking sanctuary are living in West, East and South Belfast. Local people and refugees were trained to deliver training and facilitate social activities. At the beginning of the INP Project Officer Ann Marie White said that the INP was 'based on developing understanding and building lasting relationships between people from the host and refugee community' ... 'to explore misunderstandings and create a safe place for talking, learning and laughter with both the refugee and host community'.

Following the end of the project Ann Marie White moved on to work in the **Creating Cohesive Community** project in South Belfast, a partnership between the **Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group (LORAG)** and the **South Belfast Roundtable (SBTR)** which aims to promote cohesion and confidence in local people and incomers, including members of the asylum and refugee community, many of whom live in that area (see also pages 103–4).

A refugee integration strategy for Northern Ireland

Over a decade ago a Democratic Dialogue study stressed that, in spite of immigration and asylum being reserved matters, the responsibility of Westminster, there was the need for focussed coordination locally.

A multi-agency approach is more than just a matter of getting a good range of agencies around a table. It requires a multiagency planning and resource allocation process. It is one thing to meet as a multiagency grouping to run a project, quite another to try to align your corporate planning and resource allocation processes with those of a range of other agencies.

No welcome here? Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Ireland and Britain, edited by Colin Harvey and Margaret Ward, 2001 <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/ddlreport/4/ddreport/4.pdf>

Around the same time, one of the first actions of the Refugee Action Group was to commission research about the local situation, in order to provide an assessment of the needs of refugees and people seeking asylum in N Ireland. In his recommendations, researcher Robbie McVeigh stated that there should be co-operation with both the Dublin Government and the UK Home Office in developing policy and that locally

... the OFMDFM [Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister] has to take its responsibility as the lead agency in the equality and human rights agendas and assume responsibility for coordinating the government's strategic policy response to the needs of all asylum seekers and refugees in Northern Ireland.

Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Northern Ireland; A Place of Refuge? by Robbie McVeigh www.mcrc-ni.org/PDFs/APOR.pdf

Since then, there has been a continued concern about the lack of co-ordination in the reception of people who seek asylum here, especially when they receive a positive decision on their case. Much of the burden of supporting people in the integration process has fallen upon charities and voluntary groups.

On the BBC Radio Ulster documentary, 'Nowhere to Go', broadcast on 16 February 2014, Professor Colin Harvey, Professor of Human Rights Law at Queen's University Belfast went further and suggested that urgent consideration be given to a separate immigration and asylum policy for N Ireland. He said that

The policy in the UK over the last decade or more has been dominated by the principals of deterrence, deflection and restriction.

Do we want to be a more welcoming place to those coming to Northern Ireland to seek refuge, to seek sanctuary, to seek a safe place here? We know ourselves the experience of conflict here in Northern Ireland.

Do we still want to continue to be led by a narrow Westminster dominated approach to this issue or do we want to begin to promote a broader conversation to make Northern Ireland a more welcoming place to those who come to seek refuge here?

www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-26212043

'... As we move beyond stereotypes and develop services which reflect the issues facing asylum seekers we need to recognise the experiences and difficulties they face in escaping conflict or oppression, of broken families and community ties and trying to build a new life in a foreign and strange society. We need services that are driven by compassion and understanding,' he [OFMDFM Junior Minister Gerry Kelly] said.

While recognising immigration is the responsibility of the Home Office, Junior Minister Jeffrey Donaldson said that the devolved administration had a role to play in ensuring that all in our society are treated with respect, fairness and dignity.'

The Belfast launch of the Independent Asylum Commission's investigation (see page 41), July 2008 www.4ni.co.uk/northern_ireland_news.asp?id=79422

'I came to the UK seven years ago as a young refugee from Rwanda. As the years passed, I came to think of the UK as home, people in my local community as friends. I felt confident enough to think that I was no longer a refugee but a citizen of a country that needed my skills and would welcome my contributions. My goal is to share what I have learnt from my experiences to empower those that are still in need.'

Marie Lyse quoted in the Independent Asylum Commission's first report, *Saving Sanctuary*, 2008

'I arrived in Belfast at the end of October [1947] and spent the first two years learning to understand that strange place, its language, customs and people. ... Yet in spite of being safe and feeling secure, I was tormented by a recurring nightmare, from which I always awoke screaming in terror. It stopped, never to return again, after the birth of our first child, Michael, in 1949. Robin's arrival five years later marked the end of transition and the beginning of my integration. From then on I was home.'

The eminent teacher, choreographer and pioneer of modern dance, Auschwitz survivor and refugee, Helen Lewis MBE, who died in December 2009, from her autobiography, *A Time to Speak*, Belfast 1992

Challenges for Migrants, Refugees and Minority-Ethnic People

Moving away from your home country is a challenge in itself. Migration deprives people of community until they build new social links. Migrant workers with secure jobs, steady incomes, and good command of English find it much easier to feel comfortable in local communities. They find it even easier if they are met half way, with acceptance and respect. Not everyone is so fortunate.

Concerns have been longstanding. As far back as 2006 Concordia, a partnership group including business Confederation of British Industry (CBI), voluntary groups (NI Council for Voluntary Action NICVA), trade unions (Irish Congress of Trade Unions), and farmers and growers (Ulster Farmers' Union), produced a policy document challenging Government to improve the support mechanisms for people who come here. They asked for one minister with sole responsibility, better local statistics, a local immigration public enquiry office, local advice and support centres for migrant workers, skills advisory service, enforcement of regulations relating to houses of multiple occupation and a migrant worker emergency rehousing fund. www.docstoc.com/docs/27647151/Migrant-workers-in-Northern-Ireland

There are still outstanding difficulties and the NI Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) response to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), published in 2011, gives a good overview of the issues. <http://nicem.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Submission-to-CERD-2011.pdf> While inward migration has dropped considerably during the recession, in the brochure to mark the launch of the NI Strategic Migration Partnership (NISMP) Migration Information Portal, John Bell stressed that

It is important that the NISMP send a clear message that decreasing inward migration does not indicate that less needs to be done on migration issues. ... while inward migration has been decreasing, there has been an increased demand for interpretation and translation facilities and increasing numbers of migrant children are attending local schools. Those people already here need to be adequately looked after ...

John Bell, *A Migration Information Portal for Northern Ireland*, 2012. www.conflictresearch.org.uk/Resources/Documents/Full%20brochure_3%20-%20NISMP%20print.pdf

Support groups and advisors confirm the challenges. There are issues with the following: immigration policies and how they are enforced, the length of time it takes to get the security of citizenship; workplace exploitation and lack of recognition of qualifications; negative stereotyping and racism; and difficulties in accessing English classes. An unfortunate minority can experience extreme poverty and destitution. Some of the challenges experienced are examined below.

In a consultation exercise for **Belfast Migrant Forum** (which is co-ordinated by Belfast City Council) groups of migrant workers identified

Living conditions

'In November 2005, STEP [a migrant worker support group in South Tyrone] was contacted by a young Latvian couple with an eight month old baby. Their employer, a recruitment agency, expected the family to share a room with a single bed in a three-bedroomed house in which six other Latvian men also resided. The couple were paying £120 per week for a room which was cold and damp. When they complained to their employer, they were told they would be evicted and lose their jobs if they complained again. STEP contacted the landlord and asked for the family to be moved to more suitable accommodation. The family were eventually moved to a two-bedroom flat, and stayed a short time before finding alternative accommodation with another agency.'

Concordia, Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland: Meeting the Needs of Migrant Workers, their Families and their Employers, March 2006, p.7 www.concordiapartnership.org/files/2006321115822__Concordia%20migrant%20w%20LR.pdf

the following wish list.

- Accessible information on rights and services, welfare entitlements, how to access health and education services and driving and insurance regulations
- Advice workers to have a better understanding of the complexities regarding the different categories of migrant workers
- More information about local culture and more opportunities to engage
- Local people to be given more information about migration
- More campaigning against racism
- Funding for English classes
- Accessible childcare
- Support for emerging migrant support groups
- Greater sharing of information between groups
- Events where people can meet people from their own country or community

They also mentioned difficulties with the health service, establishing where they live in order to get a library ticket (necessary in order to access the internet) and proving identity so that they could open a bank account. Those who had lost their jobs felt that their nationality would make it more difficult to get another job (see also page 104).

When local citizens who act as **Honorary Consuls** (accredited by foreign embassies) were also consulted by Belfast City Council they mentioned difficulties such as exploitation by agencies and employers; ruthless landlords; outrageous fees for transferring money home; the UK Border Agency holding onto passports too long; and difficulties with police, especially for people who had experience of authoritarian regimes. (For a list of contact details for honorary consuls see http://ca-ni.org/consular_list.html and for a list of the countries with honorary consuls see page 147.)

Since transitional arrangements ended for Romanian and Bulgarian nationals in January 2014 they have had full access to the job market (see pages 7 and 9). They are now able to look for work but most of the Romanian Roma people living here find it difficult to demonstrate through documentation, that they meet the habitual residence criteria (see pages 61–4) which affects their entitlement to obtain National Insurance Numbers, social welfare etc.

There is online advice on migrant workers' rights on the Law Centre web site. www.lawcentreni.org/publications/migrant-workers.html

The Effects of Immigration Policies

While all newcomers can experience difficulties in learning how to navigate our systems, some migrant workers experience more hardships than others because they have different entitlements depending on where they come from and how they are regarded by immigration rules or the asylum system. In addition, Government budgetary restrictions affect migrant people like everyone else and there have been fears that cuts to the UK Border Agency of up to 20% might make for less efficiency in

processing visas etc. and continued increases in fees (see page 34) www.migrantsrights.org.uk/blog/2010/10/how-will-savage-government-spending-cuts-affect-migrants

Access to healthcare

People from anywhere in the world have a right to emergency medical treatment in the UK. Hospitals know this, but not all family doctors are aware that their contracts oblige them to give any medical treatment that is 'immediately necessary'. Some people are not entitled to free ongoing care or to register with a family doctor, but the legal situation in N Ireland is unclear and there is not the same flexibility as there has been in GB in terms of registering with a GP. There is a particular issue here for those who are at the end of the asylum process who can not be sent home (see page 47). It is normally necessary to prove that you have the right to live here and/or are 'ordinarily resident', usually by showing that you have been lawfully residing in N Ireland for a number of months and with a settled purpose. The NI Health and Social Care (HSC) **Business Services Organisation (BSO)** determines if a person is eligible for GP registration. People who feel that they have been wrongly denied access to a GP may ask for advice from the Law Centre (see page 90).

Rather than assuming that everyone from a certain category is not entitled to care, it would be helpful if family doctors would submit applications to the BSO. A form to assess entitlement to NHS services and to register with a doctor for the first time is available in 16 languages online. www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/1814.htm (It is also available in doctors' surgeries.) Failure to be able to register with a family doctor has a knock-on affect on free entitlement to other services such as children's vaccinations. For more information see *Access Denied – Or Paying When You Shouldn't*, a NI Human Rights Commission research paper, January 2011. www.nihrc.org/documents/research-and-investigations/health/access-to-publicly-funded-medical-care-january-2011.pdf (For other health issues see also pages 135–40.)

Some people who have had access to free healthcare lose it if their status changes.

One respondent, who had lost a limb, ... went for countless fittings for a prosthetic replacement. However, upon his asylum claim being refused, he was denied the limb that had been made up for him.

Extract from a GB report, *Not Gone but Forgotten; The Urgent Need for A More Humane Asylum System*, British Red Cross
www.redcross.org.uk/About-us/News/2010/June/New-report-calls-for-end-to-asylum-seekers-destitution

An article comparing the lack of access to free secondary healthcare for people whose asylum claims have been refused in NI with the situation in the rest of the UK can be found on the Law Centre web site. www.lawcentreni.org/component/content/article/63-policy-briefings/865-refused-asylum-seekers-and-access-to-free-secondary-healthcare.html There are ongoing discussions in an attempt to clarify and improve the position over access to dental care and free prescriptions, especially for people who have been refused asylum. For the persuasive argument in favour of following Scotland and Wales in providing free care for people whose

'A child with both British and Irish passports, whose mother was a failed asylum seeker, was refused registration with a doctor (GP). This decision had been taken by the Business Service Organisation (BSO) ... The mother sought the support of a number of community organisations, statutory services and even legal advice. Eventually, one organisation ... escalated the issue to the attention of the UK Border Agency, who then clarified the position to BSO and both the child and the mother were registered. The child had suffered with a urinary infection for months and was unable to receive medical care during this time.'

Case study in
Submission to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in Response to the UK's Seventh Periodic Report, NICEM, 2013

The words we use...

We are often unaware that our everyday English contains a lot of jargon. For example if we ask someone from another country if they have signed on with a GP it means nothing to them. 'General practitioner' is not much better as we are one of only a few countries to use this term. 'Family doctor' would be more helpful.

asylum claims have failed see 'The case for free healthcare for asylum seekers' in *Frontline* 90, Winter 2013/14. www.lawcentreni.org/Publications/Frontline/Frontline-90.pdf Representatives from the Law Centre, Red Cross and NICRAS lobbied the Stormont Health, Social Services and Public Safety Committee on this issue in November 2013.

The *Barriers to Health: Migrant Health and Wellbeing in Belfast* report described why some minority-ethnic people have particular difficulty in accessing health services, including language barriers, ignorance about entitlements and in some cases culturally inappropriate treatment and negative attitudes among healthcare professionals. www.belfasttrust.hscni.net/pdf/Migrant-Health-Strategy.pdf

In 2011 the Public Health Authority (PHA) together with the Health and Social Care Board, announced a regional service for migrants who have difficulty accessing the care they need through the existing health and social care system. This nurse-led **N I New Entrant Service (NINES)** has one full-time and one part-time health protection nurse and a part-time health support worker. It provides initial health assessments, a BCG vaccination clinic, health promotion advice and a drop-in clinic. There is also an evening clinic for new arrivals coming here to work. All new asylum applicants are directed to the service. For further information on the services or clinic times, or to make an appointment, Tel: (028) 9056 5909, Monday to Friday.

The announcement of this service coincided with a conference on minority-ethnic health and wellbeing. Among the speakers were Denise Wright of the South Belfast Roundtable (also then chairperson of EMBRACE) who spoke about difficulties encountered by Roma people and Dr Linda Agnew of the Refugee Health Special Interest Group who spoke about the physical and mental health of refugees and people claiming asylum. The presentations are available online. www.publichealth.hscni.net/event/conference-minority-ethnic-health-and-wellbeing-issues-northern-ireland

In 2011 the Department of Health in England published detailed guidance setting out how the NHS should charge Overseas Visitors for secondary healthcare. The NHS has always had a duty to charge patients who are not eligible to receive free healthcare. However, under the 2011 guidance, the NHS should notify the Home Office of any debts of more than £1,000 that remain outstanding after three months, incurred by people from outside Europe. The Home Office may then refuse subsequent immigration applications or take enforcement action in some instances against the patient. Patients in need of 'immediately necessary' or 'urgent' assistance will be given treatment (regardless of their ability to pay for it) but they may be required to pay charges later. The five Health Trusts have been taking steps to identify and charge people who are not entitled to free healthcare in N Ireland. They now each have a Paying Patients Officer.

In 2013 the Belfast Health Trust commissioned research about the experiences and needs of Hungarian and Slovakian Roma people in Belfast (see page 9).

In June 2013 the Law Centre published a policy briefing, 'Accessing healthcare for migrants in Northern Ireland: problems and solutions' www.lawcentreni.org/Publications/Policy-Briefings/Policy-Briefing-Migrants-and-health-care-Law-Centre-NI-2013.pdf

There is an overview of entitlements to Health and Social Care on the Migration Information Portal. www.migrationni.org/living-in-northern-ireland#health

The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust has made a detailed **Multicultural & Beliefs Handbook** available to its staff, and its Welcome Pack has been translated into 18 languages. www.belfasttrust.hscni.net/pdf/BHSC_MultiCultural_Beliefs_Handbook.pdf

Entitlement to benefits

If European jobseekers make arrangements in advance they can transfer some benefits from their country of origin, claiming them here, with the UK being reimbursed later. People working sufficient hours have an entitlement to some UK benefits such as working tax credits. This also applies to people registered with HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) as self-employed, including people from Croatia, who would otherwise not be entitled to benefits (see also page 63).

Before January 2014 European Economic Area (EEA) nationals could apply for jobseekers allowance as soon as they could prove habitual residence test (see below). They now have to wait for three months and from April 2014 new EEA arrivals who are out-of-work, cannot receive housing benefit, and those who have been in work, and then claim jobseekers allowance and retain worker status, can only receive housing benefit for six months. From March 2014, European migrants will usually have to show that they have been earning at least £149 a week for three months, or can expect to earn it, before they can access a range of benefits. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-26254735 (This new minimum income test is likely to be tested to see if it is compatible with EU law. www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/10648866/Earnings-threshold-for-European-migrants-to-get-benefits-illegal-under-EU-law.html)

From April 2014 in GB, if a person's only right to reside is as a jobseeker, they will not be entitled to housing benefit, unless they already have an entitlement. www.legislation.gov.uk/uk-si/2014/539/made

Most people need to establish that this is now where they live, in order to pass the **Habitual Residence Test**, first introduced to prevent 'benefit tourism'. This test was made tougher from the beginning of 2014 (see page 63). (A UK citizen returning from abroad also has to pass the Habitual Residence Test before they can have full access to benefits.) It is applied to people who have come here recently, when they try to access some social security benefits or get housing assistance. Applicants must first demonstrate that they have the **Right to Reside**. This is not just about being allowed to live here but about having certain rights under EU directives. These Treaty rights attach to EU citizens who are working or studying here and usually apply only when they have enough money to support themselves or are genuinely looking for work with a real chance of getting a job. Only after the Right to Reside element of the test is satisfied can Habitual Residence be decided. It depends on factors such as

how long they have lived here, and intend to stay, and their employment prospects. Habitual Residence unfortunately has no statutory definition and individuals are assessed on a case-by-case basis. The right to claim Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) for more than six months is limited to those who can prove that they have a genuine prospect of work. Anyone expelled for begging or rough sleeping will have a 12-month bar on re-entry to the UK. www.lawontheweb.co.uk/news/2013/12/0402-eu-migrant-benefits-to-be-restricted-from-1-january

Most people from outside Europe have their passports stamped, 'No Recourse to Public Funds' (NRPF) and will only be eligible to claim out-of-work benefits when they get Indefinite Leave to Remain. Usually this is after at least 5 years. A person subject to the NRPF rule who claims a benefit to which they are not entitled will be in breach of one of the conditions of their immigration leave. This can have serious implications. It is important therefore, that any person subject to this rule seeks advice before considering making any sort of benefits claim.

These are very complex issues and there is further information about advice and support groups and the Habitual Residence Test on the NI Migration Information Portal. www.migrationni.org/living-in-northern-ireland#migrantrights.

In a landmark case in 2011 (the **Zambrano** case) the EU Court of Justice ruled that someone from a non-EEA country with a young dependent EU national child could not be denied the right to reside in the EU state where their child has nationality, and that permission to work could not be denied either, in order that the parent could support the child. See *Frontline* 79, Spring 2011. www.lawcentreni.org/Publications/Frontline/Frontline79webversion.pdf So far, however, they are excluded from most benefits.

For more detail on benefit entitlements see page 63.

Transitional arrangements for new EU States

In the UK, transitional arrangements have been placed on citizens of all the new member states in the 21st century. Migrants from the Eastern and Central European (A8) states that joined in the 2004 had to register for work and were ineligible for out-of-work benefits until they had been in registered work for a year (see also page 7).

When Bulgaria and Romania (A2 states) joined, even stricter transitional arrangements were put in place until January 2014. Their citizens could enter the country freely, work as self-employed or get permission in advance to come here as highly skilled workers. Small numbers also worked in sectoral schemes such as the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS) or the Sectors Based Scheme (see also page 9). They were only entitled to in-work benefits (see page 63). This left some A2 nationals vulnerable to exploitation in the black economy by unscrupulous employers and criminal gangs. When Roma people from Romania were subject to attack in Belfast in 2009 (see pages 120–1), they were ineligible for Housing Executive accommodation and had to be given exceptional emergency help to return home. All children have to be in education while they are here but under the transitional arrangements, Romanian Roma

'The first few months I worked ten hours per day, five to six days a week. Sometimes from 6am to midnight.'

Female A2 [i.e. Bulgarian or Romanian] national mushroom picker

'For the work that we did we didn't get enough money ... If it is sometimes very busy he pay good money, if he's not busy you work hard there for nothing then you go home and you get nothing.'

A Roma worker in a Belfast Car-wash

(Both quotations from Forced Labour in Northern Ireland, 2011)

Rules Relating to Benefits and People from Other Countries

A person's immigration status may affect her/his entitlement to social security benefits. There are many different benefits in N Ireland which are administered by the Social Security Agency, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), and NI Housing Executive (NIHE). There is comprehensive information on the Law Centre web site. www.lawcentreni.org/EoR/ Each benefit has its statutory rules of entitlement. In addition, migrants are often affected by the following rules:

Person Subject to Immigration Control (PSIC)

A PSIC is a person who is not an EEA national or a British citizen, who requires leave to be in UK and does not have it, or is in UK under a visa that states 'No recourse to public funds', or where another person has agreed to maintain them. As a general rule a PSIC is not entitled to most benefits. There are important exceptions. For example, where a person has paid enough national insurance contributions s/he can claim Contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance (CESA), Contribution-based Jobseekers Allowance (CJSA) or benefits related to employment, such as industrial injuries benefits, statutory maternity pay and statutory sick pay.

Habitual Residence Rule

This applies to all claimants including returning British citizens who claim Income-based Jobseekers Allowance, Income-related ESA, Income Support, Pension Credit and Housing Benefit. The person must show habitual residence and an intention to establish settled residence. All the facts of the case will be looked at such as employment, family, housing, finances, or whether person has travelled on a return ticket. From January 2014 people have had to provide more detailed answers, including the efforts made to find work before coming to the UK and whether their English language skills could be a barrier to them finding employment. This rule can lead to people being denied access to these benefits for up to three months, which is regarded as 'an appreciable period'. Those affected should seek legal advice.

Right to Reside

This rule affects Income-based JSA, Income-related ESA, Income Support, Pension Credit and Housing Benefit and also Child Tax Credit and Child Benefit. It makes it more difficult for EEA nationals to claim these benefits. Claimants will generally have to show that they are an EEA national, or are the family member of an EEA national, who is a worker, self-employed person, a jobseeker, a self-sufficient person, a person who retains worker status, or who has permanent residence or is a refugee.

Croatian nationals

Croatia joined the EU in 2013. Under transitional arrangements most Croatian nationals have restricted access to the UK labour market (see also page 64). This affects their right to reside for benefit purposes. People affected should seek legal advice. As a general rule Croatian jobseekers will not be entitled to means tested benefits unless they have completed 12 months lawful employment and will not be entitled to in-work benefits such as tax credits unless in they are in self-employment or authorised employment.

Universal Credit will change the system for everyone. It is due to be implemented in N Ireland between 2014 and 2017. (Universal Credit will have Right to Reside and Habitual Residence rules.)

children had no entitlement to support towards uniforms or transport to school. (This continues to be true of some children in the asylum system and other immigrants who are not entitled to benefits (see pages 62 and 3). EMBRACE has been able to help these children through its Emergency Fund (see page 164).)

Similar transitional arrangements restricting access to the labour market, and to benefits, will apply to Croatians for a number of years (see also page 63). www.gov.uk/croatian-national It remains to be seen if this makes them liable to exploitation and whether any will become destitute in N Ireland.

Citizenship

People from outside Europe are also ineligible for out-of-work benefits. It is unsettling to be in another country, hoping to make a home here, but aware that your passport is stamped 'No recourse to public funds', and know that if you lose your job, you have no safety net and no right to stay in the country. When the **Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Bill** proposed changes to the citizenship requirements it added to those feelings of insecurity. People doing valuable jobs felt let down and unappreciated. In a briefing document for local politicians a nurse, Ricky Gallo, explained how the proposed legislation would inhibit community integration.

I think this bill is making it harder for us to get involved in anything, not the other way round! You have to work and make sure nothing goes wrong with your work, because everything depends on you keeping that job. And then, you never know what will happen next. You always feel like they could send you home, so you don't really want to get involved in anything, because it doesn't feel like this is definitely going to be 'home' until you've got some kind of settled status.

www.lawcentreni.org/policy/policy-briefings/1199.html

Non-EEA nationals who want to stay in the UK permanently must be able to demonstrate the ability to communicate in English, have been resident here for at least 5 continuous years before they can apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain and there are income requirements. A year later they can apply for residency or citizenship. Skilled workers who have entered the country under Tier 2 of the points-based system (see page 31), have to be earning at least the salary appropriate for that visa or the correct rate for the job, whichever is higher, and their employer must certify that the worker is still needed in his/her job (see pages 32–3). www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/282574/cop-skilled-workers.pdf

Research by NICEM within the Filipino community, published in 2012, shows that this is a major issue. *Bayanihan; The Filipino Community in Northern Ireland*, demonstrated how unsettling it is to come as a skilled worker, serve the community within the health sector but feel vulnerable to employment abuses because you cannot afford to lose your job. There was also a sense of grievance about UKBA fees when it came to applying for leave to remain or citizenship (see above) and the additional hurdles they face. One of these is the fact that many Filipinos came here as senior care workers before the rules were changed. They needed to be earning

a minimum of £7.02 per hour, while the NICEM report indicates that average pay in N Ireland for senior care workers was only £6.70 in 2011. Failure to attain the correct rates may lead to refusal of permission to remain here, meaning that the person may have to return to their country of origin despite having worked lawfully (and paid tax) in the UK for 5 years. (These regulations also hit people in other sectors such as chefs in Asian restaurants – see pages 28–9.)

It is reported that many health workers from outside Europe have left to pursue jobs in countries where the citizenship requirements are less stringent.

Border issues

By a longstanding agreement there is supposed to be freedom of movement between GB, N Ireland and ROI, within what is known as the **Common Travel Area**, for everyone except those who need visas to enter the different jurisdictions, but both the Irish and British Governments have planned to increase checks at our airports, ports and the border. The UK Border, Citizenship and Nationality Bill included proposals to increase internal checks within the Common Travel Area.

In 2009, Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission Chief Commissioner, Monica McWilliams stated that

The Human Rights Commission is extremely concerned that the proposed land border checks could lead to racial profiling and as a result impact significantly on minority-ethnic persons, crossing or just living or working near the land border. As these measures could lead to ethnic minorities having constantly to carry identity papers or face frequent questioning regarding their status and, potentially, detention.

www.statewatch.org/news/2009/mar/uk-nihrc-border-checks-prel.pdf

The proposals were defeated at that stage but appeared again in the **Policing and Crime Act 2009**. Customs and immigration officials were empowered to check, for customs purposes, the travel documents of anyone entering the UK, which includes the land border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Assurances were given that this would not apply outside customs operations but as customs and immigrations powers have merged, it is not clear how this can be guaranteed. In 2012, Phil Taylor of UKBA assured the NI Justice Committee that there was 'no suggestion that we will be setting up formal border controls between the north and south of Ireland'. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/newsid_9769000/9769608.stm

The ROI has a Short-stay Visa Waiver scheme whereby it accepts some UK-issued tourist visas for certain nationalities. The purpose is to encourage visitors. The UK does not have a reciprocal scheme. Most people, subject to immigration control, who require a visa to enter either the UK or ROI, are not entitled to travel freely across the border. Official web sites do not always make this entirely clear although there is information on the Home Office site. www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-travel-area-cta/common-travel-area-cta The North/South Ministerial Council Border People web site also contains useful information and warnings for people travelling or seeking work on either side of the border. www.borderpeople.info/index/work/browse/browse-detail.htm?objId=6447 Local people are

'We are very in fear because the UK Home Office is always changing the law...'

Female Work Permit holder quoted in *Bayanihan; The Filipino Community in Northern Ireland*

'... what is a border? Is it a barrier or is it a meeting place? I imagine that most of us want to believe that a border can be a meeting place. Therefore, I imagine that most of us would rather not be debating a Bill which is predicated on a pathology of suspicion and a predetermination towards exclusion rather than welcome.'

Bishop of Lincoln, Dr John Saxbee, Committee stage of the UK Border, Citizenship and Nationality Bill, February, 2009 www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200809/ldhansrd/text/90211-0005.htm

'As one of the migrants who became affected when the rule for residency was changed retrospectively from four to five years in 2005, I strongly feel for the ones who have to face harsher and constantly evolving rules as it is now.'

Katrina Albarico of the Filipino Group within the Parish Pastoral Council of St Colmcille's church in Ballyhackamore, Belfast

'They tell us...

"You can't leave us because we brought you into this country, so you can't work for anybody else apart from us."

'Even if we had worked the night shift, there was pressure to work during the day.'

Domestic care workers quoted in *Who Cares?*

'Paola came to the Republic of Ireland from Brazil to work in a meat-packing company but was later moved to work across the border in Northern Ireland, although she did not realise she was in another country. ... she was told that Newry was very dangerous and not to go out at night, and all workers were told that they could not be seen in groups leaving the house to walk to work, as this could be dangerous. ... She remained in this employment for 15 months until she could no longer endure the level of control and low wages and left.'

Les Allamby et al,
Forced Labour in
Northern Ireland,
2011

'They assume you are employed illegally'.

A member of
the Bangladeshi
community, complaining
about heavy-handed
raids on restaurants
30 Years Seen but
Not Heard

often unaware that permission to enter one part of the island does not always confer the right to travel across the border, and many people who cross innocently are turned back or subject to detention or removal. A number of organisations (such as the Immigrant Council of Ireland and the Law Centre NI) have argued for common visa arrangements. The two governments have indicated that they are considering some common or mutual arrangements. Unless we can develop a more sympathetic common approach to the regulation of immigration throughout the island of Ireland, the border will continue to have negative consequences on both residents and migrants, and a detrimental impact on tourism.

The situation affects a variety of people. Minority-ethnic Derry GAA supporters have been removed from buses going to matches in Croke Park. The Christian group, SPIRASI, which works with survivors of torture in the Republic of Ireland, has had difficulty bringing people living in Donegal to its Dublin centre. A NI Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (NICRAS) football team was invited to play in a Homeless World Cup qualifying match in 2011 and was unable to go because of visa restrictions.

Border areas already experience high levels of social exclusion and a 'grey economy' that allows employers to exploit undocumented/irregular migrants more easily. Migrant support workers in the South Tyrone Empowerment Programme (STEP) have encountered people who say that they have been abused in this way and researchers into forced labour found examples of workers in the meat packing and mushroom industries who had been moved to and fro across the border and exploited.

How immigration policies are enforced

'I just wanted to take my Bible, but they didn't let me.'

A detainee interviewed by NI Human Rights Commission researchers,
Our Hidden Borders: The UK Border Agency's Powers of Detention, page 52

In 2012 the **Border Force** was split from the rest of the UK Border Agency (UKBA) following a report into the inconsistent operation of border checks. Following criticism of its work the UKBA has been abolished and its functions brought back into the main Home Office in 2013 where they are undertaken by **UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI)**.

Officials have the right to detain anyone suspected of committing an immigration offence, as well as people in the asylum system. Locally, this may include people who have strayed across the border without the correct visa, or asylum applicants who live in the community, but are thought to have broken Home Office rules, e.g. by spending time away from their accommodation, or by getting paid work, which is usually not permitted. Others are detained if it is felt that their asylum application has little hope of success, or if the person has exhausted all appeal remedies. During the years 2009 to 2012 between 2,000 and 3,000 people have been detained in UK **Removal Centres** at any one time and in 2011 the detention estate expanded to accommodate up to 3,500. In the whole of 2012 around 29,000 people were detained, of which about 48% were asylum detainees. This does not include people who may have been detained in police cells, prison establishments or non-residential

Strangers into Citizens Campaign

Some people feel that unauthorised or undocumented people, 'irregular migrants', who may number around 500,000 in the UK, should be given amnesty and the right to work. They have proposed a one-off regularisation for people who have been in the country for over four years, to include long-term asylum applicants, as well as people working without legal documentation. In 2006, the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) estimated that regularising migrant workers in the UK could result in an extra £1 billion in tax revenue. www.ippr.org/ecom/files/irregular_migration.pdf The Strangers into Citizens campaign held a rally on May Day 2007 in London, attended by faith leaders and trade unionists. Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, who held a special mass for migrant workers in Westminster Cathedral, told the BBC: 'Many of them are married, settled down and so they live in a kind of shadow land. That's not right and it's not fair.' news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6631193.stm

In 2012 a research report, *No Way Out, No Way In*, estimated that there were around 120,000 migrant children in the UK without formal permission to be here. The majority were born here, others were left in the UK by their parents and some are (or have been) in the asylum system. www.compas.ox.ac.uk/fileadmin/files/Publications/Reports/NO_WAY_OUT_NO_WAY_IN_FINAL.pdf

In 2009 Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, who supports 'an amnesty', commissioned a study which indicated that regularising the UK's 600,000 plus undocumented migrants would boost the economy by £3 billion per annum. www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/jun/15/migrants-amnesty-immigration-london-johnson A more recent Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) study *No Easy Options: Irregular Immigration in the UK*, published in 2011, concluded that a range of measures was needed. www.ippr.org/publication/551837/no-easy-options-irregular-immigration-in-the-uk The authors argue that the public will not support mass regularisation but there should be more flexibility and generosity, along with a recognition that for some migrants the best option is to return home. The researchers were sympathetic towards British Overseas Citizens (BOC) where no other country will give them citizenship. One BOC, Tracy Koh, said

I have lived in the UK for eight years and have put down roots here. I have never sought benefits from the government; I want only to work legally, and to contribute to British society, to the country that I love. All I have ever dreamed of is to be part of a community, to hold my head up high, and live a normal life.

www.citizensuk.org/2011/03/strangers-into-citizens-take-action-with-british-overseas-citizens/

Hard questions remain:

Irregular immigrants are able to survive in this country because there is work for them [to] do. Most of it is at the bottom end of the labour market. If irregular immigration is to be squeezed out of the system, but the 'pull factor' or demand side that drives it still persists, then ministers will have to face up to the fact some legal routes for low and no-skilled immigration from outside the EU should over time be opened up.

Tim Finch (one of the authors of *No Easy Options*) originally published in the *New Statesman* www.ippr.org/articles/5617519/what-of-our-long-resident-irregular-immigrants

Liberal Democrat policy in the run up to the General Election in 2010 proposed some regularisation, but this did not survive the Coalition agreement. Other countries have found that tightening border controls actually increases the numbers of irregular migrants as it decreases the likelihood of migrants returning to their country of origin of their own accord. Spain regularised some undocumented migrants in 2005. www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/libertycentral/2009/may/03/amnesty-illegal-immigrants

The Strangers into Citizens campaign ceased to be active in 2013.

'I spent a lot of time at Oakington Immigration Reception Centre and it is not organised on the idea that human beings are infinitely worthwhile.'

Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, commenting on the immigration detention system, February 2008 www.reconciliationtalk.com/immigration/page/2/

'The Race Relations Order (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 do not make it unlawful for immigration officers to discriminate on the basis of nationality or ethnic or national origin, when authorised to do so by a Minister...'

Nazia Latif, 'A Difficult Journey? Immigration Enforcement in Northern Ireland', Journal of Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Law, Vol. 23, No 4, 2009

holding centres. These statistics and more information can be found in a Migration Observatory briefing, November 2013, but the briefing identifies evidence gaps, particularly the difficulty in tracing the experience of individual detainees including their release and re-detention. www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/briefings/immigration-detention-uk (The briefing will be updated in November 2014.) The figures for people in immigration detention rose by 5% in 2013 to 30,036. www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-october-to-december-2013/immigration-statistics-october-to-december-2013#summary-points-october-to-december-2013

The cost of detention was recently reported to be £100 per night. www.sdv.org.uk/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/Intouch124january.pdf

In 2011, 41,482 foreign nationals were removed from the UK under immigration law, 10,077 of whom had been asylum applicants, and their dependents. (In the financial year 2010–11 this cost over £28 million.) Read more in a Migration Observatory briefing, December 2012: <http://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/briefings/deportations-removals-and-voluntary-departures-uk> In 2013 there were 4,671 enforced removals of people who had sought asylum at some stage, and 8,380 people who were non-asylum cases. (There were 32,661 voluntary departures.) www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-october-to-december-2013/immigration-statistics-october-to-december-2013

Locally, the enforcement of immigration controls, at our ports, airports and the border, is through **Operation Gull**, the joint PSNI, Garda Síochána and Home Office operation. In the past no separate figures for N Ireland were published but it is believed that around 900 people were picked up in Northern Ireland in the year up to March 2009 and detained on suspicion of breaches of immigration legislation. Of these, around 600 were removed from the UK. The Organised Crime Task Force Annual Report and Threat Assessment for 2013 indicates that in the year 2012/2013, almost 300 people were intercepted by Operation Gull trying to use N Ireland ports in order to travel illegally across the UK. The report also suggests that work of Operation Gull at N Ireland sea ports and in partnership with the Scottish Police at Galloway ports is having a deterrent effect on those who would abuse these travel routes (see also page 69). www.dojni.gov.uk/index/publications/publication-categories/pubs-policing-community-safety/community-safety/organised-crime/octf-annual-report-2013.pdf See also **Border Issues** pages 65–6.

In addition, the UKBA/Home Office conducts 'traditional' enforcement raids on homes and work premises where it has a suspicion it may find immigration offenders (see also page 71) and a number of people have been arrested for working here illegally – 41 in 2009–10 and two in 2010–11. <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm1006171/text/100617w0015.htm>

Although Operation Gull has been in existence for a number of years, there is still an element of secrecy about it because the Home Office has not publicly set out its rationale and associated guidance/procedures. There are concerns that some people may be targeted because of their ethnicity. A number of visitors have had to be compensated following their detention. Jamiu Omikunle, a Nigerian student, was detained at Aldergrove on his way from London to Belfast to act as godfather at a

baptism. He was awarded £20,000 in February 2009 because of unlawful detention in Dungavel Immigration Removal Centre in Scotland. www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/columnists/eamon-mccann/eamon-mccann-why-some-deportations-are-a-black-and-white-issue-14184389.html This is not an isolated case. For other concerns about Operation Gull see Law Centre (NI) briefing, October 2008. www.lawcentreni.org/operation-gull.html?q=operation+gull

In 2013 a refugee from Afghanistan, now living in Belfast, received £85,000 in damages, for detention in Maghaberry Prison and the temporary immigration centre on the Crumlin Road in 2002; and in removal centres in Scotland and England in 2006 and 2007; under threat of removal, when it was Government policy for people in his circumstances to be given Exceptional Leave to Remain. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-22967878

Politicians have been concerned about reductions in Home Office funding. On 22 November 2011 there was a debate in the House of Commons on immigration issues at the Scottish port Stranraer/Cairnryan, about the withdrawal of UK Border Agency officials. (These are not regarded as ports for immigration purposes because they have no direct access to another state.) Charged that there was an inevitable increase in irregular migration, the immigration minister, Damien Green responded that in the four months between January and April 2011 '175 immigration offenders were detected at Northern Irish sea and airports and at west of Scotland sea ports', a 200% increase over the same period in 2010 and claimed this was a sign of 'getting to the root of the problem'. www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm111122/debtext/111122-0004.htm The new arrangements included an increased number of UKBA enforcement staff in N Ireland sea ports and a review concluded that there had been a 65% increase in detections from the 2010 period, with 102 immigration offenders detected in the first four months of 2011. They pointed out that this did not weaken controls at airports, where 73 people were apprehended at N Ireland airports on domestic flights, an increase of 300% over the same period in 2010. A further review showed a total of 281 detections in ports during the whole of 2011, 152 by the UKBA in N Ireland and 129 by the police in Scotland. www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-travel-area-review-of-new-arrangements-at-northern-ireland-sea-ports

Criticism of the policy and practice of detention

While there is a single national detention system, Immigration Removal Centres are run by a number of private company providers and the prison service. So, UK detention facilities vary in quality and facilities. Some give limited access to recreation or advice and all rely heavily on the work of voluntary groups such as the **Association for Visitors to Immigration Detainees (AVID)** and a number of reports have expressed concerns about the conditions. The mental health of detainees is a problem (see also page 138), especially as there is no limit to the length of time for which people may be detained. (See for example the 2012 briefing paper by AVID and BID (Bail for Detainees), 'Positive duty of care? The mental health crisis in immigration detention'. www.aviddetention.org.uk/images/positive%20duty%20of%20care%20final.pdf.) People should only be

The Medical Justice Network campaigns to improve conditions for people in detention, their booklet contains examples of how people feel.

'My torture was terrible, but giving birth in handcuffs came a close second.' www.medicaljustice.org.uk/images/documents/medical-justice-booklet-july-2007.pdf

'Jamiu recounted how his immigration status was disputed while in transit to a christening in Belfast, and he was detained:

I was panicked and confused and fearful and lonely. I knew that no one knew where I was. ... I find it impossible to concentrate. I have recurring dreams and flashbacks. I have developed what I can only refer to as a phobia of the police. I can't really discuss my feelings with anyone ... I have never been in any trouble of any kind in my life ... No matter how long I live this ordeal will be with me for the rest of my life.'

Robin Wilson, Distant Voices, Shaken Lives; Human Stories of Immigration Detention from Northern Ireland, 2010 www.embraceni.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Distant-Voices-Shaken-Lives.pdf

'What I personally will never forget, are the eyes of Ronke's boys looking up at me and asking "What have we done wrong?" and my sense of helplessness as I watched them pass through the door to their detention centre as branded criminals.'

Rev Johnstone Lambe, minister of Mountpottinger Presbyterian Church, quoted in Building a Welcoming Community, No.11 Spring 2008

'"They make you feel like a criminal, when you haven't done anything wrong," says Adebowale.' [Adebowale Falode aged nine.]

'Sarah, a tiny, lively baby, has livid red eczema all over her face which, Comfort [Adefowaju] tells me, she has not been able to get any medicine for. "They don't even provide enough formula. It is four o'clock, and Sarah has only had one bottle so far today."'

Both quotations from the New Statesman 'No place for children', Alice O'Keefe, 13 December 2007 www.newstatesman.com/uk-politics/2007/12/yarl-wood-children-immigration

See also page 71.

detained if there is a prospect of their removal but, because removals are contested, some people have been in removal centres for years.

A paediatric study of children in detention was published in 2009. Doctors found that a majority of the 24 children detained at Yarl's Wood Removal Centre were experiencing mental and physical health difficulties related to their detention, including weight loss, sleep disturbance and bed-wetting, daytime incontinence (indicating severe stress), headaches, abdominal pain and behavioural problems. The study also showed deterioration in the mental health of the parents. For an account of the affects of detention on children, read about the Ay family, who were locked up for 13 months and won compensation from the Home Office. www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2012/jan/06/child-asylum-seekers-win-compensation In 2009 it was also revealed that 1,300 children had been held in UK removal centres during a recent 15-month period. news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/8335602.stm In 2010 the new Government announced its intention to end child detention. The Home Office contracted the children's charity Barnardo's to run a holding centre for families, Cedars, at Pease Pottage, near Gatwick airport. The new process includes: a Family Returns Panel to consider child welfare issues; a family conference to discuss future options and the specific option for assisted return; and the expansion and refurbishment of Tinsley House Immigration Removal Centre at Gatwick airport. Both Cedars and Tinsley House hold families for up to 72 hours. In 2012, over 200 children entered immigration detention in the UK. Inevitably, this secure 'pre-departure accommodation' can be seen as detention under another name. See 'New Centres "to detain child asylum seekers"' in the *Independent* newspaper. www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/new-centres-to-detain-child-asylum-seekers-2203843.html

In 2009 the **Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe** asked countries to ensure that people seeking asylum are not detained just because they are applicants for asylum, and that if detention is used as a last resort, people should have access to legal representation, their families and relevant support organisations. They also asked EU states to honour their obligation to provide adequate asylum reception and procedural conditions. www.caritas-europa.org/module/FileLib/ChrGrp_CommonpaperonECproposalsforDublinII_FINALd.pdf In 2010 the Jesuit Refugee Service published a report on how detention contributes to the vulnerability of migrants in Europe and has outlined the alternatives to detention. www.detention-in-europe.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=309&Itemid=262

In 2012 the Refugee Council published the report, *Not a Minor Offence; Unaccompanied Children Locked Up as Part of the Asylum System*. www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0002/5945/Not_a_minor_offence_2012.pdf This challenges the policy and practice relating to the detention of young people whose age is disputed.

Migration Observatory has published an online 'policy primer' on detention in the UK. migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/policy-primers/immigration-detention-policy-challenges

Local research on immigration enforcement

In 2009 the NI Human Rights Commission published the results of research on the application of immigration legislation here, *Our Hidden Borders: The UK Border Agency's Powers of Detention*. www.statewatch.org/news/2009/apr/Our%20Hidden%20Borders%20April%202009.pdf Researchers Dr Nazia Latif and Agnieszka Martynowicz examined how Operation Gull operated, as well as the day-to-day interviewing of people in their homes and workplaces, which they called 'traditional enforcement'. The report paints a disturbing picture of insufficient legal safeguards and oversight, a need for human rights training, greater awareness by magistrates, inconsistent practice in informing people about their legal rights and access to interpreters, sometimes determined by cost. It emphasised the importance of challenging popular discourse, and quoted one immigration officer who expressed the view that 'Whatever the Daily Mail and Star have a rant about is what gets listened to.' In 2010 the **Refugee Action Group (RAG)** published *Distant Voices, Shaken Lives; Human Stories of Immigration Detention from Northern Ireland*, a report that included the first hand accounts of eight men and women who had been detained and suggested alternatives to detention. www.embraceni.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Distant-Voices-Shaken-Lives.pdf Among the arguments against detention was the fact that people who are detained are not always removed subsequently. The system is expensive and there is little evidence that failed asylum applicants will abscond if they feel the system has treated them fairly.

For an overview of immigration detention see also 'Prison by another name' by Liz Griffith, in *Frontline Social Welfare Law Quarterly*, 81, Autumn 2011 who said 'It is sobering to remember that we are dealing with human beings, for whom detention is a terrifying and disorientating experience that has a lasting impact.' www.lawcentreni.org/Publications/Frontline/Frontline81.pdf

During Refugee Week in June 2013 the **National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns UK (NCADC)** ran a workshop in Belfast on campaigning for justice within the immigration and asylum system. Around 50 people attended. <http://incadc.org.uk/blog/incadc-in-belfast/> NCADC has an online toolkit to assist people in understanding the system and organise a campaign. www.ncadc.org.uk/toolkit/index.html

Families seeking sanctuary here are particularly vulnerable when their applications have failed. In late 2007 people from Mountpottinger Presbyterian Church found themselves campaigning, with others, against the detention and removal of the Falode and Adefowaju families who were part of their congregation. Both families had fled from Nigeria. It proved impossible to persuade the authorities to allow the families to return to Belfast and they were removed from the UK. Both cases highlighted how children suffer and feel criminalised by the experience of detention. The leaders of the four largest churches interceded with the Home Secretary on behalf of families from the Mountpottinger area of east Belfast. They expressed their acceptance of the need to have an immigration policy but said: 'It should not over-ride basic human rights and the religious freedom of each individual. These, we believe, must always be protected.'

The Refugee Action Group (RAG) has an out-of-hours Immigration Detention Emergency Helpline 0800 400 495 operated by a volunteers who take details from the callers, and offer to pass on information about the detention to family and friends, and to an immigration solicitor. Travellers who observe someone being detained have also rung the helpline. Helpline cards can be obtained from EMBRACE.

'I have been a Helpline volunteer since the service began in June 2009. On two occasions I have received calls in the middle of the night from distressed family members wanting to report the 'disappearance' of loved ones. The sheer panic in the callers' voices was alarming, particularly in the dead of night. Imagine waiting at a ferry terminal or airport arrival hall and your partner never arrives.' *Distant Voices*

Short-term holding facility at Larne

People picked up in N Ireland used to be detained within the prison system locally but are now sent to **Larne House** short-term residential holding unit, Larne, Co. Antrim. (Because some immigration infringements are criminal offences, a few foreign nationals may also be in the NI prison system.) Detainees are held at Larne for a maximum of seven days prior to the majority being removed directly from the UK. A few are moved to Scotland, or released – in some cases to put in a claim for asylum. Larne House opened in 2011 as an alternative to holding people in police custody suites prior to removal or transfer, as this was inappropriate. The centre is run by **Tascor** on behalf of the Home Office. www.tascor.co.uk/services/immigration-border/what-we-do/ It comprises the refurbished custody area of a police station and so is quite claustrophobic with small rooms, narrow corridors and little natural light. The staff, however, seem amenable to pre-arranged visits by friends and family. Concerns were expressed at meetings of the All Party Group for Ethnic Minorities that some detainees may not have been offered access to legal representation. <http://nicem.org.uk/files?category=All%20Party%20Group%20on%20Ethnic%20Minority%20Communities> This was in spite of a written answer from Immigration Minister Damien Green to a question from Naomi Long MP

People detained at Larne House are advised of their rights from the outset of detention. They are given access to legal advice at any time during their stay at the facility. Assistance provided includes help from immigration and custody staff, and information leaflets and posters about how and where to access legal advice. Detainees also have free phone and internet access and private rooms for meetings with legal representatives.

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm120611/text/120611w0003.htm

The NI Policing Board annual Human Rights Report for 2012 recorded concern over the continued use of police custody to hold immigration detainees; 228 people had been detained in this way for immigration offences between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012 and there were a further 146 between 1 July 2011 and 31 March 2012. The board asked the PSNI to explain why UKBA were continuing to use police custody suites while Larne House was available. www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/human_rights_annual_report_online_version.pdf In November 2013 the Board was told that many people were detained in police cells because they had been arrested for having committed offences, but that an agreement for the PSNI to be reimbursed for the time spent in police custody should speed up transfers to Larne. www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/board_meeting_-_7_november_2013_-_minutes.pdf

NI Human Rights Commission (NIHRC) concerns

In April 2013 the NIHRC published its submission to the UN Committee Against Torture. The chapter on immigration detention expressed concern that, in spite of the opening of the Larne House Short-Term Holding Unit, some people are still being detained for over six days in police custody suites that are unsuitable for this purpose (see above). They are also unhappy that detainees must self-identify if they are victims

of torture, rather than being identified by medical professionals. There was further anxiety that speed and secrecy of removals may prevent the identification of victims of trafficking. There was also concern that Larne House was not being inspected frequently enough by the Home Office and the NIHRC wanted more information about oversight by the Independent Monitoring Board in Glasgow. No permanent arrangements had been put in place for lay custody visitors to inspect Larne House at that time.

These concerns about human rights should not reflect negatively on the staff at Larne House. Detainees report fair treatment while they are there. Read the full report: www.nihrc.org/index.php/publications

Prior to the opening of Larne House, Richard Kerr (in his capacity as Race Relations Panel Convenor of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland) had been in discussion with the UKBA about the provision of chaplaincy services to the Detention Unit. In 2011 a 'religious advice and support group', made up mainly of clergy from a number of denominations in the Larne area, was formed, and training and orientation was provided by UKBA and Reliance (who ran Larne House before Tascor). Members of this group visit the unit on a regular rota basis and are 'on call' as required. Interaction with staff and detainees has been largely positive and appreciated.

The RAG (Refugee Action Group) prepared an **Information Pack** in 2008 in order to assist people who may be detained. This contains contact details for local (NI) and GB support organisations and groups; advice on rights and how to access legal advice and representation; and suggestions on how to be prepared, including keeping documents, medication and phone numbers to hand. It is also a helpful for anyone who is campaigning on behalf of someone in detention, and it can be obtained from NICRAS (see page 54 for contact details).

Human Trafficking

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), about 12.3 million people worldwide are in forced labour, bonded labour, forced child labour or sexual servitude at any given time. Other estimates range between 4 million and 27 million. According to US Government-sponsored research, about 800,000 people are trafficked across national boundaries each year, about 80% of whom are women and girls and 'up to 50%' are children.

House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, *The Trade in Human Beings: Human Trafficking in the UK, Sixth Report of Session 2008–09 Volume 1* www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmhaff/123/123i.pdf

Trafficking involves transporting people away from the communities in which they live and forcing them to work against their will using violence, deception or coercion. When children are trafficked, no violence, deception or coercion needs to be involved: simply transporting them into exploitative conditions constitutes trafficking. People are trafficked both between countries and within the borders of a state.

Definition by Anti-Slavery
www.antislavery.org/english/slavery_today/trafficking.aspx

'People who used to move drugs around now move people around.'

Phil Taylor, Scotland and Northern Ireland Regional Director, UKBA, speaking at the NI Human Rights Commission Conference, Belfast, 20 April 2009

'It wasn't alright then. It isn't alright now. Modern slavery traps more people today than in the entire 400 years of the transatlantic slave trade.'

Blue Blindfold anti-trafficking campaign UK web site

'A young man, in his late twenties or early thirties, came to the attention of the UK immigration authorities. He had never slept on a bed, had never sat in a chair and had never been paid any money. He had been brought here at the age of 11 from Pakistan into a family home and had no documentation and no evidence of ever having been here.'

A story from GB, from the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, The Trade in Human Beings: Human Trafficking in the UK, Sixth Report of Session 2008–09 Vol. I

Trafficking differs from people smuggling. People who are smuggled are assumed to have given their consent, and people who are trafficked are moved against their will or by deception. In reality, the distinction may be irrelevant. Someone may consent to be smuggled, only to be sold into forced labour. Families and individuals may have to move because of poverty or fear, and for some, travelling with legal documents is just not an option. Others may travel legally, thinking that they are going to proper jobs in a new country, only to find they are in the power of gangsters, or have been deceived about the work or remuneration. Stricter border controls and entry requirements create an underground economy where money is made by providing fraudulent documents, help with transport, guided border crossings, and the facilitation of jobs and accommodation. In either trafficking or smuggling, individuals can end up with large financial debts, owed to the people who smuggled or trafficked them. They can also be 'bound' to the individuals or gangs back home, who arranged their transport and employment. To assert one's rights can be viewed as breaking a debt of honour, and family at home may be at physical risk. Trafficking is a crime that is hidden from view, isolating victims and destroying them psychologically. It thrives partly because people in poverty throughout the world are especially vulnerable to deception.

Trafficking does not always involve movement across international borders – those who are controlled by others in their own country may also be trafficked people. Following news in 2011 that local men were being kept in slave labour conditions in England by criminal elements within the Traveller community, the BBC claimed to have found at least 32 vulnerable trafficked British men, living and working in appalling conditions in six European countries. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-16836065 Five people from one family were jailed subsequently for forced labour offences in December 2012. www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2012/dec/19/traveller-family-jailed-forced-labour

The difficulty in getting successful prosecutions has led to suspected traffickers being charged with other offences such as failure to pay tax or living off immoral earnings. It is often assumed that people trafficking only refers to the movement of women for sexual exploitation but other forms of forced labour exploitation are also common. The arrival of unaccompanied minors is another cause for concern. Children may end up in domestic or sexual servitude, petty crime, or are used to facilitate benefit fraud. The PSNI say that one child, picked up in Belfast, reported being required to steal 25 mobile phones each day.

The UK National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

The UK ratified the **UN Convention Against Human Trafficking** in 2008 and this included signing up to a new national referral mechanism, a process to help frontline staff identify victims of trafficking and offer them support. The UK National Referral Mechanism (NRM) was introduced in 2009. It strengthened arrangements for looking after victims, including a 45-day reflection and recovery period, and the possibility of a one-year residence permit.

If an organisation or individual suspects that a person has been trafficked they are expected to inform an organisation on the list of **First Responders**. (Locally this includes agencies such as the PSNI, Home

Office, NHS Trusts and some NGOs including the recent addition of Migrant Help, see page 79.) They complete a **Referral Form** that is sent to the **UK Human Trafficking Centre** in Sheffield or, if there are immigration law implications, the **Home Office**. A person may make a claim for asylum and those who are considering the asylum claim should be made aware of the **Trafficking Referral**. After 5 days there should be a **Reasonable Grounds** decision and then the person will have a 30-day **Reflection Period** during which they have time to decide whether to co-operate with the authorities. The reflection period may be extended to 45 days. If the **Conclusive Decision** is positive, they should be given one year's **Discretionary Leave to Remain**, although some people choose to return to their countries of origin.

While there is concern that the time is too short to allow traumatized people to feel able to tell their stories, some people have said they would prefer a quicker decision if they could be sure that their co-operation would have a positive outcome. Others will never find it easy to co-operate because their fear is so great, especially if traffickers have made threats to their families back home. There can also be an abiding sense of shame about being sent home, and about outstanding debts to family or friends who thought they were sending someone to a successful life in another country. Support organisations are concerned at negative decisions where cases had appeared strong, and fear that failure to be recognised as trafficking victims may have the effect of reducing the credibility of people who also have asylum claims.

The Government published a new strategy promising stronger action in spring 2011. www.homeoffice.gov.uk/media-centre/press-releases/human-trafficking-strategy There had been criticism of the UK failure to sign up to the EU Trafficking Directive but they decided to do so in March 2011. www.gov.uk/government/speeches/eu-directive-on-human-trafficking The *First Annual Report of the Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group on Human Trafficking* was published in 2012 and assessed the situation in the UK. www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-trafficking-inter-departmental-ministerial-group-report-2012

In 2011, 946 possible victims of human trafficking were referred to the NRM. Of these people, there were 634 females, 312 males, 712 adults and 234 children. The most common countries of origin of these possible victims were Nigeria, China, Vietnam, Romania and Slovakia. Sexual exploitation was the most prominent recorded form of trafficking for adults, with labour exploitation and exploitation for crime was reported to be increasing. For the first time, two victims were recorded as having been brought to the UK for organ harvesting. The UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC) Baseline Assessment published in August 2012 indicated that there were over 2,000 potential victims of human trafficking in the UK at that time. In 2013 there were 1,746 referrals to the NRM of which 41 were referred from N Ireland, 25 female and 16 male: a 173% increase on 2012. For a breakdown of these figures see page 83.

A Joseph Rowntree Foundation report on forced labour pointed out the difference between N Ireland referrals and those in GB counties.

Referrals in which sexual exploitation was recorded were around 40 per cent of the total within each country except in Northern Ireland

'Katerina was a student in Romania. She built up a friendship with a friend of a friend named Alex, who invited her to the UK and told her that she could stay at his house; he would even help her with the air fare. When she arrived in the UK, Katerina was held prisoner in a flat where she was repeatedly beaten and raped. Alex told her that she could have her freedom, but she would have to work as a prostitute to pay back the money that he had paid to bring her here. Katerina eventually gave in and began work, paying all of the money she made to Alex.'

A story from GB, from the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, The Trade in Human Beings: Human Trafficking in the UK, Sixth Report of Session 2008–09 Vol. I

where sexual exploitation was closer to 50 per cent.

JRF Programme Paper, Forced Labour in the UK by Alistair Geddes et al., 2013
www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/Forced%20Labour%20in%20the%20UK%20FINAL%20prog%20paper.pdf

It is unclear if this reflects the actual position regarding offences or the emphasis of enforcement operations. Giving evidence to the Justice Committee, in relation to the Human Trafficking and Exploitation Bill (see pages 82–3) Detective Chief Superintendent Roy McComb said

That is probably the next challenge for us. We have focused on the sexual exploitation end of the human trafficking chain, but I think that labour exploitation is probably another area of business that we will have to look at.

www.niassembly.gov.uk/Assembly-Business/Official-Report/Committee-Minutes-of-Evidence/Session-2013-2014/February-2014/Human-Trafficking-and-Exploitation-Further-Provisions-and-Support-for-Victims-Bill-Police-Service-of-Northern-Ireland/

A new **National Crime Agency (NCA)** – a kind of UK FBI – was established in 2013. This aims to pull together intelligence and co-ordinate the national response to organised crime, including trafficking. (It incorporates the Serious and Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) and the Child Exploitation and Protection Centre (CEOP).) There are difficulties locally because nationalist and republican politicians see the NCA as a threat to independent policing in N Ireland, while other parties feel that sufficient concessions have been made; fear that in not co-operating with the NCA we will lose a weapon in the war against crimes such as human trafficking; and worry that it will be expensive to replace their input effectively. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-24419507

From April 2014 specialist teams will be at Heathrow airport in order to identify potential trafficking victims and disrupt criminal gangs. This will be rolled out to other sites later. www.gov.uk/government/news/specialist-teams-to-fight-modern-slavery-at-uk-ports

Criticism of the UK's support for victims of trafficking

In March 2013 the **Centre for Social Justice (CSJ)** (an independent think tank set up in by the former Conservative Party leader, Iain Duncan Smyth, in 2004) was strident in its criticism of the UK's 'shambolic' response to the problem of human trafficking in their It Happens Here report. They were particularly concerned that the UK Border Agency/ Home Office should be stripped of its major role because too many people were being seen as 'illegal immigrants' rather than victims of crime. The CSJ wanted to see the appointment of an anti-slavery commissioner and among the many shortcomings described, the report notes a shocking lack of leadership and widespread ignorance of the National Referral Mechanism among social workers. They would also like to see legislation:

The law should be changed to halt the current misunderstanding of human trafficking for non-sexual exploitation as an immigration matter. A new Modern Slavery Act should be introduced by Parliament to bring all human trafficking and modern slavery offences together. This will ensure that victims do not face the threat of prosecution and are encouraged to report abuse and seek help from welfare agencies.

www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/UserStorage/pdf/Press%20releases%202013/CSJ-press-release---slavery---100313.pdf

Unaccompanied Children

When children arrive here without parents or guardian they are the responsibility of social services until they become adults. In February 2014, the NI Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY), Patricia Lewsley, launched a report on how these young people are supported when they arrive here. The report describes a lack of monitoring in the past and the difficulty of quantifying how many young people have arrived here on their own recently but the Home Office say that a total of 17 asylum claims were received here from children, between 2009 and 2012. There were at least 12 referrals relating to child trafficking in the same period. www.niccy.org/downloads/2014/Publications/Guardianship_reports_Feb_14/NICCY_Guardianship_main_report_-_Feb_14.pdf The National Crime Agency indicates that there were 20 trafficking referrals for minors in 2013 of which 10 were from the UK (see page 83).

Ms Lewsley outlined how 'separated children' can be seeking asylum, migrants or trafficked, possibly without English and coming into contact with a bewildering number of professional people from social services to the police. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child has recommended all such children should have guardians and Ms Lewsley recommended that this be put in place here.

The child may have experienced or witnessed horrible things in their own country or on their journey here. They need someone who will always consider their best interests, who is informed and present in all planning and decision making processes, and who is equipped to deal with the child's legal, physical, emotional and psychological needs.

www.niccy.org/News/latest/vulnerable-alone-and-in-need-of-our-protection

(See also the Anti-Trafficking Young People Project, page 84.)

In October 2013 the Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group updated their research on the UK situation. *Hidden in Plain Sight, Three Years On: Updated Analysis of UK Measures to Protect Trafficked Persons*, found that while the number of referrals had increased, the assistance given to them had not. Among the criticisms is a feeling that there was a disparity between the 80% of Europeans who were given positive decisions compared to 20% of those from the rest of the world, and a fear that some genuine victims were failing to be identified. www.antislavery.org/english/press_and_news/news_and_press_releases_2009/hidden_in_plain_sight.aspx

The Modern Slavery Bill 2013

In December 2013 the Government published the draft Modern Slavery Bill, which will consolidate previous legislation, following research undertaken by the Labour MP, Frank Field. The bill includes a maximum custodial sentence of life for traffickers. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-25389760 While welcoming these plans, campaigners are disappointed that there is a failure to put the support of victims at the heart of the bill and fears were expressed that the drafting of the bill was rushed and some of the evidence collected by Frank Field ignored. Evangelical Alliance produced a briefing for churches in the hope of strengthening the bill and gaining the following:

- **Focus on victims:** ensuring that they are properly identified, receive immediate support and assistance and their case is fully investigated and that they are not prosecuted for crimes committed under duress and control of another.
- **A strong and independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner**

- **Engagement with businesses:** to bring greater transparency in supply chain legislation, and require businesses to disclose measures taken to eradicate modern slavery from their supply chains and business practices.

www.eauk.org/current-affairs/politics/modern-slavery/index.cfm

The Local Situation

Trafficking is not new to N Ireland. The BBC exposed the trafficking and gross exploitation of European nationals on farms here in 2002. Our land border with another European state puts us in a unique position in the UK. Cheap direct flights mean that we can be seen as a gateway to both the GB and the Irish Republic. As there is more scrutiny of arrivals in London and Dublin, regional ports and airports are now favoured routes. In *The Nature and Extent of Human Trafficking in Northern Ireland*, by Agnieszka Martynowicz, Sarah Toucas and Anne Caughey of the Institute for Conflict Research, published in 2010, the authors stated that the problem was difficult to quantify, with victims often reluctant to admit the nature of their situation. They quoted a law enforcement officer who described the three types of trafficking.

... if we were to put it in [some] order, I'd say at the moment in Northern Ireland forced labour is the biggest problem with trafficking, followed very closely by sexual exploitation, and third would be domestic servitude.

The Nature and Extent of Human Trafficking in Northern Ireland

These categories can be blurred. For example, people in domestic servitude or forced labour may be subject to sexual exploitation.

Evidence suggested that, at that time, women trafficked for prostitution were from a large number of countries, with a predominance of people from China and other parts of Asia, although there seemed to be more women from central and eastern Europe in the North West. Women were being moved about to exert greater control over their lives. www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/ECNIHRCtraffickingReport.pdf

Along with growing recognition of the problem, there was concern about how victims were protected. In March 2009, new N Ireland support services were launched along with the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) (see pages 74–5). Specialist PSNI officers were to be trained to debrief rescued people, and all front-line police officers trained to recognise the key indicators that people may have been exploited. It has been unclear if all frontline staff have sufficient in-depth training. (It would be helpful if it could be ensured that everyone likely to come into contact with foreign nationals here received training about the signs that people may be victims of trafficking. This would include people such as clergy and pastoral workers, advice workers, teachers, etc. in addition to health and social services professionals (see also page 84).

The officers directly involved in trafficking operations encounter distressing situations and have to undertake painstaking work. Intelligence and evidence gathering and criminal proceedings can take years. They are also aware that they cannot rescue all victims. Dougie Grant of the PSNI told an Irish Baptist Network conference in March 2011 that on one occasion they went to a house and found an empty room where blood

and pieces of finger nails showed that a person had tried to claw their way out. DNA tests showed that this was a woman who had disappeared in the south of England five years previously. www.ibnetworks.org/human-trafficking_conference.html

In 2010 Justice Minister David Ford announced the **Visitor or Victim** campaign which featured a poster and leaflet in nine languages which can be placed at points of entry and places such as doctors' surgeries, and encourages trafficked people to come forward and identify themselves through the **Crimestoppers** charity. www.dojni.gov.uk/index/media-centre/news-archive/october_2010/potential_victims_of_human_trafficking_encouraged_to_seek_help.htm

Extreme labour exploitation occurs in many sectors, with reports of debt bondage, and of workers exploited in care homes, whose passports were kept by their employers (see also pages 48–93). Partly because of victims' fears, it is more difficult to get evidence to convict people than it is for other forms of organised crime. So, as David Ford told the Irish Baptist conference, the authorities use collective expertise and are creative in using the Proceeds of Crime Act to recover assets and the proceeds of money laundering, as well as unpaid tax. www.dojni.gov.uk/index/media-centreford_addresses_human_trafficking_conference.htm

Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland looks after adult female victims of trafficking rescued here. www.womensaidni.org/ **Migrant Help** (previously known as **Migrant Helpline**) looks after adult male victims. It is an English-based charity that provides help to migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum, who are in distress. They now have workers in N Ireland. These charities have to care for very traumatised people, sometimes bearing the signs of torture or suffering from sexually transmitted diseases, having had poor nutrition, difficult to communicate with because of language barriers and having lost their trust in other human beings. Some have suffered terribly as they were moved, come under gunfire in war zones, been forced into the boots of vehicles, or made to swim for their lives during their painful journeys.

There has been some criticism of the local arrangements. A 2009 report commissioned by Equality Commission for NI and NI Human Rights Commission recommended a multi-agency approach to helping victims of trafficking, including more training, better awareness, and more effective communication within and between the support organisations. www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/ECNIHRCtraffickingReport.pdf There is a summary of the Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group's report, *Wrong Kind of Victim*, 2010, and access the report itself, on the Amnesty International web site. www.amnesty.org.uk/news_details.asp?NewsID=18820 Among other recommendations, they asked for a N Ireland Human Trafficking Group, the establishment of a local referral mechanism and the appointment of local NGOs who have expertise and experience with working with trafficked people as First Responders (see also page 75).

More Recent Developments

In December 2011 Detective Superintendent Philip Marshall told the PSNI Policing Board that 73 victims had been rescued locally since 2009 and that this was probably only the tip of the iceberg. www.bbc.co.uk/news/

'There are women from ethnic minority backgrounds who may not have come in trafficked but ended up being trafficked and have had to return back to situations (of threat) because we find them very difficult to support.'

Marie Brown, Women's Aid <http://drugsinfo.newslireland.wordpress.com/category/drugs-and-crime/page/301/>

'Human trafficking is a global problem and we should not be blind to the fact that it is happening right now in Northern Ireland. Women, men and even children are being brought to this country, often against their will, for the purposes of economic and sexual exploitation. They are trafficked by individuals and gangs who give no thought to their suffering, but are solely motivated by their own financial gain.' The Recorder of Belfast, His Honour Judge Burgess speaking at the sentencing of Matyas Pis for offences including human trafficking, 23 April 2012. www.courtsni.gov.uk/en-gb/judicial%20decisions/summaryjudgments/documents/summary%20of%20judgment%20-%20r%20v%20matyas%20pis%20r-v-matyas-pis_230412.html

In 2004 a Chinese woman, Qu Mei Na, was murdered in Belfast. Speaking in February 2008, following the sentencing of one of the men convicted of her murder, politician Anna Lo said that 'it was widely believed in the Chinese community that the woman had been trafficked and that she had been trying to get out of prostitution.' www.newsletter.co.uk/news/MLA-and-Womens-Aid-voice.3751911.jp

'This must end. The Government must act to give slavery no corner to hide in the UK. And the Church must use its experience of care and its passion for justice to press for a law that banishes slavery for good.' Evangelical Alliance briefing, Modern Slavery Bill – Calling the Church to Action www.eauk.org/current-affairs/politics/modern-slavery/index.cfm

Honour-based violence and forced marriage

In October 2011 the PSNI hosted a conference on the crimes of honour-based violence and forced marriage. Delegates heard about the relative prevalence of this form of abuse in GB and were faced with the question: 'Is this occurring locally?' The Civil Law Reform Division of the Stormont Department of Finance and Personnel would welcome evidence of any problems occurring here. www.dfpni.gov.uk/index/civil-law-reform/law-reform/lr-contact.htm In 2011 the PSNI published *Police Response to Honour Based Violence (HBV)*, service procedures outlining how their officers should respond. www.psnipolice.uk/service_procedure_2-11.pdf In 2011–12 the PSNI identified two incidents where the 'Honour Based Incident qualifier' was applied. www.psnipolice.uk/honour_based_violence-2.pdf

While there is no evidence of a major problem here, it is disturbing that one respondent in a survey of minority-ethnic women submission to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) by Sarah Isal, *The Experiences of Minority Ethnic Women in Northern Ireland*, in June 2013 (see also page 129), said that there are 'no advocates for minority groups, even more so for women who are in forced marriages'.

Information about forced marriage and the protection available in civil law for people faced with this denial of human rights and dignity is available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office web site which has multi-lingual leaflets, posters and resources as well as helpful guidance on the signs. The Forced Marriage Unit (a joint initiative between the Home Office and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office) gave advice and support in 1485 cases where there was the possibility of forced marriage in 2012. Where the age was known, 13% of cases involved victims who were less than 15 years old. www.gov.uk/forced-marriage

Forced Marriage should not be confused with **Sham Marriage** where a wedding is planned in order to gain a better immigration status for one of the participants. (However, some forms of sham marriage occur where women have been trafficked and are forced to marry a number of different men. In this case sexual exploitation may be part of the criminal act.) There have been a number of recent prosecutions for sham marriage in N Ireland.

'Many of the women who have been trafficked into Northern Ireland and forced into prostitution were under the illusion that they would be working as nannies, seamstresses, hairdressers or that they would be receiving an education.'

Research Paper Investigating the Issues for Women in Northern Ireland Involved in Prostitution and Exploring Best Practice Elsewhere, Department of Justice, April 2011

[uk-northern-ireland-15996188](http://www.northern-ireland-15996188) Speaking to the Stormont All Party Group on Ethnic Minority Communities in October 2011, he said that while many previous victims had been Chinese, during 2011, the countries of origin had included the UK, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Tanzania, Guinea and Zimbabwe.

The NI Policing Board and PSNI Policing Plan 2011–14 stressed the need to address people trafficking and increase organisational knowledge of trafficking and the issues of prostitution. www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/amended_version__policing_plan_2011-14.pdf It is to be hoped that the other forms of trafficking, such as forced labour, will also be prioritised by the authorities. In recent years the PSNI has rescued significant numbers of people: 25 in 2009–10; 23 in 2010–11; and 33 in 2011–12 and in 2012 there was the first local conviction when Hungarian national Matyas Pis changed his plea to guilty of trafficking, brothel keeping and controlling prostitution.

There was increased activity during 2012. On 7 February the NI Assembly passed a resolution expressing concern at the increase in human trafficking here. During the debate Justice Minister David Ford praised NGOS who worked in this area, including voluntary and church groups. www.niassembly.gov.uk/Assembly-Business/Official-Report/Reports-11-12/07-February-2012/#a6 In response to the debate Helena McCormick of the NI Council

for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) said: 'We know from police statistics that we have the fastest growing sex industry in the UK at the moment.' www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-16935379

In April, Evangelical Alliance in N Ireland announced its campaign for an increase in the penalties for someone convicted of having sex with a trafficked woman, so that they would face prison and have their name added to the sex-offenders register. www.eauk.org/northern-ireland/stop-trafficking-in-ni.cfm

David Ford welcomed the formation of an **All-Party Group on Human Trafficking** at Stormont in May and consulted on legislation relating to two new proposed offences, as part of the Criminal Justice Bill (see page 82), needed so that N Ireland would comply with the European Directive on Human Trafficking. www.dojni.gov.uk/index/media-centreford-welcomes-all-party-group-on-human-trafficking.htm (Amnesty International provides secretarial and advisory services to the All-Party Group.) In June the NI Assembly Research and Information Service produced a briefing for politicians, *Human Trafficking in Northern Ireland*. www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/RaSe/Publications/2012/ofmdfm/10012.pdf

In September 2012 the **Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA)** reported on the situation in the UK and made some specific comments about N Ireland. They noted confusion around First Responders in NI and the process of referral; the few prosecutions; lack of compensation awards; and absence of reliable data. They were also anxious that informal co-operative arrangements on policy and its implementation should be formalized. www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/trafficking/Docs/Reports/GRETA_2012_6_FGR_GBR_en.pdf During consultation the Law Centre NI raised a number of concerns, including fears that historic victims of trafficking might be disadvantaged here as compared to the rest of the UK. www.lawcentreni.org/policy/consultation-responses/848.htm There was a further critique of current responses to human trafficking in a NI Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) briefing paper by Professor Tom Obokata, published in November 2012, which recommended maximizing deterrence through increased sentences, more effective awareness raising, and giving serious consideration to having an independent anti-trafficking co-ordinator or rapporteur. http://nicem.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/NICEM_Trafficking_Report.pdf

In October 2012 the Department of Justice NI (DOJ) and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) published guidance on the care of adult and child victims of Human Trafficking. www.dojni.gov.uk/index/media-centre/news-archive/october-2012/guidance-on-the-support-of-adult-victims-of-human-trafficking-published.htm In the same month, Amnesty welcomed the fact that the DOJ was to establish a collaborative group to tackle human trafficking (see NGO Engagement Group, page 82). Local support groups were also increasingly active. The No More Traffic on Our Streets campaign, for example, held an awareness-raising festival in the Belfast area between 12 and 21 May. A number of the events were held in churches and the festival ended in a candlelit vigil at the City Hall. [www.nomoretraffik.com/](http://nomoretraffik.com/) Groups include the Solas Trust, whose focus has been to develop a refuge here for victims of trafficking. <http://solastrust.org/>

'I think of "victim A", a young girl from China, who was orphaned as a child and, subsequently, sold into prostitution at the age of 14. Like so many trafficking victims, she fell prey to a fraudulent scheme that promised employment and a better life abroad. Victim A's journey started in rural China, continued through Hong Kong and eventually ended in Belfast. She quickly learned that instead of working at a proper job, she was to perform sexual favours for her trafficker – the man she believed would provide employment for her – and his friends. She was routinely raped in an effort to break her spirit, humiliate her and degrade her. Once in Belfast, victim A eventually escaped her life of exploitation, but she still lives with a deep sense of shame as a result of the terrible acts that were committed against her.'

Lord Morrow speaking in the NI Assembly, 7 February 2012

'This is rape for profit. This is a high-yield, low-risk crime that needs to be dealt with urgently.'

David McIlveen, MLA, NI Assembly debate, 7 February 2012 www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-16935379

'... most of the girls whom we have rescued, especially those who have been trafficked, have no clue where they are. They rarely know which country they are in. Even though the language spoken is English, they do not know which country they are in, and they certainly do not know which city they are in.'

Evidence to the NI Justice Committee by Detective Chief Superintendent Roy McComb, February 2014 www.niassembly.gov.uk/Assembly-Business/Official-Report/Committee-Minutes-of-Evidence/Session-2013-2014/February-2014/Human-Trafficking-and-Exploitation-Further-Provisions-and-Support-for-Victims-Bill-Police-Service-of-Northern-Ireland/

At the end of the year the Justice Minister hosted the first meeting of an **NGO Engagement Group** that operates under the auspices of the Organised Crime Task Force. It has three sub-groups on training, education and awareness raising and is comprised of public bodies and NGOs and includes the Community Faiths' Forum (see page 158). www.northernireland.gov.uk/index/media-centre/news-departments/news-doj/news-releases-doj-december-2012/news-doj-131212-justice-minister-hosts.htm

In April 2013 The Criminal Justice Act (Northern Ireland) became law and brought N Ireland into line with the criminal aspects of the EU Directive. Traffickers operating internally within the United Kingdom will no longer be immune from prosecution in here and trafficking offences prosecuted in Northern Ireland will now be tried only on indictment, allowing a maximum sentence of 14 years imprisonment. www.dojni.gov.uk/index/media-centre/news-archive/april-2013/criminal-justice-act-northern-ireland-2013-receives-royal-assent.htm The DOJ also published its first annual trafficking action plan. In August the Minister launched an educational resource pack for post primary pupils. www.dojni.gov.uk/index/media-centre/news-archive/august-2013/ford-highlights-role-of-young-people-in-tackling-human-trafficking.htm In the following month the DOJ produced a leaflet, *Human Trafficking: Know Your Rights*, in eight languages to signpost potential victims to sources of help. www.dojni.gov.uk/index/publications/publication-categories/pubs-policing-community-safety/community-safety/organised-crime/multi-lingual-leaflet-for-victims-of-human-trafficking.htm

Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Further Provisions and Support for Victims) Bill

A Private Members Bill on human trafficking was initiated by Lord Morrow in September 2012. He reissued an amended Bill the following year. Some proposals have been welcomed widely, especially those relating to the provision of protection and services for victims. Clause 6 (previously Clause 4) proposed making it illegal to pay for sexual services. This has been praised by some people, but others feel it blurs the issue of prostitution and trafficking and there is anxiety about outlawing prostitution without putting in place adequate supported exit strategies for those who will lose their livelihoods. Some commentators have also talked about a right-wing Christian conspiracy and scaremongering about the extent of trafficking here. See, for example, an article in the *Belfast Telegraph* by Graham Ellison. www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/news-analysis/the-prostitution-proposal-needs-kicked-to-the-kerb-28873882.html Dr Ellison questions the level of human trafficking for sexual exploitation and would like to see a greater emphasis on other forms of forced labour. www.newsletter.co.uk/news/regional/queen-s-academic-questions-extent-of-human-trafficking-1-5560148 Amnesty also commented on the draft bill. www.amnesty.org.uk/human-trafficking-northern-ireland#.Ut2AKhyQEnU (This web page contains information and reports about trafficking, as well as other Amnesty responses in relation to trafficking in N Ireland.)

Making payment for sex services illegal would follow the example of Sweden (the Nordic model). Other European countries, including the Republic of Ireland seem likely to follow and some people argue that if the UK does not do likewise it will become more attractive for people who want to continue to earn money from sexual exploitation.

Northern Ireland Human Trafficking figures for 2013

In 2013 there were 1,746 referrals to the NRM of which 41 were referred from N Ireland, 25 female and 16 male: a 173% increase on 2012. Of the female referrals, 10 of the adults were for sexual exploitation and one for labour exploitation and 10 of the minors were for sexual exploitation and four for an unknown exploitation type. (Of the female minors referred for sexual exploitation nine were from the UK.) Eight of the adult male referrals were for labour exploitation and one for sexual exploitation, and one unknown. The one minor male referred for sexual exploitation was from the UK and the five from other countries were for unknown types of exploitation. The top countries of origin for referrals were: Romania 12; UK 11; China five; ROI five; Nigeria three; and Egypt, Guinea Bissau, Philippines and Poland one each. Ten were referred by a local authority, 27 by the PSNI and 4 by the Home Office. www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/publications/139-national-referral-mechanism-statistics-2013/file

The Justice Committee requested evidence on the Bill and more than 130 organisations responded providing a wide range of responses which can be found online. www.niassembly.gov.uk/Assembly-Business/Committees/Justice/Legislation---Committee-Stage-of-Bills/The-Human-Trafficking-and-Exploitation-Further-Provisions-and-Support-for-Victims-Bill---Committee-Stage/ The committee will consider the evidence and produce a report.

At the committee stage of the NI Assembly Criminal Justice Bill concerns were expressed about the trafficking provisions. There were fears about the level of sentencing and the Justice Minister was considering making trafficking an indictable offence only, so that trials would be held in the Crown Court, obviating the possibility of a very low sentences. Voluntary organisations had also expressed concern about the failure of the Department to include measures, such as those relating to the protection, assistance and support for victims, and training. It was agreed that some of these measures could be given consideration when Lord Morrow's Bill reached its committee stage. www.niassembly.gov.uk/Assembly-Business/Committees/Justice/Reports/Report-on-the-Criminal-Justice-Bill--NIA1011-15/#sthash.wSQPwsa4.dpuf

In January 2014 Justice Minister David Ford and Lord Morrow wrote jointly to the NI Justice Committee explaining that they had managed to come to agreement on the vast majority of clauses in the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Further Provisions and Support for Victims) Bill. A synopsis of the bill's clauses can be found online. www.niassembly.gov.uk/Assembly-Business/Committees/Justice/Legislation---Committee-Stage-of-Bills/The-Human-Trafficking-and-Exploitation-Further-Provisions-and-Support-for-Victims-Bill---Committee-Stage/Brief-Synopsis

David Ford also announced in January that he had held bilateral meetings with the leaders of the four main churches and said that 'Churches are a significant part of our community and can play a vital role in identifying and reporting trafficking and exploitation where it occurs or is suspected.' www.dojni.gov.uk/index/media-centre/news-archive/january_2014/ford-meets-with-church-leaders-to-discuss-human-trafficking.htm

The DOJ initiated a 12-week consultation, *Human Trafficking and Slavery: Strengthening Northern Ireland's Response*, in the light of the Government's Modern Slavery Bill (see pages 77–8), to run until 15 April 2014. www.dojni.gov.uk/index/public-consultations/current-consultations/human-trafficking-and-slavery-strengthening-northern-irelands-response.pdf

'I am delighted that the Minister and I have been able to reach agreement about the vast majority of clauses in my Bill. This lays the foundation for Northern Ireland to have the very best anti-trafficking legislation in the United Kingdom.

Not only will the Bill tighten up prosecution of traffickers in our province, but very significantly it will also help to ensure that victims are well-supported from the moment they are rescued.'

Lord Morrow, 17 January 2014 www.northernireland.gov.uk/index/media-centre/news-departments/news-doj/news-doj-170114-justice-committee-updated.htm

What can you do about trafficking?

- Be aware of the signs. The NI Direct's Human Trafficking web page contains information on signs, the support available for victims and teaching resources. www.nidirect.gov.uk/human-trafficking **Crimestoppers** also has the 'It's Time to Recognise the Signs' campaign. <http://readthesigns.co.uk/> Information is also available on the EMBRACE web site. www.embraceni.org/category/information/trafficking/ The Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) and partners have produced short 'open your eyes' videos on all forms of trafficking. The ones marked MIRROR are for English speakers. www.youtube.com/results?search_query=CCME%20videos%20open%20your%20eyes&sm=3
- **If you feel that someone is in immediate danger dial 999.** Report other suspicions to the **PSNI** on **0845 600 8000** or the **101** non-emergency number. Remember that traffickers are usually part of organised crime gangs and so you should not confront them. Let the police do their job.
- You can also report suspicious activity through the **Crimestoppers** confidential line **0800 555 111**.
- The **Law Centre NI** can provide free and confidential specialist legal advice to victims and advisers through its daily advice line 9.30am-1pm **028 9024 4401** and has a support leaflet for trafficked people **Exploited** that includes information in Albanian, Czech, English, French, Lithuanian, Malaysian, Mandarin, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian and Thai.
- Individuals can also be advised through the 24-hour **Migrant Helpline 07766 668 781** E-mail: mhl@migranthelpline.org
- Where a child is concerned, the local **Health and Social Care Trust** should be contacted. There are online contact details for the five Northern Ireland Trusts and you should contact the duty social worker. www.hscni.net/index.php?link=trusts
- There is also a **Child Trafficking Help and Information Line 0800 107 7057** and an NSPCC 24-hour **Child Protection Helpline 0808 800 5000**.
- If you want to form a group to challenge human trafficking in your community or just find out more, Detective Superintendent **Philip Marshall** of **PSNI Organised Crime Branch** or **Roger McVicker** of **Migrant Help** are happy to speak to groups about the local situation and to suggest guidelines for your activities.
E-mail Philip.Marshall@psni.pnn.police.uk
E-mail: roger.mcvicker@migranthelpline.org

Frontline workers 'key to tackling human trafficking'

In January 2014 about 200 frontline workers including refuse collectors, taxi drivers and postal workers were told that they had a vital role to play in helping to stop human trafficking. The event was held in Belfast City Hall and was organised by the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP). They were helped to recognise the signs, see below:

Is someone

- Working against their will?
- Having their movements controlled?
- Subject to violence or threats?
- Distrustful of authorities?

- Unable to communicate freely with others?
- Unsure of where they are?
- Not integrated with the local community?

Do they appear to

- Have little or no time off?
- Live in overcrowded accommodation?
- Have bruises or unexplained injuries?
- Be subject to security at their accommodation or work premises?
- Be poorly integrated into the community?
- Work excessive hours? Be in a situation of dependence?

www.facebook.com/PSNI.Belfast/posts/575745769183810

Expert help for trafficked children and young people

In December 2013 the Law Centre NI launched the **Anti-Trafficking Children and Young People Project** to assist trafficked children and young people up to the age of 25. Because of funding from Comic Relief, the Law Centre will be able to assist victims throughout the complex process and also be funded to provide information and policy responses. www.lawcentreni.org/Publications/Frontline/Frontline-90.pdf

The project advice line is open Monday to Friday 9.30am – 1.00pm (028) 9024 4401

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) unit within the National Crime Agency has a film about sexual exploitation for use by teachers and youth leaders. <http://ceop.police.uk/Media-Centre/Press-releases/2013/School-best-place-to-learn-about-sexual-exploitation/>

Worker Exploitation

'We are all witnesses of the burden of suffering, the dislocation and the aspirations that accompany the flow of migrants. ... there is no doubt that foreign workers ... make a significant contribution to the economic development of the host country through their labour, besides that which they make to their country of origin through the money they send home. Obviously, these [workers] cannot be considered as a commodity or a mere workforce. They must not, therefore, be treated like any other factor of production. Every migrant is a human person who, as such, possesses fundamental, inalienable rights that must be respected by everyone and in every circumstance.'

Caritas in Veritate (Love in Truth), Encyclical letter of Pope Benedict XVI,
29 June 2009

Trafficking and smuggling enable people to be exploited in the workplace, partly because of the immigration status of some victims, but exploitation also affects people who are permitted to work here. Some are unaware of their rights, but even if they are aware that they are being treated unfairly, they are often frightened to complain in case they lose their jobs. The recession has only made this worse. Researchers have found that employers take advantage of migrant workers.

'Migrant workers can be more vulnerable than other sorts of workers, and therefore can be taken advantage of by bad employers. Increased

'The agency calls you in the morning 'I need you today, come to work.' People come and after half an hour, the manager says 'Why are you here? I don't need you, go home'. So people spend money for taxi – six or eight pounds – if the wife or husband is working in the same conditions – how can these people live.'

'I was supposed to have a contract. There was no contract. Before we moved to Ireland we were supposed to have a contract. But I never saw a contract and I never signed anything. When we complained they closed the Foundation [recruitment agency] in Poland but they still supply people for the company.'

Two workers quoted in Migrant Workers and their Families in Northern Ireland by Robbie McVeigh

'We'd like a proper job...where at the end of each week I would know how much I would get; with the agency you never know. Normally people working through the agency have shifts ... 'We work Friday, Saturday and Sunday, normally, we just work when they call us but the boss makes sure work at least two shifts each week, because this is enough money for the rent, and he owns the house.'

Tiago from Brazil quoted in The New Workers

vulnerability comes from often having few options other than the current employment, lack of knowledge of rights or paths to access rights, and fear of repercussions. For other non-EU migrant workers, the lack of a benefits safety net and the right to change employer can also lead people to be trapped in exploitative circumstances.'

Daniel Holder and C. Lanao, *Case Studies of discrimination and disadvantage for Portuguese Migrant Workers*, 2006

Agencies and Employers

Agency workers are people who are supplied by an employment business or agency to work for a third party. Belfast agencies reported to the Institute for Conflict Research that the majority of workers they dealt with were employed in healthcare, construction, hospitality, or as manual workers. The advantage for migrant workers is that they can get into work quickly. Working as an 'agency worker', however, means having fewer rights than an 'employee'. (In general terms, an employee has a contract of employment and a worker works only when needed or when they want.) Agencies and employment businesses exert great power, for both good and ill, over the lives of migrant workers. At the Committee of Employment and Learning hearing on the Agency Workers Directive in June 2011 Kevin Doherty of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NI) stated that there were over 300 employment agencies and employment businesses operating in N Ireland. There are no official figures for the numbers of agency workers. Gary Irvine of the Diamond Recruitment Group 2009 accepted that around 20,000 agency workers might be active at any one time, but estimated that between 50,000 to 100,000 people might be involved in agency work over the course of a year. (More recently, at a seminar on Agency Worker Protection organised by the NI Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) in January 2012, it was suggested that there were around 210–230 agencies operating here at that time.)

Employers were beginning to make increased use of subcontracted agency workers before the recent increase in the employment of migrant workers. Tarya McKee of the Transport and General Workers Union reported to a conference in 2006 that migrant workers had sometimes been among the workers made redundant to make way for agency workers. An increasing number of local people also work for agencies. Most contracts are for short periods, increasing levels of anxiety about future employment. A **Fair Work Coalition** report *Fair Work: Fighting Poverty through Decent Jobs*, in 2010, highlighted how people are increasingly denied fair treatment in the workplace because they are classed as 'workers' not employees and falsely classified as self-employed. www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/fairworkreport.pdf

Zero hours contracts are a particular problem. Not only can they leave people without income but these contracts make it difficult for people to plan their lives and for parents, it is especially difficult.

NICEM published a report, *Believe in Childcare?*, in 2014, following research with people from 25 countries who are living here. The executive summary states that they found a high level of ignorance about help with childcare: 69.5% of the total sample was unaware of a Childcare Voucher Scheme;

47.0% were not aware of the right to request flexible working hours; 43.7% were unaware of free part time pre-school places; and 25.5% of participants were not aware of Working Tax Credit. 'While parents acknowledged that cost was a barrier to using formal childcare, some parents were unable to access formal childcare as it did not operate at the times they needed it.' Shift patterns made arrangements difficult and participants 'who worked on zero-hours contracts also reported that arranging childcare on short notice was problematic'. <http://nicem.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Believe-in-Childcare-Executive-Summary-English.pdf>

There are indications that agency working strengthens the possibility of exploitation and forced labour. The **International Labour Organisation (ILO)** describes forced labour as including some of the following; violence and/or threats; restriction of movement; being tied to the employer or agency through debt; the withholding of wages or refusal to pay wages; passports or identity documents being withheld; and the threat to tell the authorities about someone who is without proper papers. All these happen through trafficking by criminal gangs, but also through the actions of unscrupulous local agencies and employers. A literature review into the role of agencies by the Institute of Conflict Research found that agencies and employers had been reported to

- retain passports during the period of employment;
- deduct rent from wages and provide poor housing;
- withhold pay;
- pay unfair wages in comparison to rates paid to local workers;
- enforce long hours and bad working conditions;
- deny holiday entitlements;
- fail to fulfil the contracts promised before arrival here;
- impose disciplinary measures that are not applied to local people; and
- discriminate against people on grounds of gender.

John Bell, *A Modern Form of Slavery? A Literature Review of Forced Labour*, Institute for Conflict Research, 2009

In January 2008 the Irish Congress of Trade Unions called for the devolved executive to use its powers to agree a new deal for agency workers. Kasia Garbal, Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NI) Migrant Worker Project Officer, said

An employer that uses agencies that rip off decent and hard-working people ... is cheating more than those workers. Those agencies are cheating every good employer and undercutting them by sheer theft. The Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive have a moral duty to control the activities of employment agencies and ensure that fairness happens as a matter of course. The alternative is for Northern Ireland to get a reputation as the sweatshop of northern Europe.

Submissions to the Stormont Assembly Committee on Employment echo this.

Our concern is that employing through agencies is no longer used as a flexible way of getting industry out of its problems and workers back into work. Given that it has been going on for so long and is so deeply

'I worked at a large supermarket chain but it was through an agency. Most of the local people would be directly employed and most of the foreign people would be employed through an agency and would be paid less, and also we would be made to work on the night shift and the local people would just do the day shift.'

Gedi from Lithuania quoted in The New Workers

'I met a guy not so long ago ... and when I added up what he had actually paid in terms of deductions, he'd paid £1,000 for his flight alone ... [I asked] "Do you not realise this?" and he said "No we never get a payslip".'

NGO representative
'We had to do everything ourselves – the agency said we had to manage things ourselves. We were here a year with no documents.'

Female A2 [Bulgarian or Romanian] national

'I have not received a contract. No-one has a contract. No safety instructions, no induction, nothing.'

Male A8 national (All 3 quotations are from Forced Labour in Northern Ireland)

'We paid 600 euro to the agency and then £500 to a contact in the UK who said he would get us work documents. We never got these. We knew only that we would be doing unskilled work in Belfast. We work on a farm and the job is not what we expected.'

'I got a contract written in English. The agency staff completed it and I signed it. But I didn't understand it.'

Evidence to the Equality Commission, The Role of the Recruitment Sector in the Employment of Migrant Workers, 2010

Some workplace difficulties call into question our assumptions that conditions here are better than in other countries. One nurse reported

'I was working in China for six years. Financially it is better here but in terms of quality in nursing homes, it is better in China ... We really want to help the residents but there is too much work. There is a lack of equipment in nursing homes here ... At feeding time you are too busy to help people, there is too much time pressure.'

Migrant Workers and their Families in Northern Ireland

rooted, it is clear to us that it is an attempt to get workers on the cheap.

Kevin Doherty, Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NI) Migrant worker Support Unit, June 2010

The Equality Commission for NI undertook an investigation as to whether the involvement of employment agencies and businesses in the employment of migrant workers has rights implications. Their main findings confirmed that

Migrant workers employed by recruitment agencies as temporary agency workers will not necessarily have the same terms and conditions as direct employees. We found that their main terms and conditions of service, including their pay, was generally inferior to that enjoyed by direct employees, even when they were employed as agency workers for substantial periods, or when they worked alongside direct employees.

Migrant workers employed by the recruitment sector generally fill jobs that attract National Minimum Wage and offer irregular hours and little in the way of job security.

The Role of the Recruitment Sector in the Employment of Migrant Workers
www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/ECMigrantfullrpt.pdf

Employees tended to be employed on the basis of the English language skills apparent at their first interview and so 'the majority of migrant workers who find work through the recruitment sector are placed in minimum wage jobs that are not commensurate with their qualifications and experience'. 72% of participants found the language barrier significant (see also pages 122–4). There were frequently reported errors and delays in receipt of pay. Workers reported favouritism in the allocation of work to fellow nationals by foreign staff or supervisors. Some said that they were barred from speaking any language other than English even during social breaks. In their recommendations the Commission places particular stress on the translation of documents for migrant workers. To read more see *The Role of the Recruitment Sector in the Employment of Migrant Workers: A Formal Investigation*, 2010. www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/ECMigrantfullrpt.pdf

There has been an attempt to address some of the problems. In December 2011 the **EU Agency Workers Directive** was extended to N Ireland. The law now gives agency workers some improved rights straight away and the same rights in terms of pay, holidays and other basic working conditions as directly recruited staff after 12 continuous weeks in post. www.northernireland.gov.uk/news-del-160811-directive-delivers-fairness Immediately, however, local trade unions noted that people were being given shorter temporary contracts to avoid these provisions. A further problem is the fact that race-relations legislation does not extend to most agency workers. This was examined in a briefing paper published in May 2012, *Anti-Discrimination Legislation and Agency Workers in Northern Ireland* by Michael Potter, of the NI Assembly Research and Information Service, which outlines the potential gaps in anti-discrimination legislation. www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/RaISel/Publications/2012/ofmdfm/9012.pdf

The problems experienced by agency workers also occur when people are employed directly and employers are unscrupulous. Trade unions have reported increasing numbers of the kind of abuses seen with agency workers (see pages 87–8).

- No written contracts
- No pay slips
- No paid holidays
- Excessive working hours
- People who object to their conditions are threatened with instant dismissal
- Women sacked because they were pregnant
- Less favourable conditions than local people
- Dismissal for minor disciplinary offences
- People sacked by text message
- No written reasons for dismissal
- Racism

Oral presentation to the Belfast Migrant Forum by Kasia Garbal and Kevin Doherty of the ICTUNI Migrant Worker Support Unit, November 2009

In June 2011, following multi-agency research co-ordinated by the Institute for Conflict Research, a report was published, which found instances of severe exploitation in N Ireland, especially in the fishing, mushroom and catering industries, and particularly among eastern Europeans, Filipinos and Chinese people. There were also possible instances within the self-employed sector among some Roma migrants. The report highlights the links between vulnerability and a lack of English language skills, social and support networks, and local knowledge. www.jrf.org.uk/publications/forced-labour-northern-ireland-exploiting-vulnerability Les Allamby wrote about the findings in *Frontline* 80, Summer 2011. www.lawcentreni.org/Publications/Frontline/Frontline80.pdf

The Gangmasters Licensing Authority

Following the death of 23 Chinese cockle pickers in Morecambe Bay, the **Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA)** was set up, with the aim of stopping exploitation in agriculture, horticulture, and shellfish gathering and the processing and packaging businesses that go with these areas of work. Penalties include up to 10 years imprisonment and unlimited fines. The abuse they have uncovered includes

- forced labour
- threats and verbal abuse against workers
- workers forced to pay exorbitant deductions from wages for unsuitable or overcrowded accommodation
- workers forced to travel to work in 'death trap' vans
- workers being paid below the minimum wage
- workers whose health and safety have been put at risk
- the use of illegal workers
- the manipulation of worker documents

In July 2008 the GLA announced that the pro-active **Operation Ajax**, including surprise raids, applied in N Ireland, and in October 2008

'We have trouble getting holiday pay from the agency. They don't want to speak to us about it. They said that if we don't like it we could always go back home.' ... 'The same people get picked for work all the time, and to do overtime. The supervisors only choose people of their own nationality.'

Evidence to the Equality Commission, The Role of the Recruitment Sector in the Employment of Migrant Workers, 2010

Rights in the workplace

People who want to learn more about their rights (including the National Minimum Wage, health and safety etc.) can contact the **Pay and Work Rights Helpline 0800 917 2368**, Text phone **0800 121 4042** or online. www.gov.uk/pay-and-work-rights-helpline (Rights include itemised pay statements showing deductions, maximum working hours per week, specified rest periods and breaks and there are limits to the deductions allowed for accommodation. A worker does not have to accept a contract of employment in a language which he/she does not understand.)

There is an introduction to working in N Ireland including rights online. (Foreign language versions are also available.) www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/employment/understanding-your-work-status/migrant-workers/introduction-to-working-in-ni.htm NI Direct also has information on the rights of agency workers www.nidirect.gov.uk/agency-workers

There are information leaflets in 18 languages on the **Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA)** web site. <http://gla.defra.gov.uk/Publications/Worker-Publications/> Report problems and issues to the GLA confidentially online <https://gla.defra.gov.uk/Report-Issue/en/Report-Form/>, E-mail intelligence@gla.gsi.gov.uk or use the confidential phone line **0800 432 0804**, which is free from a landline. Multilingual staff are available (9am – 5pm). It is also possible to contact the GLA on **0845 602 5020**. Contact details for officers in N Ireland are: Nigel Stockdale, mob **07825797102/** nigel.stockdale@gla.gsi.gov.uk and Christine Howe, mob **07825 797103/** Christine.howe@gla.gsi.gov.uk

The **Law Centre NI** and **NI Human Rights Commission** has an online guide to the rights of migrant workers, available in 10 languages. www.lawcentreni.org/publications/migrant-workers.html

Advice about workplace issues is also available from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NI) **Migrant Worker Support Unit** which has produced a number of publications including *Your Rights at Work*, a multilingual pocket guide and a multilingual leaflet informing migrant workers about the service. Tel. **(028) 90 31 9644** or E-mail Kasia.Garbal@ictuni.org

The **Equality Commission NI** can provide free confidential advice and assistance in taking cases concerning racial discrimination in the workplace, in education and in the provision of goods and services etc. They also have leaflets on employment rights in 10 languages. Tel. **(028) 90 500 600** www.equalityni.org

The **Labour Relations Agency (LRA)** web site www.lra.org.uk has a telephone helpline **(028) 90 321442**. The independent LRA provides employment advice to employers and employees and provides conciliation, mediation and arbitrations services. It has no enforcement role.

The **Department of Employment and Learning (DEL)** has an **Employment Agency Inspectorate (EAI)** with two inspectors responsible for ensuring that recruitment agencies and businesses comply with the law. The inspectors are concerned about under-reporting and, having started by inspecting all known agencies, are now carrying out targeted operations. Between April 2012 and March 2013, the EAI carried out 24 inspections and investigations. Thirteen complaints were received in that period. www.delni.gov.uk/eai-fifth-annual-report-august-2013.pdf They have produced a flier in eight languages: *Are you an agency worker who has been mistreated by your Employment Agency* www.delni.gov.uk/eai-flyer.pdf Contact the inspectors by E-mail eai@delni.gov.uk Tel. **(028) 9025 7554** or make an online complaint. www.delni.gov.uk/eai-complaint-form1.pdf The names of prohibited agencies and agents are displayed online. www.delni.gov.uk/index/er/eai.htm

You can also get advice on workplace rights from the **Law Centre NI** helplines **Belfast (028) 9024 4401** and **Derry~Londonderry (028) 7126 2433**.

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is responsible for the enforcement of the minimum wage, which was set at £6.19 per hour for people over 21 from October 2012.

The **Belfast Migrant Centre**, 1st Floor, Ascot House, 24-31 Shaftesbury Square, Belfast, BT2 7DB has bi-lingual staff. They offer an immigration advice service by appointment: Tel: **(028) 9043 8962**. They also offer drop-in advice clinics in Belfast on Mondays, 9.00 to 11.30 and Thursdays, 5.30pm to 8.00pm, for issues not related to immigration. They also run clinics outside Belfast. Contact: Max Petruskin **077 307 47 860**, North West Regional Office, The Old Church, Clarendon Street, L/Derry BT48 7ES or Liz Conor-Kerr **075 455 02285**, Mid-Ulster and Down Regional Office, Ozanam Centre, 14–16 William Street, Lurgan BT66 6JA. <http://belfastmigrantcentre.org/>

Business in the Community (BIC) has an **Employers Charter for Employing Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland**. Their revised *Best Practice Guidelines for Employing Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland* is available online. www.bitc.org.uk/northern_ireland/resources/publications/best_practice.html and the **Equality Commission NI** has published *Employing Migrant Workers: A Good Practice Guide for Employers for Promoting Equality of Opportunity*. www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/EmpMigrantWorkers.pdf

they revealed that over a third of agencies who supply workers for the food processing, packing, farming and horticulture sectors did not hold GLA licences. The GLA identified a particular problem with unlicensed gangmasters involved in shellfish activities on the N Ireland coast, such as periwinkle gathering. A number of investigations, arrests and prosecutions have taken place locally.

The GLA uncovers issues with workers in relation to pay and conditions. Workers are sometimes exploited in their own countries prior to entering the UK. They are charged large fees just to be placed in work in the UK. The workers then sometimes have to pay a further amount to a local gangmaster who is working alongside the agency in the home country.

Between 2008 and 2012 there were 48 convictions under the Gangmasters Licensing Act. In 2013 7 people were convicted of operating as a gangmaster without a licence and 15 for using an unlicensed gangmaster. <http://gla.defra.gov.uk/Our-Impact/Prosecutions/> One of the 2013 cases resulted in a Lithuanian gangmaster receiving a jail sentence of seven years – the first ever custodial sentence under the Act. His crimes included beating a worker with an iron bar. <http://gla.defra.gov.uk/PageFiles/1491/morkunas%20-%20final.pdf> Two other cases involved unlicensed N Ireland gangmasters who were fined for supplying labour to the mushroom industry. One had charged at least 18 agency workers from Romania and Bulgaria a finding fee of between £300 and £500. The other charged 23 workers £100 each towards their transport from the airport and to assist with accommodation. Both local men were fined £500 and ordered to pay a contribution towards prosecution costs. <http://gla.defra.gov.uk/PageFiles/1491/Irish%20mushroom%20conviction.pdf>

It is a great pity that the GLA is not authorised and equipped to investigate more sectors of the economy because exploitation is not confined to the food industry. During the NI Assembly debate on human trafficking on 7 February 2012 (see page 80–1) Justice Minister David Ford said

In response to fears that the GLA might be axed during the Government's review of red tape in employment regulation, Mark Serwotka, Public and Commercial Services general secretary, said: 'Let's not forget the GLA was established because people lost their lives. Its role should be expanded, not cut.' www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/gangmasters-licensing-authority-could-be-scrapped-85502

The limitation of sectors also leads unscrupulous gangmasters to move on to other industries:

'The GLA came in and the labour traffickers moved into the building industry, literally overnight.'

NGO representative quoted in Les Allamby et al, *Forced Labour in Northern Ireland*, 2011

I have ... asked the Home Office to review the remit of the Gangmasters Licensing Authority to include construction, hospitality and the catering industry alongside agriculture and fisheries, which will provide protection for some victims of forced labour.

www.theyworkforyou.com/nl/?id=2012-02-07.0.141

One particular area of concern is the social care sector, where both care assistants and domestic care workers are subject to exploitation, especially if they are employed through agencies. A briefing paper by Oxfam and Kalayaan, an advocacy charity for domestic care workers, described the typical experience of

working excessive hours, extreme pressure to work overtime, an expectation that the worker will be constantly on call, spurious deductions taken from pay for petrol and other expenses, and non-payment of holiday and sick pay...

Who Cares? How Best to Protect UK Care Workers Employed through Agencies and Gangmasters from Exploitation, *Oxfam Briefing Paper 2 December 2009* <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/who-cares-how-best-to-protect-uk-care-workers-employed-through-agencies-and-gan-114060>

There have been similar experiences locally. In 2009 Helen Sloan of 1st Bangor Presbyterian Church told her local migrant forum about a woman who attended language classes at the church.

... she had been brought over by an agency and was working in a private house looking after two elderly people one of whom was bedridden. She was working 24/7 and was allowed off just two hours per week to attend the class. ... Over the weeks we watched as this woman aged before our eyes, finally she couldn't take it anymore and asked us for help. I am pleased to say she is now working in a care home, she is very happy and looks 10 years younger.

Building a Welcoming Community, No. 15, Autumn/Winter 2009/10 [www.embraceni.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/7665_Embrace_NL\[1\].pdf](http://www.embraceni.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/7665_Embrace_NL[1].pdf)

Another hidden problem area is that of domestic helps, with four possible victims of human trafficking detected in this form of employment in NI Ireland between 2008 and 2011 (see also page 78).

For an overview of forced labour in the UK read the latest Joseph Rowntree Foundation reports. www.jrf.org.uk/publications/forced-labour-uk

The effectiveness of enforcement mechanisms

Research for the NI Strategic Migration Partnership (NISMP) concluded that

Many migrant workers in Northern Ireland are employed in jobs characterised by low wages, long working hours and poor working conditions and are thus recognised by interviewees for this paper as a demographic particularly susceptible to exploitation with conditions for workers described by one government agency representative as 'squalor' and by a non-government agency representative as 'horrific'. A further government agency representative described some employers as being 'blasé' about how they treated migrants.

Assessing the Effectiveness of Enforcement Mechanisms in Upholding the Employment Rights of Migrant Workers in NI, *NISMP*, 2013.

Exploitation in the fishing industry

Temporary **Transit Visas** are only supposed to be used to allow seamen to join ships that are heading for international waters, but in 2008 it became public knowledge that these visas (see page 35) were being used in the Co. Down fishing industry to employ around 160 Filipino men at local Philippines wages, and under contract to Filipino employment agencies, some earning the equivalent of £375 per month including overtime, for 300 hours work. The **International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF)** said that the minimum wage here would have entitled them to more than £1,600 per month. As well as commitments to their families, such workers may also have debts to people back home who arranged their employment. Some have experienced physical ill treatment as well as exploitation and also been forced to live on board the boats, as they have no documentation entitling them to go ashore. The fact that they were here on transit visas made it possible for employers to threaten that they would be deported if they complained. At least one man was removed from the country, by the immigration authorities, after his employer learned that he had spoken about his problems to a local MLA.

Researchers into forced labour found that members of the Catholic Church helped some fishermen to get back their passports and some of the money they were owed, before aiding their return home. www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/forced-labour-Northern-Ireland-summary.pdf To read more, see the ITF report *Migrant Workers in the Scottish and Irish Fishing Industry*, November 2008, which has the subtitle 'forced or compulsory labour or just plain modern day slavery'. www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2008/dec/14/immigration-fishing-scotland-filipinos The situation was also reported in the local news media. news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/7773255.stm

Employment within UK territorial waters is subject to immigration control. People from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) should have permission from the UK Home Office in order to be employed inside the 12-mile limit. A temporary three-month scheme for non-EEA fishermen came into force in early 2010 and was reopened in 2011 for a short time, allowing people to request permission to work, provided that they were paid the minimum wage and were given safety training. It would appear that local employers did not take advantage of this chance of regularising their employees, and following the controversy, support groups have found it harder to access these men. <http://nicem.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/APG-minutes-May-2012.pdf> Nationals from a number of African countries have also been involved and in some cases trafficking has been suspected.

In June 2012 the Race Relations Order 1997 was amended to remove the right of employers employing those seafarers to discriminate in their rates of pay on the basis of their nationality, for EEA nationals and some other designated states. www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/Official-Reports/Plenary/2012/20120625.pdf The mistreatment of migrant workers in the fishing industry was debated in Westminster in November 2012. www.theyworkforyou.com/whall/?id=2012-11-28a.94.0 See also a blog by NICEM in 2012 <http://minorityrightsnow.wordpress.com/2012/12/06/westminster-debate-spotlight-on-the-treatment-of-migrant-workers-in-the-fishing-industry/>

In July 2013 four men, two from India and two from the Philippines were arrested in England for immigration offences on a Newry-registered vessel, based in Kilkeel. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-23189936 This kind of exploitation exists throughout the world as highlighted by the BBC in January 2014 in a shocking report about the abuse of Burmese men on Thailand's trawlers. www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-25814718 In the same month it was reported that, in an operation around the British coast, up to 150 officers from the National Crime Agency had rescued around 50 men who had been deceived into slavery, working up to 22 hours a day, either unpaid or poorly paid, in terrible conditions. Many were from the Philippines and their passports had been confiscated. www.ibtimes.co.uk/uk-police-investigate-slavery-migrant-fishermen-1432935 (A chaplain had been involved in rescuing some Filipino men back in 2012.) The situation in Irish waters is continuing to give cause for concern (*Sunday Times* 25 January 2014).

The draft Modern Slavery Bill (see pages 77–8) contains a clause about the monitoring of fishing vessels.

'I am working in a school in Newry as a teaching assistant and cleaning after school. I've been working in the school over three years now. At the beginning I was cleaning, then I got the job in the school kitchen. At one moment I was working five jobs (is that not crazy?). I was cleaning two shops in the shopping centre from 8.00 am – 10.00 am. Then I got a bus to the school, started in the kitchen at 10.20 am and finished at 12.30 pm, at 12.30 pm I started the classroom assistant job and finished at 2.30 pm and at 2.30 pm I started cleaning till 5.45 pm. Well – that is not all ... then I was cleaning a shop from 10.30 pm till 00.30 am. Well, I have done it!'

Junona Baleisa, a Theology graduate, originally from Latvia www.britishcouncil.org/northernireland-society-ordinarylives-latvia.htm

The report also notes that exploitation exists in spite of legislative protection because of problems such as language barriers and the difficulty in obtaining intelligence. There is a need for more co-ordination by government agencies, groups and community organisations if exploitation is to be countered. There were nine recommendations.

- The creation of a NI Employment Rights Authority should be considered. (They exist in other EU states.)
- Ways of ensuring better information sharing should be considered by the relevant departments and agencies.
- NISMP should hold a Labour Sub Group meeting to discuss the issues.
- The NI Local Government Association (NILGA) should explore the setting up of employment support hubs to link migrant workers with advice and support groups and enforcement bodies.
- NISMP should ensure that information on employment rights is developed and is available for migrant workers
- There should be exploration as to whether information could be supplied when people receive their work permits.
- The Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) should fund organisations to ensure that increased tribunal support is available for migrant workers.
- Industrial and Fair Employment Tribunals should be more user friendly and have information that is accessible for migrant workers.
- DEL and the Department of Justice NI (DOJ) should explore ways of making it easier to enforce awards.

www.migrationni.org/DataEditorUploads/Upholding%20Employment%20Rights%20of%20Migrant%20Workers%20%20NOV13.pdf

Recognition of Qualifications

The 2011 Census revealed that 30% of people born in N Ireland have no qualifications, compared to migrants from Central and Eastern European countries, for whom the figure was 17%.

Across the five main ethnic groups, Asians have the largest proportion of residents with level 4 or higher qualifications (44 per cent), followed by the Mixed (35 per cent) and Other (34 per cent) ethnic groups. The White population have the lowest proportion (23 per cent).

Census 2011: Detailed Characteristics of Ethnicity and Country of Birth at the Northern Ireland Level www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/RaSel/Publications/2013/general/113813.pdf

(It is important to remember that the designation 'white' in the Census includes people born locally and those born in other countries.)

Migrant workers are often employed well below the level of their qualifications and in industries that are different from their area of expertise. It is not unusual to meet a physiotherapist working as a cleaner in a supermarket. The minimum wage here may well be more than a professional wage in some other countries and young people, here to improve their English or to earn money quickly before returning home, may be happy to work below their skills level. Others, however, feel that

they are meeting discrimination. When the Equality Commission NI was researching the role of agencies (see also page 88) they found that

Many migrant workers who participated in this investigation indicated that they were prevented from registering for work with some recruitment agencies because they lacked English language skills; including agencies that were recruiting for the type of work that would require very little verbal communication.

... many workers encounter problems, find it difficult to obtain work that matches their qualifications and are confined to irregular and temporary work. ... For some the job was not as expected. For example, one man was told he would be working using his physiotherapy qualifications but on arrival there was no such job and he was actually distributing leaflets.

The Role of the Recruitment Sector in the Employment of Migrant Workers, 2010

They stress that 'The language barrier also creates difficulties in terms of the recognition of the equivalency of foreign qualifications.' Agencies say that checking foreign qualifications is very time consuming. In some cases it is clear that difficulty with language would prevent migrant workers from working effectively at the level of their skills and qualifications. In other cases, however, employers' lack the language skill to allow them to understand and accept foreign qualifications. Negative attitudes may play a part. One group of researchers found that someone who had studied in South America was told that a qualification from a 'jungle university' was not acceptable. (D. Holder, C. Lanao, *Case Studies of discrimination and disadvantage for Portuguese Migrant Workers*. Dungannon: STEP, Animate, 2005.)

Recent research for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation locally confirms that 'underemployment' contributes to poverty among minority-ethnic people (see pages 124–5). More seriously, there is the suggestion that official employability training schemes tend to push people into expected roles e.g. in health and social care, which seem helpful in the short term but

However the extent to which these are appropriate longer-term solutions is not clear, especially if such schemes segment different ethnic groups within certain sectors of the labour market and they do not provide opportunities for progression. This can result in a perception among the majority communities that these are the types of jobs that ethnic minority communities are content to undertake.

Ruth McAreavy, Policy briefing, Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series Seminar on Migration, January 2014 www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/RaSel/knowledge_exchange/briefing_papers/series3/mcareavey090114.pdf

Employers check qualification equivalencies through the **National Academic Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom (UK NARIC)**. www.naric.org.uk/ This is the official agency to providing information and advice to employees and employers, but not all migrant workers will know about it. There is a cost involved and additional charges for the English language certification which most employers require. The **Department for Employment and Learning (DEL)** is licensed by NARIC and seven Jobs and Benefits Offices and the EURES (European Employment Service) supply a **Qualification Equivalency**

'I found that I should have my certificate recognized and to do this I needed to study for a year and that costs £11-16,000 to do this. It's not running here, it's only in London, just in five Universities across the UK.'

A Sudanese woman interviewed in 2013 as part of a Joseph Rowntree Foundation poverty and ethnicity project. From a research presentation to the Belfast Migrant Forum, December 2013, by Ruth McAreavy, Queen's University Belfast www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/RaSel/knowledge_exchange/briefing_papers/series3/mcareavey090114.pdf

'I felt very downgraded because the local people are getting a different rate for the same work. And yet I'm qualified as a midwife. I have more qualifications than the local care assistants.'

Migrant Workers and their Families in Northern Ireland

‘... discussions with a Slovakian migrant worker revealed that he was unconcerned about improving his standard of employment, as, for him, success would be measured by an improvement in speaking and writing in English...’

Immigration and Social Cohesion in the UK

letter with the DEL letterhead indicating how a jobseeker’s qualifications compare with those in the UK. In order for DEL to check, they need to see copies of qualification certificates. This free service can also be accessed by post or E-mail. The contact details are listed online. www.delni.gov.uk/index/finding-employment-findingstaff/fe-fs-help-to-find-employment/qualifications-recognised-uk-english.htm

The team researching into links between poverty and ethnicity in N Ireland (see pages 124–5) stated that the scheme had been used 823 times since the 2012 pilot, with the largest number of users being from Poland (17.9%) but was not well known by employers. www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/RaISe/knowledge_exchange/briefing_papers/series3/mcareavey090114.pdf

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) should make it easier to compare the level of qualifications from different national systems thereby assisting the mobility of migrant workers within Europe. **Ofqual** (England) and the **Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)** (Northern Ireland) are the joint **EQF National Coordination point (NCP)** for England and Northern Ireland.

Some people are able to progress from job to job as their English improves and there is a happy ending:

‘My qualification [from Poland] was in food technology. I started working in a chip shop in the village, then my English got better and I saw lots of opportunities to use my qualifications. I got a job as a quality control manager, what I always wanted to do in Poland.’

Worker quoted in “... *Easy Life, Great People, Bad Weather*” *A Report on the Experiences of Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland*, by John Bell, Anne Caughey, Ulf Hansson, Agnieszka Martynowicz and Maura Scully, 2009

Negative Attitudes and Racism

‘We must not merely regard black and minority-ethnic people as ‘deserving’ respect and inclusion, but reject racism as the sin of exclusion, disrespect and ‘segregation’, by grasping and cherishing the fact that all God’s children inherently share in the dignity of the Being of God.’

Rev. Arlington Trotman, Churches Commission on Racial Justice speaking at the All Ireland Churches’ Consultative Meeting on Racism (AICCMR) conference, Challenged by Difference: Threat or Enrichment, November 2005

Attitudes and Stereotypes about Migrants and Minority-Ethnic People

Attitudes to minority-ethnic people have been monitored over the years. In 2009 the ARK research survey on prejudice and tolerance in N Ireland revealed disturbing levels of prejudice.

- 93% of respondents in 2008 thought there was a lot or a little prejudice against minority-ethnic communities in N Ireland.
- One in ten people described themselves as ‘at all prejudiced’. (Ten years previously it had been one in four.)
- 32% reported themselves to be ‘very’ or ‘a little’ prejudiced against minority-ethnic people.

www.ark.ac.uk/publications/updates/update63.pdf

Key findings from the 2010 Omnibus Survey included positive reactions towards migrant workers but also some that are more negative.

- 52% of respondents felt that the Government should place more restrictions on migrant workers
- 28% of respondents thought Northern Ireland people were very prejudiced against migrant workers
- Only 4% of respondents considered themselves to be very prejudiced, but 29% described themselves as a little prejudiced
- 48% of respondents felt that migrant workers take jobs away from people who were born in Northern Ireland
- 30% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that migrant workers come to Northern Ireland just to get social security benefits
- 70% of respondents felt that the number of migrant workers coming to Northern Ireland puts a strain on services

Attitudes to Migrant Workers: Results from the Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey, November 2010

www.delni.gov.uk/es/attitudes-towards-migrant-workers-report-2010

In 2012 the **Equality Commission NI** published a 2011 survey, *Do You Mean Me? Discrimination: Attitudes and Experience in Northern Ireland*. They found that people tended to have positive responses to groups who were different, but a substantial minority of people expressed negative attitudes: 30% of people towards Travellers, 21% towards Eastern European migrant workers, and 13% towards black and minority-ethnic groups. (Only 7% expressed negative feelings towards people of another religion.) In each case, slightly more males reported negative views than females and there is further analysis in the report about the other categories of people who were more likely to have negative attitudes.

In the case of Eastern European migrants, there was a slight increase in negative attitudes in what is referred to as the ‘social distance scale’. In the 2008 survey 22% of people said they would mind having an Eastern European as a work colleague; 23% would mind one as a neighbour; and 35% would mind one marrying a close relative. By 2011 comparable figures were 26%, 28% and 36%. (It is important to note that these figures include people who minded a little as well as those who minded a lot.)

In 2008 24% of people had thought that racial or ethnic groups were the most likely to be treated unfairly. This sympathy drops dramatically to 5% in the 2011 survey, in direct contrast to what people say about their personal experiences. Alarming, one in three respondents reported that they had been subject to unfair treatment over the last four years because of the group they belonged to. This included 61% of the people from minority-ethnic groups. [www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/DYMMSurveyMainReport\(webB\).pdf](http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/DYMMSurveyMainReport(webB).pdf) A summary report is also available. www.equalityni.org/archive/DYMMsummary/index.html

The 2012 ARK NI Life and Times (NILT) survey was published in 2013. It examined the impact of immigration, contact with minority-ethnic people and the changing levels of prejudice. Only 24% saw immigration as bad overall (32% as bad for the economy and 21% for cultural life). 31% saw it as neither good or bad and 43% felt that immigration was either ‘good’

The words we use...

It is common to hear people talk about ‘non-nationals’. This is demeaning as well as inaccurate. Nearly everyone is a national of some country. ‘Foreign nationals’ or ‘people from other countries’ would be more appropriate.

‘My routine before I start work as an auxiliary nurse is to wash my hands. The person I look after then told me that my hands did not appear washed because they are brown. I told her that this is my colour, brown, my hands are clean. She still could not believe me. I felt emotionally and directly racially abused.’

Research Respondent in ‘Africans in Northern Ireland, West of the Bann: A Preliminary Perspective’ by Elly Omondi Odhiambo in *Shared Space Issue 5*, 2008 www.community-relations.org.uk/fs/doc/shared-space-issue-chapter4-45-57-web.pdf

'The workplace creates an ideal environment for interaction and integration. Where there are instances of inappropriate or perhaps just uninformed comment, our stewards can step in and talk to people about attitudes and beliefs...'

Nathalie Donnelly, UNISON's Migrant Worker Project Officer quoted in Minority Rights Now Issue 8 Autumn/Winter 2012 http://issuu.com/nicemnil/docs/mrn_8_2012_web?mode=window&backgroundcolor=%23222222

'As in the rest of the UK and ROI, there has been strong evidence of so-called 'occupational segregation' between natives and migrants, meaning that, at least during the recent years of economic growth, the involuntary displacement of native employment appears to have been minimal...'

The Economic, Labour Market and Skills Impacts of Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland, December 2009

or 'very good'. 50% thought that immigration was positive for cultural life. While 10% felt that immigration to N Ireland should be increased a 'little' or 'a lot' and 43% that it should stay as it is, 47% wanted it to be reduce 'a little' or 'a lot'.

The negative views are not the consequence of close contact with newcomers. In describing the findings, Philip McDermott from the University of Ulster, pointed out that only 26% of respondents to the survey 'had a close interaction (such as a lengthy conversation) with those from a minority ethnic community'. An increasing number have misgivings about greater closeness. 88% said that they would accept Eastern Europeans as tourist but only 60% would like an Eastern European to marry into their family, a decrease from 76% in 2008. 79% felt that there was prejudice against people from minority-ethnic communities and 41% felt that there was more racial prejudice than five years before.

The data from the 2012 NILT indicate that race, ethnicity and cultural diversity continue to be complex questions for a Northern Ireland which is still in transition from conflict to a stable peace. Overall, respondents seemed largely supportive in principle of increasing levels of diversity and the impact of these social changes. However, these feelings appeared to dissipate when participants were faced with the scenario of having closer personal contact with migrants.

Philip McDermott, ARK Research Update 86 A 'Shared Society?' Attitudes on immigration and diversity, November 2013 www.ark.ac.uk/publications/updates/update86.pdf

For a short review of the findings read the press release, 'Public Attitudes To A Diversifying Society'. <http://news.ulster.ac.uk/releases/2013/7183.html>

So, while many people are welcoming, it seems that negative attitudes to migrants and minority-ethnic people have been increasing. Many of these are based on negative thinking that seemed to grow as unemployment levels rose. It may also have risen as recent migrants have begun to put down roots, buying houses (see page 150) or renting social housing (see page 101). There have been many studies of the impact of migration (mostly in GB) and some of these have been analysed for the Migration Advisory Committee (see page 32). Their report, *Analysis of the Impacts of Migration*, 2012, examined how economic and social impacts should be measured and the effects on the labour market. The impacts are difficult to study but there is a consensus that they are not as dramatic as the newspaper headlines would imply. www.gov.uk/government/publications/analysis-of-the-impacts-of-migration (Six impact studies on the subjects of crime, public services, social cohesion, housing, transport and congestion can also be found online. www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-advisory-committee-reports-analysis-of-the-impacts-of-migration) It is likely that the negative impacts are further diluted in N Ireland where the proportion of migrants in the population is much smaller, but fears and antagonism still exist. These are just some of the feelings that are widely expressed.

'The migrants are taking our jobs'

'They drive down wages'

Migrants to N Ireland have usually been attracted by job vacancies. Many

come here with job offers from companies or agencies that were unable to fill job vacancies locally. They have filled skills gaps and labour shortages and often do jobs that local people are not trained to do or prepared to do. Sectors such as the food processing industry cannot survive without migrant labour. In some cases employers would have had to move their factories abroad if they had not been able to attract foreign workers. Evidence from the NI Strategic Migration Partnership shows that there are still difficulties in attracting local workers in sectors such as health, agriculture and IT (see page 13). For their own sake, it is important that local young people obtain the education and skills to enable them to step into available jobs and there are also fears among employers that it may not always be possible to access sufficient migrant labour to fill the gaps.

A Home Office report indicates that employment patterns in the UK have been subject to very recent change.

Over most of the last decade, employment levels in the UK rose faster among foreign nationals than among UK nationals. However, in 2012 and 2013 the share of employment growth attributed to UK nationals increased, as the share attributed to foreign nationals fell.

Employment and Occupational Skill levels among UK and Foreign Nationals, by Stuart Campbell, Jacqui Cooper and Jon Simmons, February 2014 www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/282503/occl08.pdf

The report also indicates that there is a substantial rise in UK people taking up low skilled jobs. (For an overview of research on immigration and the labour market see 'Is migration good or bad for British jobs?' *Guardian* 5 March 2014. www.theguardian.com/news/reality-check/2014/mar/05/immigration-migration-british-jobs-economy-newsnight-)

During the recession pay rates have remained static, and some have fallen, so it is understandable that people have linked this with the presence of migrants. Research has shown that if wages drop because of migrant labour, however, it is usually temporary, although it may be more marked in relation to some pay scales.

Studies estimating the impact of migrants on UK wages have generally found little or no impact on average wages. However, in some studies migrants were found to increase wages at the top of the UK wage distribution and to lower wages at the bottom.

Analysis of the Impacts of Migration, 2012

One of the reasons that people are prepared to work for low pay in the UK is because their income is topped up by working tax credits. To learn more, read the Migration Observatory online briefing, 'The Labour Market Effects of Immigration'. www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/briefings/labour-market-effects-immigration

'They get Jobseekers Allowance the minute they get off the plane'

It has not always been possible to establish a right to JSA immediately and since January 2014 European jobseekers are not eligible for benefits until they have been in the UK for three months (see page 61). Advice workers had already been reporting lengthy delays for some foreign nationals accessing benefits, possibly because officials are not used to

'Although on average private sector pay in Northern Ireland is lower than anywhere else in the UK, in most years since 2004 median private sector wages in Northern Ireland rose more strongly than the UK as a whole. [Source: *Labour Market Bulletin*, DEL, June 2009.] These figures do not suggest any serious negative impact of migrant workers on the Northern Ireland labour market: in contrast they suggest that migration helped the labour market and the economy to grow. ... It is illegal in Northern Ireland for an employer to pay a migrant worker less than a local worker for doing the same job.'

'I'm Not a Racist But...': Exposing the Common Myths which can Fuel Racist Attitudes Towards Migrant Workers, *Irish Congress of Trade Unions Northern Ireland Committee*, 2011

www.ictuni.org/download/pdf/imnotracistbookletweb.pdf?issuul=ignore

'If Britain gets our taxpayers, shouldn't it also pay their benefits? Why should Polish taxpayers subsidize British taxpayers' children?'

Radosław Sikorski, Poland's Foreign Minister, responds on Twitter to David Cameron's call for a revision of the EU treaties to allow the withdrawal of child welfare benefit to children living outside the UK. Telegraph, 6 January 2014 www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/poland/10553020/Poland-attacks-David-Cameron-plan-to-ban-Polish-and-EU-migrants-from-claiming-child-benefit.html

the different rules that apply to them. Some people are able to import their local jobseekers benefits with them, if they organise it before they leave their home country. These are paid through our system and the UK is reimbursed later. Department of Work and Pensions figures for 2013 indicate that less than 5% of European Union migrants were claiming jobseekers allowance and less than 10% were claiming other DWP working-age benefits. www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/commentary/costs-and-benefits-benefits-tourism-what-does-it-mean From March 2014, European migrants coming to the UK will have to earn at least £149 a week for three months before they can access a range of benefits (see pages 61–3 for other recent changes). Migrant workers from outside Europe are usually not entitled to out-of-work benefits for at least five years (see page 62).

'They even get child benefit for children back in Europe'

This is true for people from some countries but this is less costly than if the children were here because they are being educated and have their healthcare paid for by another country, while the tax and national insurance is being paid to the UK. (There might be other views about whether it is a good thing for children to be separated from their parents.)

'They don't contribute to society'

'They are costing the country money'

'They send money out of the country'

Foreign workers pay national insurance, tax and rent, and spend money in our local economy on necessities such as clothes and food in the same way as the rest of us do. In the financial year 2008–09 it was estimated that immigrants to the UK from Central and Eastern Europe paid 37% more in taxes than was spent on them by the state. www.ucl.ac.uk/news/news-articles/0907/09072302 They do send money to their families but local people lodge money in banks whose headquarters are in other countries, spend money on foreign holidays and many of our purchases, such as food, clothing, furniture and electrical goods are produced abroad. The World Bank estimates that the UK receives twice as much in remittances than is sent abroad (see page 17). To read more about the difficulty of analysing the fiscal benefits of immigration read the Migration Observatory briefing, 'The Fiscal Impact of Immigration in the UK'. www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/briefings/fiscal-impact-immigration-uk

'They are only here for the benefits'

'Migrants are getting everything on social security.'

The UK does not have the most generous benefits system in Europe. Most people arrive with jobs already lined up. No newly arrived migrant workers are eligible for immediate out-of-work welfare benefits (see page 61). Most people from outside Europe have their passports stamped 'No recourse to public funds' and can only access benefits when they are given permission to settle here which can now take at least 5 years. There are reported delays in accessing benefits when they do become entitled to receive them. (See above and page 11 for research on the comparative numbers of local people and foreign nationals in receipt of benefits in the UK.) Benefit arrangements are reciprocal, with at least 40,000 expat Britons claiming unemployment benefit in other EU countries, *Sunday*

Times 10 November 2013. www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/uk_news/National/article1338637.ece

'They get priority in housing'

The NI Housing Executive (NIHE) allocates social housing from a common waiting list and a standard points-based system, based mostly on need. When new houses are built, however, people from other countries may have worked their way to the top of the list, perhaps because they have children, and this may seem unfair to local people. The 2011 Census revealed that 76% of migrants from Central and Eastern Europe lived in privately rented accommodation at that time, compared to 13% of people who were born in N Ireland. (Local people are not always aware that houses are no longer owned by the NIHE.) Over a quarter of recent European migrants are living in some degree of overcrowding in comparison to 9% of local people. (For more census information about housing see Dr Raymond Russell's NI Assembly Research and Information Service paper, *Census 2011: Detailed Characteristics of Ethnicity and Country of Birth at the Northern Ireland level*, www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/RaIS/Publications/2013/general/13813.pdf)

The NIHE manages around 89,000 properties but there were just 1032 migrant worker households who were NIHE tenants as of 31 July 2013. The Housing Executive Equality Unit, *Black and Minority Ethnic and Migrant Worker Mapping Update*, February 2014, contains this and other useful statistics, such as the distribution of minority-ethnic people, based on the 2011 Census. www.nihe.gov.uk/black_and_minority_ethnic_and_migrant_worker_mapping_update_february_2014.pdf NIHE developed a *Housing Myths and Migrants* leaflet in 2013. www.nihe.gov.uk/housing_myths_and_migrants.pdf (There is information about accessing advice about housing in a number of languages from Housing Advice NI. <http://housingadviceni.org/advice-for-migrant-workers.html>)

'They are putting pressure on our schools and the health service'

Increased numbers of people do put increased pressure on local services and extra resources are needed to support special costs such as interpretation and helping newly arrived children with their English. On the other hand, children from other countries have helped to save some schools from closure and are a cultural and language resource. The health service could not function without the many doctors, nurses and ancillary staff from other countries.

This is the subject of much discussion but little hard evidence.

While the rapid growth in immigration in recent years has clearly had important consequences for public services in the UK, we do not have robust estimates of these effects which can include costs (consumption) and benefits (provision).

Migration Observatory www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/reports/7-migrants-impacts-public-services-no-systematic-data-and-analysis

One thing is clear. Some of the national financial benefits of immigration go to the Exchequer in the centre through increased income from taxes, while additional costs are largely experienced at local level. There used to be a Migration Impacts Fund and some people argue that it should be reintroduced.

'Do you think there are any tensions between locals and the migrants?'

'Oh, I hear it regularly, you know. "Oh, my son or daughter can't get a house because they are all rented out to Portuguese or Lithuanians and, if they weren't here, there would be more."'

Interviewer and key informant from Dungannon in Immigration and Social Cohesion in the UK

... the Migration Impact Fund was quietly axed by the Coalition Government in 2010 – although the £50 levy on visas was not removed. This left local authorities bereft of funding to help them deal with the challenges. On the scrapping of the fund, a spokesman commented that ‘the impacts of migration are better addressed through controlling immigration’. But this argument is redundant in relation to EU migration which is beyond the control of government.

Katherine Tonkiss, author of *Migration and Identity in a Post-National World*, writing on the *Migrant Rights Network* web site.
www.migrantsrights.org.uk/migration-pulse/2013/migration-and-integration-are-now-policy-challenges-too-far-many-local-authorit

‘They choose to live together and we could be stuck with ghettos’

Rather than renting to local families, landlords with a group of houses may choose to let single rooms to foreign nationals because this produces more rent. This is not the fault of people from other countries. People do sometimes follow each other to areas they think will be safe, because of earlier attacks elsewhere. Others just go where houses are empty and affordable. It is difficult for local people to be critical about other people clustering together when many of us live in areas that are already very segregated in other ways.

‘It is in their culture to get together and drink in their houses’

The same might be said of local youngsters who leave home to go to university, for example, and make life a pain for their neighbours. The answer is not to label whole nations of people but to build relationships and find ways of making it clear to people what is and what is not acceptable behaviour.

‘They are contributing to increased crime’

As the numbers of foreign nationals living here rises, it is inevitable that some commit offences and freedom of movement has made organised crime easier but people from other countries are still more likely to be victims of crime than perpetrators. This is not always evident in statistics as they are less likely to report crime victimisation. Research in England and Wales between 2001 and 2008 showed that neither people seeking asylum, nor European migrants had much effect on violent crime. There was a slight increase in property crime in areas where numbers of people seeking asylum rose (possibly because asylum applicants are not allowed to work) but a decrease in property crime where there was an increase in A8 European migrants. See the Migration Observatory’s online briefing: ‘Immigration and Crime: Evidence for the UK and Other Countries’. www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/briefings/immigration-and-crime-evidence-uk-and-other-countries

‘I don’t mind “them” being here but “they” need to behave.’

It is wrong to ignore the fact that poor relationships with local people are sometimes caused by the behaviour of incomers. Research in Dungannon for *Immigration and Social Cohesion in the UK* identified friction and stressed the importance of neighbourhood relationships in moulding attitudes. The negative stereotypes about national groups, that they have loud parties, are dangerous drivers, aggressive and violent, heavy drinkers, disrespectful towards women, or rude may all be based on actual behaviours or incidents.

When someone from another country misbehaves or commits a crime it stands out and we forget how many local people are convicted of criminal acts. The anxiety caused is magnified in areas where very large numbers of newcomers have arrived suddenly. All the stereotypes listed could apply equally to elements within established communities and especially to young adults living away from their families. Everyone is subject to the law and should behave. If a migrant worker misbehaves, that should not reflect badly on others from their country or ethnic group. Clear guidelines on our customs and laws should be made available to new arrivals.

GB research has found that issues other than recent immigration affect social cohesion.

Our analysis indicates that it is principally socio-economic deprivation – not migration – that best explains peoples’ perceptions of their local area. However, existing diversity may partly explain differences in levels of cohesion. In other words, new migration does not notably affect cohesion but pre-existing diversity and high levels of poverty are predictors of lower social cohesion.

Shamit Saggar, Will Somerville, Rob Ford & Maria Sobolewska, *The Impacts of Migration on Social Cohesion and Integration*, 2012
www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-impacts-of-migration-on-social-cohesion-and-integration

A Strategy for Community Cohesion in Lower Ormeau and Botanic, 2013, drawn up for the **Creating Cohesive Community** project in Belfast reveals some of the difficulties experienced at community level. Problems may be the result of a combination of real anti-social behaviour and negative perceptions on both sides. Initial consultation with the established community in the Botanic and Lower Ormeau areas of Belfast indicated a range of issues. For example, it was felt that minority-ethnic people did not know what was expected and acceptable behaviour; that there was a lack of respect for existing culture; that minority-ethnic children were causing trouble; and that minority-ethnic communities ‘keep themselves to themselves’. Trust was seen as a major issue and there was ‘the perception that minority ethnic communities find it easier to access to housing and human rights issues (housing, health, etc.)’.

Minority-ethnic people felt unwelcome and mistrusted in relation to some mainstream community projects; thought their entire community was stereotyped if a negative incident occurred involving an individual; and they thought that they received inferior treatment in relation to statutory services such as housing and health services and the police. Some, including members of the Roma community found it difficult to participate in some activities because of their economic situation.

Both communities agreed that there was a lack of opportunities to develop links and that the language barrier was a problem.

The strategy decided upon was threefold: early intervention and engagement; a focus on housing issues; and the development of emergency responses to both hate crime and anti-social behaviour. The early interventions included supporting both newcomers and the established community in developing good neighbourly relations and working with the schools to address attitudes and perceptions at an early stage. It was

‘What we say to our migrant workers is that there are things that they can do that would help your own situation and your own acceptance within the community. I tell them open the curtains, because they have an awful habit of keeping their curtains closed. ... So I tell them ... maybe pick up some litter and also to say hello to your neighbour. (Key informant, Dungannon)’

Immigration and Social Cohesion in the UK

also important 'to provide meaningful opportunities for engagement and dialogue'. Practical initiatives included publishing a neighbourhood guide; training and deploying 'active citizens'; capacity building with teachers; an ongoing programme of events with information disseminated through a networking forum and community organisations; and making English classes available.

In our society pre-existing sectarian and class divisions and segregation make social cohesion problematic.

It is important to develop a more rational conversation around the impacts of immigration but it is equally important to recognise the limitations of 'putting across the facts'. People's major concerns are emotional and that is not going to change merely through access to statistics or argument.

The important practical point here is that 'myth-busting' exercises are likely to have limited impact on concern. But equally we shouldn't give up on better informing the public. There is a significant danger in accepting that our inaccurate picture of immigration is fine because it partly reflects our concerns and emotional reactions: this is just as partial as the view that if we just informed people fully they will all come to a more 'rational' view of immigration.

Perceptions and Reality: 10 Things We Should Know about Attitudes to Immigration in the UK, Ipsos MORI, 2014

Even contact with newcomers will not help unless there are ways of ensuring that people develop meaningful relationships in a situation where they can feel comfortable.

In this respect, our findings support previous evidence that a larger proportion of immigrants over the population increases feelings of threat, unless intergroup contact is positively structured (Barlow et al. 2012) and optimal conditions are met (Allport 1954).

Yvonne Markaki and Simonetta Longhi, 'What determines attitudes to immigration in European countries? An analysis at the regional level' in *Migration Studies* 1 (3), Oxford, 2013 <http://migration.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2013/09/04/migration.mnt015.full.pdf+html>

'Local jobs for local workers.'

Migrant workers are aware of the negative perceptions.

'If there is redundancy I might be first one to go' (*Bulgarian migrant worker*)

'Because [migrant workers] are foreigners and maybe local people will be given the priority.' (*White European migrant worker*)

'The ideas of people like "local people first" puts us migrant workers at a disadvantage. Having no residency or citizenship status puts us more into danger of being affected by any job cuts; not being a member of the EU makes us more vulnerable.' (*Filipino nurse*)

Migrant Workers, Racism and the Recession: Survey Results on the Impact of the Recession on UNISON Migrant Worker and Black and Minority Ethnic Members, UNISON Northern Ireland, 2009

TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber said:

'Migrant workers are making a substantial contribution to Britain's economy, and some sectors would collapse if they were removed overnight. They haven't caused mass unemployment or held wages down as some would have us believe.

But we do not do enough to protect vulnerable workers, whether migrant or indigenous, from exploitation. If migrant workers are treated fairly and paid a decent wage they can only add to the economy, and pose no threat to the livelihoods of the rest of the workforce.

The availability of migrant workers should not stop employers or government helping unemployed and disadvantaged UK citizens into work, nor stop efforts to give the low skilled the new skills they need to improve their job security and help them get better jobs.'

Trades Union Congress General Secretary, Brendan Barber, announcing the launch of TUC study *The Economics of Migration*, 14 June 2007 www.tuc.org.uk/law/tuc-13413-f0.cfm

'Truth or Myth?': Police experience

'Migration has had a significant impact on UK communities in past years but while this has led to new demands made on the police service, the evidence does not support theories of a large scale crime wave generated through migration. In fact, crime has been falling across the country over the past year. Many migrants are young professionals looking to earn money and return to their home countries. Cultural differences such as attitudes to offences like drink driving may exist, but can be exaggerated. ... The influx of eastern Europeans has created pressures on forces in some areas, including local rumour and misunderstandings fuelling tensions which police have had to be proactive in resolving, and leading to significant increases in spending on interpreters, which can also make investigations more complex.'

Association of Chief Police Officers for England Wales & N Ireland (ACPO) press release about an ACPO report which concluded that press reports of a migrant-related crime wave were a myth, 16 April 2008

'... the very next day the *Daily Mail* devoted a doublepage spread to this story. Claiming to have seen a leaked copy of the report, the article ... went on to say that the ACPO report warns of an increase in violence, extortion, human trafficking and a growing sex trade.'

'Truth or Myth?' in *Constabulary*, May 2008 www.assoziazioneargos.com/Rassegna%20Stampa/Constabulary_Mag2008.pdf

The Royal Geographical Society briefing, *UK Migration Controversies: A Simple Guide* is an evidence-based response to 10 contentious arguments in circulation in the UK. www.rgs.org/NR/rdonlyres/4711AA55-F60A-4B16-9F30-27DEF5232C03/0/MigrationFINAL.pdf

Negative Stereotypes about People Seeking Asylum

People who are seeking sanctuary get a bad press in the UK. Research by the Glasgow Media Group describes the persistent hostile coverage; how the term 'asylum seeker' became synonymous with crime, terrorism and abuse of the system; and the pressure put on reporters to report stories in a negative way.

One journalist relays a story where an editor sends a young reporter to 'go and monster an asylum seeker'. Another comments: 'There's nothing better than a Muslim asylum seeker, in particular, that's a sort of jackpot I suppose. You know, it's very much the cartoon baddy, the caricature, you know, all social ills can be traced back to immigrants and asylum seekers flooding this country'.

Quotation from *Bad News for Refugees* by the Glasgow Media Group, cited in a Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants book review www.jcwi.org.uk/blog/2013/11/14/bad-news-refugees-book-review

'Paul has tried ... to tell people about his story but has found that "they don't want to hear"... Paul has a twofold message to the people of NI – a definite "thank you for hosting us..." but also "to understand us before you start judging us (i.e. why we are here)".'

The words of a man, seeking asylum here, who feels that negative attitudes are fuelled by tabloid newspapers in Conversations Around the Kitchen Table

'Immigrants, including refugees, pay more into the public purse compared to their UK born counterparts. (Institute for Public Policy Research, Paying their way: the fiscal contribution of immigrants in the UK, 2005)'

Extract from a Refugee Council mythbuster
www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/policy_research/the_truth_about_asylum/facts_about_asylum_-_page_3

This is confirmed by a Migration Observatory report, which found that throughout the press the most common word associated with 'asylum seeker' was 'failed'. Other words used commonly are 'illegal' and 'criminal'. The report authors give the following example of how criminals are associated with people in the asylum process.

Shock details revealed by MPs show that 275,000 missing foreign criminals, failed asylum seekers and others have not yet been dealt with. (Mid-market [newspaper])

Migration in the News: Portrayals of Immigrants, Migrants, Asylum Seekers and Refugees in National British Newspapers, 2010-2012, 2013
www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/reports/migration-news

It is heartening to note that while the use of the term 'bogus' with 'asylum seeker' was seen widely in 2010 and 2011, this usage had declined in 2012.

A recent report looked back on earlier years with horror

... the media onslaught against asylum seekers at the turn of the 1990s and 2000s was sustained and brutal. We have a particularly grim array of headlines to look back on. Asylum seekers were 'AIDS-infected ... overwhelming our hospitals' according to the *Telegraph* in 2003; 'the asylum shambles is the sea in which terror most easily swims' warned the *Daily Mail* the same year. ... media and politicians engaged not so much in a race to the bottom as a crash to the basement.

Dividing Lines: Asylum, the Media and Some Reasons for (Cautious) Optimism by Russell Hargrave, 2014
www.asylumaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/DividingLines_V3_highres.pdf

However, as the title indicates, the author feels that there is now reason to hope, that there is less heat in the issue and that the door is open within the press for positive stories about asylum. He is reassured by the fact that although the public have highly magnified views about how many people seek asylum in the UK, they nevertheless are supportive of those who are felt to have a legitimate case for shelter. However, while the worst of the media coverage may be behind us, as this report suggests, the legacy of previous negative coverage is still with us in enduring negative opinions.

Research in GB, conducted between 1990 and 2008 has found that attitudes towards refugees have hardened.

The evidence indicates that the British public has become less tolerant towards refugees since the early 1990s, despite increasing educational levels and proportions from minority groups amongst the population. This may reflect the general increase in immigration, and of high numbers asylum applications seen at certain points, over the past couple of decades. It seems likely, however, that the development of more negative attitudes also reflect the nature of the political and policy debate in the period since 1997 and the ways in which migration and asylum issues have been represented in the British media.

Regional Variations in Attitudes Towards Refugees: Evidence from Great Britain by Heaven Crawley, Stephen Drinkwater and Rukhsana Kauser, 2013
http://cream-migration.org/publ/uploads/CDP_26_13.pdf

Many local authorities and refugee support organisations in England have had to produce myth-busting material because of the negative attitudes towards people who are seeking asylum. These counter the misinformation that people on very basic allowances (see page 45) have been issued with mobile phones, leather jackets or satellite TVs and that they bring crime when support organisations reckon that they are more likely to be victims of crime. They are also accused of queue jumping in obtaining accommodation. (In N Ireland, people seeking asylum are allocated privately-rented accommodation, not Housing Executive property. When people get permission to stay, however, they might well have quite a number of housing points if they have children.) Some say that 'asylum seekers are taking our jobs' when most are not allowed to work.

Even the word 'asylum' provokes negative responses. The Independent Asylum Commission, in association with the Citizen Organising Foundation, commissioned a poll which found that only 18% of people responded positively to the word 'asylum'.

- 65.7% of respondents said that it was 'very' or 'quite' important for the UK to provide sanctuary to people from abroad who are fleeing persecution.
- 71.5% said that they did not know a lot about what the Government is doing about asylum seekers.
- 74.9% thought that the UK hosted more asylum seekers per capita than most other countries in Europe.
- 81.2% responded positively to the word 'sanctuary'.

www.independentasylumcommission.org.uk/

With this level of negativity and ignorance, it is not surprising that people seeking sanctuary feel unwanted. To read about the campaign to restore faith in our ability to respond positively to ideas of sanctuary, see page 41.

A recent Parliamentary inquiry about asylum support (see pages 45 and 47–8) links negative perceptions to very negative outcomes.

Many members of the public continue to believe myths about asylum seekers, in particular that the UK accepts more than its fair share of refugees and that they receive all manner of luxuries. Yet the reality is that many families desperately needing support are left unable to meet even their most basic living needs.

Misconceptions such as these cause tension between deprived communities and contribute to the severe hostility experienced by refugee children and families, often living in close proximity to other vulnerable families. The panel received extremely distressing evidence of families being racially abused, children being hounded at school and babies having stones thrown at them. Families also reported that when they were harassed or victimised, they often felt unable to complain for fear of the repercussions on their protection case.

Report of the Parliamentary Inquiry into Asylum Support for Children and Young People, (Executive Summary), 2012
www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/asylum_support_inquiry_report_executive_summary_final.pdf

See also page 14 for guidelines for journalists.

'Myth: Asylum Seekers are really Economic Migrants.

FACT: Most of those currently claiming asylum in Northern Ireland come from countries such as Iran, Somalia, Syria and Zimbabwe. These are countries with well documented abuses of Human Rights, including rape, murder, detention and torture. Many ... had enjoyed comfortable lives in their own countries but had to flee ... in order to save their lives.'

Refugee!, NI Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (NICRAS), 2012

The Simple Acts
 Campaign gives great ideas about getting involved with refugee issues. They say: 'We believe that if everyone does at least one of these simple actions, we could make a big change to the way refugees are perceived in the UK. It sounds simple – and it is.'

www.simpleacts.org.uk/

'... live in harmony with one another, be sympathetic, love as brothers and sisters, be compassionate and humble.'

I Peter 3:8 (NIV)

'The local minister... provided tins of food and spoons to our home but did not invite us to his church. They [the Church] were saying we were poor. I was insulted. Would the same thing have happened if a white person moved into the area?'

An African woman quoted in an ICCM briefing for Church Leaders by Fee Ching Leong

Attitudes in Churches

Surveys of minority-ethnic people have shown that they do not always feel welcomed as equals. An All-Ireland Inter-Church body sponsored a survey, undertaken by the late Fee Ching Leong, who found that black and minority-ethnic people felt patronised and excluded by churches. In 2005 Canon Rajkumar Sathiyaraj and David Maganda undertook a similar exercise locally for the Church Mission Society Ireland, a Protestant mission organisation with links to the Church of Ireland. They found much the same situation. While some minority-ethnic people were warmly welcomed in churches, many reported racist attitudes. They felt that they were viewed as ignorant and lacking competence, that people were suspicious of them and didn't trust them with responsibility, even in the local church.

Many from Christian backgrounds commented that they had been in Northern Ireland for more than 5 years and are nothing more than 'pew warmers'. It's as if, in the eyes of local Christians and the Clergy, they have nothing valuable to contribute to the life and ministry of the church. They viewed that as indirect discrimination and racism purely on the basis of their background and colour.

The words of Christians who have felt rejected demonstrate the deep hurt they feel.

Being a foreigner in this land has not been easy because people take you as a leper ... We have once sat in the church ... we smiled as we sat down, but there was nothing in response. They shifted and moved to keep space and distance between us so much that it became embarrassing. ... Was this just? Everywhere we go, it brings home the fact that once you have coloured skin you are regarded as scum and a refugee who has come to take ... take ... take ...

Yvonne Mefor in *Inter-Cultural Insights: Christian Reflections on Racism, Hospitality and Identity from the Island of Ireland*

I am from a rejected people. As a member of the Traveller Community neither society, nor the church knows me. And in not knowing me they fear and at times despise me. I am so tired of the rejection and ignorance. I too am much in need of the water from the well. I crave the life giving water that is life from God. ... My only hope is to be filled with the spirit of love or I will be lost to the continuous hurt I experience as a Traveller person.

Cathleen McDonagh, reflecting on John 4: 5–15 in *Inter-Cultural Insights*

In church after the service a lady sat beside us and started shouting, why did we come here, we cannot even speak normally. It was very bad for us, especially for the children. It was a bad surprise in the house of God.

The words of an interviewee from research carried out in 2013 on behalf of the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust into the needs of Hungarian and Slovakian Roma people

For some, the differences from home are subtle.

The family have joined a local church where they can attend services and 'meet some friendly people' ... However, the ... welcome ...

offered in NI is not what they are used to and tends to be focussed on practical things such as any urgent needs the family might have or bible chat rather than more personal exchanges. As Paul explains, 'my home experience is when you've got a visitor; its very much (an emphasis) on welcome and wanting to know more about the visitor' rather than the reserve he notices here.

The experience of someone seeking asylum here recorded in *Conversations Around the Kitchen Table* www.communitydialogue.org/PDFs/kitchen.pdf

It is also important to recognise our patronising attitudes. Although both mission and Christian development organisations now use much more positive images, many people from faith backgrounds have been imprinted with the idea that people from other parts of the world are victims to be helped. The very charitable impulse to welcome newcomers, or support destitute people, may lead us to have subconscious feelings of superiority. Migrants simply want to be received in dignity and equality, and to get on with their lives, just as we would hope to be treated in other countries.

The Christian community has a responsibility to demonstrate the values of their faith, and has a role to play at the cutting edge of transforming society. Invite the congregation to discuss how inclusive they really are. Is there real ethnic representation throughout the church structure? Are prominent roles within the church open to those who are usually called upon to 'help out' at the proverbial 'African Caribbean or Asian cultural evenings', or be part of the 'Gospel' choir? How can the church show a clear commitment to inclusion?

From a Churches Together in Britain and Ireland resource for Racial Justice Sunday, 2013 www.ctbi.org.uk/CBCF/648

Far Right Groups

From time to time attempts have been made to establish groups here that are antagonistic to the presence of minority-ethnic people. In 2007 the *Belfast Telegraph* reported that the Knights of the Invisible Empire, a white supremacist group, was active in the Ballymena and Craigavon areas. The same article suggested that Combat 18, the White Nationalist Party and the National Front were associated with an increase in racist activities. In 2009 posters appeared in the Co. Down town of Comber, saying 'Save our land. Join the Klan.' The town had previously seen the distribution of flyers featuring images of the Battle of the Somme accompanied by swastikas. www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/Sunday-life/news/evil-klan-hoods-in-ulster-net-hate-campaign-13902207.html and www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/community-telegraph/north-down/news/itsquomindless-idiotrsquo-behind-new-racial-slur-flyers-in-comber-14299561.html

There were complaints that loyalists distributed British National Party (BNP) leaflets in north Antrim around the time that there were attacks on foreigners. The BNP say that they distributed several thousand pieces of literature in Mid-Ulster in 2009. In 2010, misunderstanding the role of the proposed Larne Short Term Holding Centre (see page 72), the BNP made statements about Larne being 'earmarked as a dumping ground for illegal immigrants and bogus asylum seekers'. In 2011 the party registered a small number of candidates for both the Assembly and local government elections.

'All forms of racism are ultimately unsustainable because they are not only evil, but racism tries to subvert the essential identity of all human beings. We as Christians must embrace difference and be 'richer' by undergoing a measure of cultural integration, recognise our human interdependence, promote social and economic redistribution, and pursue ethnic harmony, so that our Being is being-in-love-for-one-another.' Revd Arlington Trotman, Churches' Commission for Racial Justice (CCRJ), speaking at the ACCMR conference Nov. 2006

BNP leader, Nick Griffin's defence of 'Christian Britain' has drawn a response from some Christians. Writing in *Ekklesia* in October 2009, Vaughan Jones wrote: '... As Christians in Britain (we are not the whole of it!) we have to be faithful to the narrative of our faith. This is a narrative, within the Bible itself, in which the constant struggle between the nomad and the settler is played out. It is a history which tells us that the fruits of faith are indeed totally rotten when ... aligned to power and wealth ... faith is powerful on a world stage when it defends the persecuted and the poor.'

<http://ekkleisia.co.uk/node/10485>

'Over the last five years, over three quarters of enquiries to our legal advice team in relation to harassment at work related to racial harassment at work,' Paul Noonan of the Equality Commission in Frontline 90, Winter 2013–14

www.lawcentreni.org/Publications/Frontline/Frontline-90.pdf

The 2009 Annual Conference of the Methodist Church of Great Britain resolved 'that racism is a denial of the Gospel' and voted to prohibit members of the clergy from being members of the BNP. www.ekkleisia.co.uk/node/9843 As a result of concern following elections, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland held a conference in October 2009 in London, 'Voting with Our Feet – The Churches' Engagement with Far Right Politics' and published 'Racial Justice & the Ballot Box: Exploring a Christian Response to Far-Right Political Parties', a paper that helps Christians to articulate strong and informed responses. There was particular concern about 'the tactic of presenting a racist agenda as Christian'. www.ctbi.org.uk/pdf_view.php?id=92

Racist Attitudes Lead to Racist Actions

Dictionaries tend to define racism in terms of beliefs that some 'races' are superior to others. Many people today do not hold conscious views of racial superiority but retain ideas about people from different countries or ethnic backgrounds that lead to discriminatory attitudes and actions. Negative stereotyping in the wider community is a breeding ground for more overt racism and racist crime. Physical and verbal racial attacks are publicised, but more subtle forms of racial discrimination and indifference also affect many aspects of people's lives in a detrimental way.

These attitudes are experienced in many aspects of people's lives.

The Ark survey on prejudice and tolerance in 2009 revealed negative attitudes (see page 96) but more worryingly, 15% of respondents said they would behave in accordance with their prejudice. www.ark.ac.uk/publications/updates/update63.pdf

In the workplace:

Research in the health service in 2006 revealed a disturbing level of racist behaviour experienced by healthcare workers. For example

- 47% reported having been harassed by patients, 27% by friends or relatives of patients and 19% said that they had suffered racist harassment from a manager or supervisor.
- 50% stated that work colleagues were most likely to be the source of racist harassment in the workplace.
- 59% experienced racist harassment outside of work.
- On occasions where staff had suffered harassment from colleagues, incidents that involved humiliation were found to be the most upsetting.

Jennifer Betts & Jennifer Hamilton, *An Investigation into the Nature, Extent and Effects of Racist Behaviours Experienced by Northern Ireland's Ethnic Minority Healthcare Staff, 2006* www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/ICRracismreport-06.pdf

In 2009 the public service trade union UNISON interviewed migrant worker members (many working in the health service) and confirmed these findings.

- 54% of respondent had been personally exposed to racism at work and 83% had encountered racism in their workplace.
- 80% of respondents working in the private care sector had

experienced racist bullying and discrimination and had felt humiliated at work.

Migrant Workers, Racism and the Recession
www.hopenothate.org.uk/features/article/19/a-divided-past-a-tangled-future

A NICEM survey of Filipino people here, *Bayanihan*, published in 2012 (see page 64), revealed that 41% of respondents said that they had been harassed in the workplace (48% of these by a colleagues, 33.3% by their manager and 44% by customers). Sometimes there is a cultural reluctance to challenge racism:

Most of the Filipinos are quite reserved. They won't speak even if they are hurt.

Jennifer Hamilton and Seamus Camplisson, 'Who Cares? The experiences of ethnic minority healthcare staff in Northern Ireland' in *Shared Space*, Issue 4, 2007 www.community-relations.org.uk/fs/doc/paper-5.pdf

The penalties for discrimination in the workplace can be severe. In a recent case a Polish man was awarded £55,000 by a fair employment tribunal for racial and religious discrimination and unfair dismissal. He had also been paid less than the minimum wage and denied holiday pay. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-26464876

At school:

In January 2014 ChildLine reported that more than 1,400 children in the UK had reported racist bullying, a 69% increase over the previous year. It was suggested that children and young people were influenced by the broader anti-immigration atmosphere such as the Government's van campaign asking 'illegal immigrants' to go home (see page 21). Children were being exposed to insults – Muslims as 'bombers', Somalis as 'pirates'. www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jan/10/racist-bullying-children-media-white-black Around the same time, the British Journal of Developmental Psychology published a study demonstrating how quality friendships across ethnic groups could help to protect children from the damage of discrimination. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/bjdp.12028/abstract>

There is plenty of local evidence about damaging ethnic bullying.

'The (racist) taunts began in earnest. ... The person who made up the rhyme "sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me" didn't know what they were talking about.'

18-year old minority ethnic student in Hazelwood Integrated College in N Belfast in *Welcoming Newcomer and Minority Ethnic Pupils in Northern Ireland, 2010*

(The report contains the personal accounts of individual children and the abusive taunts and aggression experienced.) www.nicie.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Welcoming-Newcomer-Students.pdf

Interviews undertaken by the National Children's Bureau (NCB) showed a high level of racist bullying.

- 51 % of respondents said that they had witnessed racist bullying or harassment in their school.
- 31% said that they had been a victim of racist bullying or harassment in their school.
- 'Once I went to the swimming pool and one Irish girl called me all sorts of things because I am Polish ... and told me to go back to

Workers in restaurants and fast food outlets have often experienced verbal abuse.

'Sometimes people will talk the bad language. Maybe call you Chinkie and maybe 'go back to your country' just like that you know. Some ... will not be friendly you know. But most people is quite nice.'

A Chinese woman restaurant worker quoted in *Into the Light (Conference Report)*. Belfast: Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, 1999

'...when they went to school, they didn't have any English and the school didn't know what to do with them. In the end they put them in a special needs class but they didn't have special needs, they just couldn't speak English ...' (Female refugee: Europe)

Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Northern Ireland: A Place of Refuge? www.mcrc-ni.org/PDFs/APOR.pdf

'Well, I was doing my papers [paper round] and a group of people they just attacked me and my sister was with me and they started calling me Paki, Paki, Paki and then they tried to bully me and my sister but then a man came out of a house and said get to your houses and leave people alone so then we were safe (Young refugee).'

New to Northern Ireland: A study of the issues faced by Migrant, Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children in Northern Ireland by Teresa Geraghty, Celine McStravick and Dr Stephanie Mitchell, 2010 www.gulbenkian.org.uk/pdf/files/NTNI_final.pdf

- my country.'
- 'I have witnessed a racist attack. It was in P6. Two boys were being picked on by about six people and they said "go back home" ...'
- 16-year-olds from a minority-ethnic group were 8 times more likely to say they had been bullied or harassed than their counterparts.

Attitudes to Difference: Young People's Attitudes to and Experiences of Contact with People from Different Minority Ethnic and Migrant Communities in Northern Ireland, 2010 www.ofmdfmrni.gov.uk/attd_web_final.pdf

NICEM's 2011 policy paper *Promoting Racial Equality in Northern Ireland's Post-Primary Schools* stated that 53% of their 16-year old respondents had been subject to racial bullying by other students. (Of these, 75.5% had been called names and 15.9% had been physically attacked.) <http://nicem.org.uk/files?category=NICEM%20Public%20Policy%20Papers>

The National Children's Bureau (NCB) and Barnardo's NI came together in the **Diversity in Action NI (DIANI)** project that ran seminars and training for people working with minority-ethnic children and young people. In 2012 DIANI (with the South Belfast Roundtable and NI Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers) facilitated a half-day 'One Size Fits All?' session for practitioners working with, or those wanting to work with, ethnically diverse children, young people and families to discuss practice that has worked well, as well as learning from things that have not gone well. The project ended in early 2013.

Research in the Republic of Ireland has demonstrated that children suffer multiple difficulties in school. School admission policies may disadvantage newcomers in a number of ways, including the difficulty of demonstrating academic ability in English. Educational opportunities may be affected by language ability – it takes a number of years to obtain an ability sufficient for more advanced examinations. It is difficult for schools to liaise with parents who are not confident in speaking English and who may have additional difficulties because of lack of transport or shift work. Teenagers may suffer because they have left their friends behind and resent their parents' choice to move. (Some of these issues are discussed in 'Adapting to Diversity: Irish Schools and Newcomer Students', Emer Smyth et al., 2009. www.academia.edu/565176/Adapting_to_Diversity_Irish_schools_and_newcomer_students)

Officials:

'I asked [a Social Security official]: "Can you please tell me if there is anywhere else I can go for help?" The answer was blunt and direct: "No! Go and ask the Portuguese Government to help you. And if you need money for the return ticket to Portugal, find a job."'

A woman dismissed from her job because she was pregnant. *Case Studies of Discrimination and Disadvantage for Portuguese Migrant Workers*, quoted in the *Animate Research Compendium*, 2006

'Foreigners can be more demanding and pushy.'

Social Security Agency official quoted in Roisin Devlin and Sorcha McKenna, *No Home From Home, an Investigative Report into Homelessness and People who are Excluded from Accessing Public Funds*, 2009

'Alcohol would be a big issue and domestic violence would be a big issue, especially with the Polish and the Romanians.'

Social Care Trust official quoted in *No Home From Home*

The community:

Recent research only reinforces the widespread existence of attitudes that have been experienced by people for a long time. Local minority-ethnic people, and people who arrived in the early 2000s were subject to casual remarks by people who may not realise that they are being insulting. Asian women in Fermanagh reported local people asking 'Are you a mail order bride?' or expressing surprise that they could speak English.

'It really annoys me when people ask me "where did you learn English?" People take it for granted that I don't know many things and that in general Asian people don't know many things.'

Fermanagh: Other Voices, 2002

More recent arrivals in the Polish community confirm the perception that they are likely to become victims of racist prejudice. These comments are from a more recent survey of Polish people living here, who were asked about their concerns:

'I feel more and more unwanted in this country'

'I'm worried about the harassment of Polish people and the lack of understanding towards my countrymen'

'I'm afraid to speak out loud in Polish in east Belfast'

'Anxiety. More racist attacks on my countrymen (Poles)'

Dr Robbie McVeigh and Chris McAfee *'Za Chlebern'*

Incomers have also found themselves stereotyped as if they fitted neatly into local groups, with people from Portugal or Poland, for example, assumed to be Catholic and therefore nationalist in their sympathies. Research by STEP found that

The divisions of the conflict are transferred on to other identities in Northern Ireland, such as the allocation or assumption of people from different national origins to sectarian categories, which is often unnoticed or misunderstood until there is an incident...

Settlement choices such as where to live, where to send children to school and where to worship are often interpreted in the host community as affiliation to a 'side' in the conflict, sometimes leading to hostility, intimidation, or even the threat of or actual violence or expulsion from accommodation.

STEP, *Research to Identify Additional Difficulties Faced by Minority Ethnic Groups and Migrant Workers because of the Conflict in N. Ireland*, 2010, Executive Summary

Incomers are expected to understand bewildering local sensitivities.

A male participant was to travel to a certain city on the Foyle and referred to it as 'Derry'. He was told if he went to 'Derry' he would return without any teeth, as he was going to 'Londonderry'. He was let off on this occasion, 'as he didn't know better'.

Research to Identify Additional Difficulties

It has been widely believed that migrants are less welcome in protestant/

In a divided community people have found themselves being asked to take sides, or it is assumed that they fit into stereotypes.

'Everyone wanted you to take sides ... people should not expect you to be involved in their fight'.

Extract from an interviewee quoted in an ICCM briefing for Church Leaders in 2006

'The assumption is that Polish = Catholic. It is also assumed that you are pro-Republican. My family is Catholic, but they are pro-British – Female A8 national'

Research to Identify Additional Difficulties

'"Because I have darker skin", says Marizete, "people think I am Portuguese and therefore assume I am a Catholic." For this reason she avoids some parts of town.'

From an interview with a Brazilian Baptist pastor's wife, Marizete, Lara while she was living in Dungannon, in lion & lamb: racism and religious liberty, Autumn 2004 www.contemporar ychristianity.net/econiroot/LionLamb/037/lionlamb037.html

They say Protestants are bad people. But they are all good to me – Male pre-2004 EU national, fluent in English

Research to Identify Additional Difficulties

Even apparently confident communities experience problems.

'Our community is confident in some respects – many of our community members are doctors, lecturers, business people and are very highly educated. But the community is not confident concerning the education of their children and racist attacks ... we are living in a culture of fear ...'

An unidentified interviewee in 'Race/Ethnicity, Disability and Sexual Orientation in Northern Ireland: A Study of Non-Governmental Organisations' by Helen Lewis in *Shared Space*, Issue 1, 2005 www.community-relations.org.uk/fs/doc/f_h_lewis.pdf

unionist areas and that paramilitary groups are responsible for racist attacks. There have undoubtedly been attacks in loyalist areas but it would be wrong to generalise.

There was no evidence that racism is confined to Protestant/Unionist communities. Only 16% of Slovaks live in protestant areas and the Slovakian focus group identified a specific majority Catholic area in Dungannon as being the most notorious they knew for racist incidents.

During the conflict territorialism was rife and some instances of racism may now be seen as just one aspect of gang control of an area. Sometimes the homes of foreign nationals are not the only ones to be attacked. STEP found that local people also lived in fear and were inhibited from standing up for neighbours from other countries.

When migrants arrived in numbers in Mid-Ulster in the early years of the 21st century many people tended to adopt the word 'Portuguese' to describe all migrant workers, and people in other areas have also found themselves lumped together.

'People threaten you saying they are UVF/UDA and may be or not, they tell you that they see you as "Indian" and think you don't know the difference'.

A member of the Bangladeshi community quoted in *30 Years Seen but Not Heard*

Even people with good intentions are inclined to assume that all migrants' needs will be the same.

'Local people who want to do something for ethnic minorities tend to want to group them all together. ... Being put together with other ethnic groups can make us feel vulnerable unless we have enough support'.

Julie Chiang Li of the Belfast Chinese Christian Church quoted in *lion & lamb: racism and religious liberty*, Autumn 2004

This warning is important. Even if it is not negative, the stereotyping of people can lead to misunderstanding. For example, we think of the Chinese population as well established, with good support organisations but this does not mean that they form a homogeneous community.

Whereas the more well-established population of Chinese people in Northern Ireland is Cantonese-speaking, increasingly new migrants are Mandarin speakers coming from a small number of provinces in mainland China. This research project corroborated undocumented observations that the more recently-arrived Mandarin speakers are less well integrated than the first wave of migrants who were Cantonese-speaking. They appear to have more limited financial resources than the earlier migrants now have and by choice have limited if any contact with existing community associations.

'Moments of a Life in the Margin: Migrant Communities in Northern Ireland' by Katy Radford and Sara Templer in *Shared Space*, Issue 8 October, 2009 www.community-relations.org.uk/fs/doc/chapter-31.pdf

Racist Crime

Unless they are challenged and transformed, negative attitudes lead to negative actions. The incidence of racially motivated crime, recorded

by the police, tended to rise during the last decade as the number of people from other countries and ethnic backgrounds increased in our communities. In 2010–11 the number of racist crimes against people was slightly lower than the previous year, but there were still 102 reported cases of violence with a racist motivation that resulted in injury, and 263 cases of criminal damage. (There was an overall figure of 842 racist incidents and 531 racist crimes.) There was a further drop in 2011–12 with 696 racist incidents and 458 racist crimes, of which 199 involved violence against the person and 213 were property crimes. In 2013–14 there was a slight rise, with 750 reported racist incidents and 470 racist crimes, of which 93% were against individuals and 7% were against businesses and organisations. There were 68 Asian crime victims, 61 black, 36 of mixed background or other and the majority, 209, were white, with the largest number of these being 65 from Poland, 63 from the UK or ROI and 18 from Lithuania. 146 were female and 287 were male. There were 63 violence against the person offences, 31 with injuries; 2 thefts; and 15 cases of criminal damage. www.psnipolice.uk/racist_incidents_and_crimes_in_northern_ireland_2004-05_to_2012-13.xls

Race hate crime is underreported – only 87% of respondents to a STEP survey in Mid Ulster would have reported to the police if they were a victim of crime (*Research to Identify Additional Difficulties*). The clearance rate is low and there are very few prosecutions using the hate crime legislation and this has been the subject of critical analysis. Recent reports show that this seems to be true throughout Europe.

To combat hate crime, the EU and its Member States need to make these crimes more visible and hold perpetrators to account. ... (24%) of the 23,500 respondents to the EU-MIDIS [European Union Minorities and Discrimination] survey – the first EU-wide survey to specifically sample ethnic minority and immigrant groups on their perception of racially or ethnically motivated crime – said they had been a victim of crime at least once in the 12 months preceding the survey. On average, 18% of all Roma and 18% of all sub-Saharan African respondents in the survey indicated that they had experienced at least one racially motivated crime in the last 12 months.

... victims are often unable or unwilling to seek redress against perpetrators, with many crimes remaining unreported and unprosecuted and, therefore, invisible.

Comment on the publication of two new reports by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) <http://fra.europa.eu/en/press-release/2012/hate-crime-reality-eu-two-new-fra-reports-show>

The Belfast Migrant Centre has a racial harassment advice and advocacy service (see page 123) and they would like to see more PSNI staff dedicated to hate crime, or at least more specialist training for PSNI officers so that race crimes can be pursued more vigorously through the criminal justice system in N Ireland.

Dr Neil Jarman of the Centre for Conflict Research said in 2012:

Last year the police recorded 1719 'crimes with a hate motivation', but there were only seven successful prosecutions using the 'aggravated by hostility' aspect of the law. Whether this is because of failures by

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) defines

A Hate Incident
as: any incident, which may or may not constitute a criminal offence, which is perceived by the victim or any other person, as being motivated by prejudice or hate.

A Hate Crime
as: any hate incident, which constitutes a criminal offence, perceived by the victim or any other person, as being motivated by prejudice or hate.

The Word 'Ethnic'

In reality all people have ethnicity. In other words, each person belongs to a people group: Asian, white, black, all have a particular heritage. In order to be careful not to reinforce exactly what we are trying to defeat – racism and discrimination – African, African Caribbean, mixed heritage and Asian peoples in Britain are understood as minorities, simply in terms of numbers. White people in Britain are the majority. Whilst people prefer self-definition, 'minority-ethnic', with the emphasis on 'minority' respects those minority identities because it emphasises 'minority', rather than 'ethnicity'. To emphasize ethnicity is to deny it to white people, and to use it negatively to segregate minority ethnicities from white ethnicities.

Consequently, even though it is widely used, 'ethnic minority' should be avoided as it places the emphasis wrongly on the ethnicity of African, African Caribbean, and Asian and mixed heritage people as the only ones that possess ethnicity. As such 'ethnic minority', for all intents and purposes means someone that is marginalized, excluded and unwanted in society, because those terms have attracted grossly negative connotations for minority-ethnic groups in Britain.

'Ethnic group', 'ethnic community', 'the ethnics' and 'ethnic minorities', 'ethnic people' as references to minorities in Britain are all linguistically incorrect, socially offensive, and do nothing to help our case against racism and racial discrimination.

Rev. Arlington Trotman Churches Commission for Racial Justice speaking at the All Ireland Churches' Consultative Meeting on Racism (AICCMR) conference, Challenged by Difference: Threat or Enrichment at Dromantine, November 2005 www.embraceni.org/wp-content/uploads/2006/06/Being.%20Identity%20and%20Belief%20-%20A%20Trotman.pdf

the police in evidence gathering or flagging up the hate element, or failure of the prosecution service to pursue this aspect of the offence is unclear to date, but we lag behind GB in our success in prosecuting hate crime offenders.

In 2013 the NI Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) launched a report researched by Robbie McVeigh, *Race Crime and Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland; Towards a Blueprint for the Eradication of Racism from the CJSNI* at a conference on race crime and the criminal justice system. The report reflects the opinion of NICEM members that 'that much more work needs to be done by the criminal justice system if it is to be seen to be taking appropriate action on racist violence.' http://nicem.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Race_and_Criminal_Justice_2013.pdf There was discussion as to whether current legislation is ineffective or if victims are being failed by the system.

In 2012 the NI Assembly All Party Working Group on Ethnic Minorities had already expressed anxiety about the alteration of the role of PSNI Hate Crime and Minority Liaison Officers (HIMLOs). The report quotes a NICEM interviewee unhappy with this and other changes.

The withdrawal of HIMLO's, the reference groups in the Policing Board, the hate crime thematic group in the Belfast City Council and the change to PCSPs [Policing and Community Safety Partnerships] (which we believe has a severe underrepresentation of ethnic minorities) has meant that the paths of communication that were available are no longer there. It is now as it was, difficult to find who you need to be talking to with seemingly no single point of contact. The shift to neighbourhood policing teams as being the 'implied'

HIMLOs assumes there is a feeling of complete integration and comfort of ethnic minorities within communities to interact with these officers and visa versa. Anecdotal evidence suggests this is not the case and there is dissatisfaction at the loss of the relationships the communities have worked to build up over the past number of years.

The report also cites evidence of the alienation of minority-ethnic people from the criminal justice system and the fact that some have experienced poor service. It argues for the introduction of ethnic monitoring so that we can have similar data to that available in England and Wales. Other recommendations include the establishment of a Criminal Justice System Race Unit in the UK Ministry of Justice and performance indicators for such things as reporting of incidents; satisfaction among ethnic groups; the training and behaviour of staff; and the level of recruitment of minority-ethnic people. The percentage of minority-ethnic police recruits is much lower than in the community. http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/peace/docs/nipmr_2013-04_full.pdf (See also foreign national prisoners pages 139–40) The report includes examples of terrifying racist attacks. http://nicem.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Race_and_Criminal_Justice_2013.pdf

The NI Human Rights Commission carried out its own investigation in 2013.

The report states that

To address racist hate crimes it is necessary for the NI Executive and criminal justice agencies to understand that the human rights engaged are overlapping, mutually dependent and reinforcing. The duties to prevent, prohibit, prosecute and protect, only when taken together, provide a comprehensive framework.

Racist Hate Crime: Human Rights and the Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland, *NI Human Rights Commission, 2013* [www.nihrc.org/documents/103141_NIHRC_Racist%20Hate%20Crime_4_Combined%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.nihrc.org/documents/103141_NIHRC_Racist%20Hate%20Crime_4_Combined%20(2).pdf)

There was less criticism of the framework of laws, than of the way in which they were understood, drawn together by the NI Executive and implemented by the criminal justice agencies. The report is critical of how the 'aggravated by racial hostility' elements of the Criminal Justice (No.2) (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 are interpreted, with the conflating of 'demonstrated' and 'motivated'. This has meant that some cases where racial hostility was demonstrated were not progressed as hate crimes. Interviews with victims and support workers demonstrate dissatisfaction with how the police and judicial authorities communicate about the progress of cases. There were many recommendations to strengthen the elements of protection, prevention, prohibition (including the criminalisation of race hate speech) and sanction of race hate crime; and the more effective support of victims, including the speedy identification of repeat victims. In responding to the report, Justice Minister, David Ford pointed to recent improvements and stated that

By Autumn 2014, we hope to have in place a 'data capture' system which will accurately record the flow of hate crime cases through the system enabling agencies to identify issues or areas for improvement.

The PSNI is also carrying out an ongoing review and sample exercise of hate crime cases to ensure good practice and lessons learned on

'Hate crime doesn't only affect the victim, it causes fear amongst the community from which they come ... and as a result, it diminishes us. At a wider level, it damages the quality of life here in Northern Ireland, it erodes our international reputation and causes untold damage to our economy. Of course it needs a robust response from the policing and justice system, but it doesn't, and can't stop there. It needs a response from all of society – from all of us. We cannot enjoy the luxury of the bystander.'

Michael Wardlow, Chief Commissioner of the Equality Commission, NI, speaking at an Irish Congress of Trade Unions hate crime seminar, 11 December 2012 www.equalityni.org/sections/default.asp?cms=News%5FSpeeches&cmsid=1_11&id=365&secid=1_1

investigative standards. They are also developing a hate crime toolkit for all officers.

He also said that the new five year Victim and Witness Strategy would also deliver significant improvements including a statutory entitlement to make a written personal statement setting out how crime has affected them. www.dojni.gov.uk/index/media-centre/ford-responds-to-human-rights-commission-report-on-hate-crime.htm

At the end of 2013 the Institute for Race Relations published an online comment page by Gerard Stewart on racist hate crime in N Ireland, which gives examples of recent incidents. (Just after this there were a number of attacks on homes in East and North Belfast. See for example a *Belfast Telegraph* article about multiple attacks on the homes of Polish people in East Belfast. www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/northern-ireland/seven-attacks-in-10-days-as-racist-gang-targets-polish-community-in-east-belfast-29924518.html)

The vast majority of the racist attacks which have become headline news have taken place in the middle of the night at the homes of foreign nationals, usually from Africa or Eastern Europe – where attackers daub racist graffiti onto the property, ahead of smashing doors and windows before fleeing. In one case, a number of Lithuanians in Dungannon experienced several attacks at their home, including the daubing of a Nazi symbol on their property accompanied by a written order to ‘get out’, in a prolonged campaign of harassment. In another incident, which bore striking resemblance to an attack months earlier in the same area, the home of a Zimbabwean family in East Belfast – who had already left another property in Belfast due to racism – was daubed with ‘No Blacks’ before they had even moved into the property.

www.irr.org.uk/news/an-assessment-of-racial-violence-in-northern-ireland/

Gerard Stewart also discusses whether the police are correct in saying that statistical increases are partly due to the acknowledged hard work of the PSNI and others, in encouraging victims of hate crime to come forward. He quotes an Institute for Conflict Research Report from 2006 which gave a number of reasons for their reluctance, including: poor experience of policing in their country of origin; anxiety about their immigration status e.g. for those in the asylum system; a desire to be inconspicuous; the feeling that police had been dismissive in the past; or that local people were more likely to be believed. See *Policing, Accountability and the Black and Minority Ethnic Communities in Northern Ireland*. www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/minority1-2.pdf

Of people reporting harassment in a NICEM study of Polish people, only about a third had gone to the police and were asked to explain why. These are some of their comments.

- ‘Because I didn’t have a clue where is the nearest station.’
- ‘Going to Police won’t change anything. You learn manners at home, that’s what they [local youths] lack. Police can’t teach them good behaviour’
- ‘Because I think the Police would not do anything about it.’
- ‘Because it doesn’t make any difference. I spoke with my landlord,

he put in new windows but he was afraid to go to the Police himself in case of retaliation.’

The experience of Polish people surveyed in ‘*Za Chlebem*’

This underreporting echoes what happens in the rest of Europe (see page 115).

The hate crime statistics all relate to individual people.

‘The man then made several racist comments towards me and then began to walk away. He had not gone far when he turned around and returned, he continued to shout racist and abusive comments at me and then began walking towards me with his two dogs. I tried to move away but could not move far as the man and his dogs were blocking my escape. When I moved the man punched me in the nose, which knocked me to the ground. One of the dogs then jumped on me and bit me on the arm. ... I had to take three weeks off work. I now experience a high level of anxiety and do not feel safe in my own home. I continue to have nightmares about the attack and cannot sleep well. ... The attack has also greatly affected my wife and children.’

Race Crime and Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland; Towards a Blueprint for the Eradication of Racism from the CJSNI, 2013

Promise Awoyelu was asleep at about 05:30 GMT on Saturday when she was hit on the head by a brick thrown through her bedroom window ... The child’s father, Charles Awoyelu, who has been living in Northern Ireland for seven years, described the attack as ‘shocking’. ... ‘We are here to make a living and we are a peace-loving family.’

BBC News N Ireland, January 2012
www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-16665103

‘Fatimah’ remains deeply distressed and increasingly isolated by the racist attacks that happened on her husband at their two previous homes in Northern Ireland. She has debilitating back pain caused by falling down the stairs when a gang broke into their first house and attacked her husband in front of her.

Supporting Refugee and Asylum Seeking Families Living in Northern Ireland

‘If I go out, especially at night, because they call me a “black bastard”, I don’t go out without the car and go to an hotel or something. ... Drunk young people are the worst, even though I have seen a generation of them grow up and the majority say “hello Doctor, how are you?” But not if they are drunk and want trouble.’

‘Some teenagers in a park. I thought they were going to ask me about something and they just punched me. I thought of leaving Northern Ireland.’

Two statements by health workers, interviewed for *An Investigation into the Nature, Extent and Effects of Racist Behaviours Experienced by Northern Ireland’s Ethnic Minority Healthcare Staff*

Some incidents have affected numbers of people. A football World Cup qualifying match between N Ireland and Poland in 2009 was marred by violence, mostly, but not entirely, by Polish fans. Afterwards a number of homes in the South Belfast Village area were damaged, apparently in revenge attacks against Polish people. Windows were smashed and at least

‘It feels horrible. I’ve been living in Belfast for eight years and I’ve never experienced anything like this before. It’s scary to be honest. Ever since I moved here, I have been working every day. To experience something like this it just makes you want to move out. They should be ashamed of themselves. Being a black human person living in Belfast, if that’s a crime, that’s the only crime I’ve committed.’

A Nigerian man whose home was attacked in East Belfast (UTV News, 19 August 2013) www.irr.org.uk/news/an-assessment-of-racial-violence-in-northern-ireland/

‘My car was burnt while parked in front of my home’

‘Verbal abuse, Damage to property. Our wheelie bins were stolen, our fence was damaged and they peed at my door.’

‘I was hit with a bottle on the head.’

The experience of Polish people surveyed by Dr Robbie McVeigh and Chris McAfee, ‘*Za Chlebem*’ <http://nicem.org.uk/files/category=Publications>

‘... the most prevalent form of discrimination and prejudice is verbal abuse with 25% of those who answered having experienced it. This was followed by harassment at 17%; discrimination at 14%; damage to your house/home at 12%; damage to your car at 10%; and being ignored and physical assault both at 9%.’ ... “We got a threat from our neighbours saying if we stay there, they would kill us. ... there are some areas that are not safe for us. In one area my friend was told to leave, they smashed her windows. We came here to be safe, you know, we came from Somalia” ...

Some of the women thought this was because of the way they dressed. “When I go shopping and people are driving their cars they open their windows and shout abuse.”

The results of a survey of people from East Africa in The Horn of Africa in Belfast

The **Unite Against Hate** campaign prepared an **Educational Toolkit** for children and young people. www.uniteagainsthate.org.uk/unite/toolkit/

one door was kicked in, leaving people who had lived in relative peace for some years fearful. A number left the area. The people whose homes were attacked included at least one Slovakian man, a Slovenian woman, a number of Hungarian men and a French woman. This event caused a number of people to move and increased the Polish population in South-east Belfast.

Attacks on foreign nationals sometimes attract international press coverage (see also attacks on Roma people below). In June 2009, the *Times of India* reported that two Indian families had been forced to move. One family from Kerala had their windows smashed. The father, a care worker married to a nurse at the Craigavon Area Hospital said

‘We cannot understand it. We came here from the state of Kerala in South India for a better life and we found most people friendly. ... We hope to move to another part of Portadown as our jobs are here and we enjoy our work. We have been so frightened by the attack. We have been living here for six months and loved Portadown, but we cannot subject our two children to this sort of racist attack. ... We believe it was young people who are not typical of our neighbours, but we do not want our children to be the victims of such hatred.’

timesofindia.indiatimes.com/news/world/uk/2-Indian-families-racially-attacked-in-Northern-Ireland/articleshow/5022263.cms

Attacks on Roma People in 2009

In June 2009, a group of Roma people gathered in the street, fearful to move back into their homes following attacks on their houses in South Belfast. The news attracted world media interest and people still talk about it.

The 113 people included very vulnerable families with small children and elderly grandparents. The men had been working, either selling the *Belfast Telegraph*, or in car washes, and were generating very little income; however, they all said that it was still considerably more than they could hope to earn even if they were able to access employment in Romania. As the group was now homeless, they were supplied with temporary accommodation, and assisted by the Red Cross, but once it became clear that there were no public funds available, to help rehouse them here, EMBRACE worked closely with the NI Housing Executive (NIHE) and Belfast Trust to enable all but two of the group to return to Romania. EMBRACE and a number of churches raised funds to provide for their immediate needs, ranging from food and clothing, prescription charges, nappies and toiletries to air fares. The crisis was exacerbated by the fact that people who had every right to be here because they are EU citizens had no recourse to public funds or easy access to the labour market (see pages 7, 8, 9, 58, 62 and 64).

While some members of the group felt that they were too traumatised to remain here, many individuals and families had wished to stay in Belfast, but in the absence of any way of accessing housing they felt their only recourse was to return home. EMBRACE helped to co-ordinate flights and, while the NIHE was able to pay for flights for families with children, donations received by EMBRACE paid for flights for the people who would otherwise have been on the streets. Many of those who returned to Romania felt able

Reporting Race Hate Crimes or Discrimination

Unless someone is in danger, it is important to have the permission of the victim before you take action. Many people fear making the situation worse by making a complaint. Where people are willing, there are a number of ways of reporting the incident.

The **Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)** has published a leaflet on racist hate crime in English, Polish, Lithuanian, Portuguese, Mandarin, Russian, Latvian, Slovakian and Romanian. www.psnipolice.uk/index/advice-and-legislation/advice_hate_crime/advice_hate_crime_racist.htm

(Leaflets on disability-related, homophobic, religious, sectarian, and transphobic hate crime are also available on the PSNI web site in a number of languages.) You can report a hate crime online. www.psnipolice.uk/index/advice-and-legislation/advice_hate_crime/hate_crime_reporting.htm

In an emergency you should dial 999, and for non-emergency calls phone **0845 600 8000**.

You can also report incidents confidentially on the **Crimestoppers** number **0800 555 111**

The **Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)** encourages reporting of neighbourhood harassment to their district offices. www.nihe.gov.uk/index/about/contact_us_home/your_nearest_office.htm

They have also published a **Hate Harassment Support Pack** for groups that are likely to be targeted.

www.nihe.gov.uk/hate_harassment_support_pack.pdf

The **Belfast Migrant Centre** offers support for victims of racist harassment and has **Bi-lingual Support Workers** for victims of race hate crime and harassment, funded by the PSNI. <http://belfastmigrantcentre.org/> Phone **(028)90438962** or E-mail bilingualsupportworker@nicem.org.uk The service covers all of Northern Ireland with one worker for Belfast and Mid-Ulster (Aleksandra Lojek-Magdziarz), another based in Derry~Londonderry to cover the Northwest (Agnieszka Luczak) and Ivy Ridge who works out of Ballymena and also looks after cases in Ballymoney, Coleraine, Larne and Moyle.

The **Equality Commission for Northern Ireland** is the body responsible for preventing discrimination and promoting equality. It covers various areas of discrimination including gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, marital status and religious or political belief. If you want advice from the Equality Commission about unlawful discrimination contact them on: E-mail: discriminationadvice@equalityni.org or by telephone on **(028) 90 500 600**.

‘History tells us that communities which have lived side by side peacefully for generations and even centuries can be persuaded to turn on each other with murderous intent. People were betrayed by their neighbours and removed from the safety of their former communities and subjected to extremes of violence and injustice. It is the courage and determination of those who survived and rebuilt their lives that we can draw on today. On HMD 2013 we are asking you to respect different communities.’

OFMDFM press release, Holocaust Memorial Day, 2013 – on the theme of ‘Communities Together: Build a Bridge’ www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/index/equality-and-strategy/good-relations/holocaust-memorial-day-home/holocaust-memorial-day-2013.htm The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day in 2014 was Journeys

to return to Belfast later and some have secured work and accommodation that would have been impossible in their own country.

There is plenty of evidence that discrimination and attacks on Roma/Romani people are widespread across Europe. The European Association for the Defense of Human Rights (AEDH) has issued a report, *Roma People in Europe in the 21st Century: Violence, Exclusion, Insecurity*, 2012. www.helcom.cz/dokumenty/Roma%20REPORT.pdf It called for nation states to take action to defend human rights.

(Perspectives on the crisis from Jolena Flett of NICEM, Linda Hutchinson of NIHE and a number of other writers, and articles on the legislative and rights implications can be found in NICEM's *Minority Rights Now!* Issue 1, December 2009. <http://nicem.org.uk/files?category=Minority%20Rights%20Now>)

Denise Wright of EMBRACE said of the Roma people assisted by EMBRACE

Many of those people have made contact with me since their return, to express their thanks for all the help they received. There has also been recognition by the statutory agencies of the key contribution of the churches who were able to meet needs when public bodies were unable to, and they are looking to build working relationships to feed into existing emergency planning for the city.

Gaps in Legislation

While action can be taken against people who commit racist crimes and act in a discriminatory way, our legislation is incomplete. The Equality Commission has identified this as a priority and is working with groups such as the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM), to ensure that people in N Ireland have the same protection as people in GB (see also page 141). One of the key changes would be to update the Race Relations Order (NI) 1997 so that colour and nationality would have the same level of protection as other racial grounds.

In October 2011 the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) took evidence in the UK. In their evidence, NICEM expressed dismay at the lack of a race relations strategy (see page 143) and stated that race had been subsumed within the broader Good Relations strategy which focussed on the majority Protestant/Unionist, Catholic/Nationalist communities. NICEM also disagreed with part of the NI Human Rights Commission submission to CERD which suggested that sectarianism should be seen as a subset of racism. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-14636076

Language Difficulties

Many migrant workers who come here already have excellent English. Filipino nurses, for example, are not chosen just because their qualifications are recognised here but also because many have been educated through English. Medical professionals from outside Europe must satisfy an English language test before they are able to work here. (There are plans to extend this testing to European nationals.) However, many other new migrants are likely to be working below the level of their educational attainment and expertise because their qualifications are not recognised (see also pages 94–6), or their English is not good enough. Accents and local dialects can add additional communication challenges.

There is a less recognised challenge for local English speakers who have sometimes become isolated in the workplace, unable to communicate or socialise because all their colleagues speak other languages.

In some of our traditional migrant populations, such as the Chinese or Bangladeshi communities, a proportion of people (especially in the older generations) may have very little English and this makes it difficult to integrate in society or to understand important information. Researchers listening to the experiences of the Bangladeshi community in 2000, found that a family did not know their 6-year old child was dying until the day he died, because an interpreter was not offered to them. Today things have improved and Northern Ireland now has a regional translation service for the health service. (Sometimes however, even with an interpreter, specialist language may be unfamiliar in the native tongue.)

The equality obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act encouraged all the public services to be more conscious of the need for improvement.

Minority ethnic groups had difficulty accessing services due to the language barrier – now there are more efforts to inform them of the services available.

How Public Authorities Provide Services to Minority Ethnic Groups: Emerging Findings Discussion Paper, 2006

Translation services are much more widely available for migrants in recent years, but are not always used and there have been expressions of concern that delays in accessing interpreters may delay medical treatment in some cases. NI Human Rights Commission researchers looking into homelessness were concerned to find that Housing Executive officials still used children as translators, although some realised that it was inappropriate.

Sometimes there are questions you wouldn't want a child to be asking a mother, if domestic violence or something.

No Home From Home

While public bodies may have a budget for translation, voluntary groups which give advice may well have no such funds.

One of the biggest complaints is the cost of English classes and their content. Far sighted employers run free classes for their employees as they recognise the benefits that knowledge of English brings to their workforce. Some local authorities, support organisations, charities and churches also provide language and conversation classes. For most people, however, learning English remains an expensive matter and classes are often not available at times that can be fitted in around work. This has a significant effect on employment potential as well as integration. A report on European migrant workers notes that,

Many work irregular hours in isolated locations and cannot access classes in universities or town centres, and work-focused language tuition is most likely to improve labour market prospects.

The UK's New Europeans; Progress and Challenges Five Years After Accession, 2010

Access to affordable English classes is especially important to people who are seeking asylum, both to assist them in coping with the asylum

'For some of us we don't speak the same language as our parents – they speak better Cantonese than English and we speak better English than Cantonese.'

Young Black & Minority Ethnic Communities in Lisburn, SE Education and Library Board, 2010 www.yesip.org/docs/2010/YoungBlackMinorityEthnicComm.pdf

'It is so easy to exploit workers who cannot speak English. Not to know the language is like being socially disabled...'

Justyna Pers, speaking as part of the British Council's Ordinary Lives project. (See also pages 153 and 180) www.britishcouncil.org/northernireland-society-ordinarylives-poland1.htm

The impact of language difficulties on family life

'I arrived in Northern Ireland when I was 13. We came from Poland because my parents believed that we would have a better life here. My father was a highly trained motor mechanic and my mother a physiotherapist.

At first my mum was very happy that we were all going to be together again and was looking forward to coming to settle down in Northern Ireland. However, it soon became clear that she was not going to be able to get the same job as she had in Poland because her English was not good enough. So, she took a job cleaning offices and began working long hours. My dad had a job as a mechanic and had already made some good friends. Because of the long hours my mum worked and the fact that she was still looking after the family she was not able to get to English classes, that made her feel even more isolated. So I became the spokesperson for the family. Talking to the landlords, doctors, hospitals, and anyone else my parents needed me for. It is hard doing grown up stuff when you are only a kid. It puts a lot of strain on you to always make sure that you get the information right.'

16-year old female student, Hazelwood Integrated College in *Welcoming Newcomer and Minority Ethnic Pupils in Northern Ireland, 2010*

For people who are seeking asylum, language can be a matter of life and death as it can affect the outcome of their cases.

'I didn't understand the interpreter and because I didn't speak English I couldn't tell anyone. The interpreter wrote down that I was Ethiopian but I'm Eritrean. This has caused me a lot of problems.'

Submission by Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum to the Independent Asylum Commission, Fit for Purpose Yet www.independentasylumcommission.org.uk/

process and acquiring the communication skills they will need for future integration and employment. The NI Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (NICRAS) uses volunteers to provide one-to-one teaching for people seeking sanctuary and volunteering can also help people seeking asylum to improve their English and help them to feel more at home during the stressful period while their application is considered (see pages 43–7).

People seeking asylum here used to receive inferior treatment regarding support for English language learning compared to those in GB and support organisations spent an inordinate time trying to access grants. Bryson House and the NI Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers supported the Law Centre NI in preparing a briefing paper on "Access to Free 'ESOL' Classes for Asylum Seekers and Refugees" in 2009. As well as outlining the importance of English language skills in everyday life, in social cohesion, and in communicating with officials, they also stressed the mental health benefits in countering isolation and in helping children with their education. The paper recommended that ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes should be free for all refugees and people who are seeking asylum in N Ireland. As the numbers are small (see pages 42–3) so was the projected cost. www.lawcentreni.org/component/content/article/63-policy-briefings/694-esol-briefing.html?q=esol

In September 2012 the Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) began implementing a 1-year pilot scheme allowing people who are seeking asylum to access free classes. www.delni.gov.uk/access-to-fe-classes-asylum-seekers.pdf NICRAS reported that uptake has been good. DEL has been evaluating the scheme with the users and seems content for it to continue.

Poverty and Homelessness

The recession and welfare reform has brought a change in living standards for many people and this will continue even as the economy recovers. So how far can poverty be linked to nationality or ethnicity? Researchers are just beginning to assess the links between poverty and ethnicity in Northern Ireland. A Joseph Rowntree Foundation survey of research

evidence, published in February 2013, points to big gaps in the evidence but these are some of the conclusions:

- People from minority-ethnic groups are employed at all levels in the economy, but low-grade, low-paid employment appears commonplace, despite many having high qualifications and skills.
- In-work and child poverty appear to be problematic, but to what extent people from minority ethnic groups receive benefits when eligible to claim is unclear.
- There has been a focus on access to services, but little is known about education and health outcomes. Housing conditions may vary, but poor management by landlords, high costs and overcrowding are evident.
- Despite positive policy changes, people from minority ethnic groups have experienced racism as service users, employees and pupils, with mixed responses from organisations, employers and schools.

Poverty and Ethnicity in Northern Ireland; An Evidence Review by Alison Wallace, Ruth McAreavy and Karl Atkin, 2013. (Extract from the summary report.) www.jrf.org.uk/publications/poverty-ethnicity-northern-ireland

Follow-up research is to be published in Spring 2014. Ruth McAreavy told the Belfast Migrant Forum in December 2013 that the research team had found in-work and child poverty, low-grade, low-paid work, issues relating to housing, health and education, a lack of effective ethnic monitoring and a perceived policy vacuum which produced ad hoc responses to the issues. Small and medium sized enterprises were more likely to have discriminatory practices than large ones, and exploitation in the workplace persists (see also pages 57–8 and 85–94). Agency working is precarious (see also pages 86–9). There was an issue of labour market segmentation with blocks of people from the same national or ethnic groups working in sectors of industry making exploitation more likely. Of those who were studied, people whose main language was Chinese had the greatest number of people with no qualifications, 31.5%. People with better English language were more likely to be in higher-level jobs and to have successful career progression and there is a problem with the recognition of foreign qualifications (see also pages 94–6). For more detail read a policy briefing included in the Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series Seminar on Migration. www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/RaISel/knowledge_exchange/briefing_papers/series3/mcareavey090114.pdf

Welfare entitlement in the UK can be based upon your immigration status and personal circumstances (see pages 61–4). European migrants are not entitled to out-of-work benefits until they have been here for three months and people from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) are usually only eligible for out-of-work benefits when they become residents or citizens (see pages 63–5) and if they are unable to return home, they may also become destitute quickly. Some people's rights and immigration status depend on the fact that their partner/spouse is working. If they leave the household because of relationship breakdown or abuse, or are abandoned, some may lose financial support without the hope that the state will assist them and others may lose their right even to stay here. This situation creates major difficulties, not just for people unfortunate enough to find themselves locked out of the welfare state, but also

for service providers whose staff struggle with rules that can make compassion difficult. Changes in housing benefit, as part of welfare reform, seem likely to put increased pressure on affordable accommodation and lead to more homelessness.

Migrant Worker Destitution

'Against the compelling urgency of the plight of immigrants ... the claims of legal compliance must give way to the more fundamental claims of our common humanity. If numerous immigrants are here because their families would otherwise live in abject poverty, the issue boils down to legal conformity versus possible starvation ... In attempting to understand what is just, we have to imagine real persons and their concrete situations. ... The survival and growth of our own civilization may well depend upon our imagining better.

'Imagining the Immigrant - Why legality must give way to humanity', John J. Savant, in *America*; *The National Catholic Review* 26 Oct 2009 <http://americamagazine.org/node/149503>

The body representing European national homelessness charities has noted that

Growing numbers of people across Europe are experiencing severe housing exclusion and immigrants are among the groups that are most particularly affected and permanently excluded.

FEANTSA *Common Position on Migration and Homelessness*, November 2012

FEANTSA has called on the EU to guarantee access to emergency accommodation and emergency support to EU citizens who find themselves destitute in another Member State. www.feantsa.org/spip.php?article494&lang=en

Problems occur when people are welcomed to the country but have no safety net, if they cannot find work or lose their jobs before they have been here long enough to have any benefit entitlement (see pages 62–4). This is true of most recent immigrants from outside the Europe Economic Area (see page 7). In 2005 a young migrant worker from Ukraine, Oksana Sukhanova, had to have parts of both legs amputated because she had been sleeping rough in Coleraine during cold weather. Once she had lost her job, because of her country of origin, her work permit was no longer valid, her immigration status was tied to the work permit, so she could not look for another job and was not entitled to welfare support. People in her situation are not eligible for benefits and do not have easy access to hostel beds because homelessness organisations are usually supported by public funds via the Housing Executive. Providers must fund the beds themselves or from charitable donations. www.theguardian.com/uk/2005/jan/13/immigration.northernireland (It seems that Oksana was able to turn her life around and get a job when she left hospital.)

Foreign nationals are especially prone to sudden homelessness as they often lack a circle of family and friends to help them for long enough to get themselves back on track. They may have used all their savings to get here but then find that promised work does not materialise. If a job falls through they may have totally underestimated the cost of living here and run out of money quickly. Some workers may experience unexpected

health problems or have no financial support following accidents at work. People on short-term contracts may send money home to families and fail to reserve sufficient savings to bridge gaps in employment. Those who have been living in tied accommodation may become homeless as soon as they lose their jobs. The problems are particularly acute for agency workers and trafficked people who may have large debts in their home country. Irregular migrants are also especially vulnerable as they will be afraid to ask for help.

Foreign rough sleepers are often subject to harassment and intimidation, and homelessness makes it almost impossible to obtain and hold down a job. Destitute local people usually have a prior history of social problems; for migrant workers it can happen the other way round. Unaccustomed destitution can lead from an ordered life to one with multiple social and medical problems. This can include resorting to crime and/or alcohol and drug abuse.

In 2009 the Law Centre NI submitted a discussion paper 'Gaps in welfare support for migrant workers' to the DEL best practice working group on migrant workers, around the time that 20 Romanian families were forced out of their homes in Belfast and were ineligible for benefits or housing support (see pages 120–1). The Law Centre liaised with Council for the Homeless to compile information to support their case. Their paper described how some migrant workers become destitute quickly, following unemployment or relationship breakdown, suggested research to audit the extent of the gaps in welfare provision, and recommended the creation of a support fund. www.lawcentreni.org/policy/policy-briefings/201.html

The issue of migrant homelessness was also highlighted when research by Roisin Devlin and Sorchá McKenna of the NI Human Rights Commission (NIHRC) was published in 2009. Their report, *No Home From Home, an Investigative Report into Homelessness and People who are Excluded from Accessing Public Funds*, confirmed the Law Centre's concerns, and demonstrated how restrictions in immigration legislation can prevent access to even the most basic levels of support from government agencies. Personal accounts from homeless individuals revealed their experiences of domestic violence, ill health and racial intimidation.

The study found that some Housing Executive staff were sympathetic to ineligible people, but others did not seem to know the official position. The researchers were also disturbed to find that vulnerable families were rarely referred to Social Services who should be made aware if children are at risk, as they can give emergency support. Many housing officials were referring ineligible foreigners to voluntary support organisations who then had to look for finance from charities.

People whose immigration status, right to work and access to funds depends on their spouses or partners are in trouble if that relationship breaks down, and especially if they are being abused. In these circumstances official bodies will refer a woman to Women's Aid who struggle to find the money from other charities to support people who have no recourse to public funds. Some officials find this difficult.

That case hit me hard because she was on her own, with twins, and we couldn't pay her and, much as I felt dreadful about it and the case

'We bought into free movement of labour across Europe. Why can't we have a European transitional migrant fund? Instead, we now have 'home-made' migration rules not based on, and sometimes in violation of, European legislation and these are the 'cracks' that vulnerable people fall through, an example of this is the UK ineligibility of support to those who were unaware of the Workers Registration Scheme and did not therefore comply with it. ... We cannot, as a society, accept the concept of human beings being ineligible for human dignity or compassion.'

Bernadette McAliskey, *South Tyrone Empowerment Programme (STEP) Plugging the Gaps? Migrant Workers – Rights and Entitlements, Inter-Agency Workshop to Explore Our Responsibilities and Legal Obligations Towards People with No Access to Public Funds, 2009*

Living in limbo; Forced Migrant Destitution in Europe

The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) has called on European states to change their policies so that migrant people can access basic human rights such as housing, social assistance and work, regardless of their legal status. Their research report is available online. www.jrseurope.org/news_releases/ANDES%20report2010.htm

'Many recent migrants live in overcrowded temporary accommodation, at high rents, or in poor conditions ... Substantial numbers live in employer-provided housing (especially in sectors such as agriculture where local housing is insufficient to meet peak seasonal demand). This magnifies the risks associated with unstable employment, since workers who lose their jobs also lose their housing.'

An overview of the UK situation in The UK's New Europeans www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/new_europeans.pdf

has stuck with me and I am waiting to hear how it goes [on appeal]. I truthfully felt that I had applied the legislation correctly, but I felt dreadful about it ...

Social security official quoted in No Home from Home

The *No Home from Home* report included a number of recommendations, the most pressing of these being that, regardless of nationality or immigration status, no one should be allowed to fall into destitution.

As the recession deepened, homelessness organisations noticed increasing need among foreign nationals. Further calls for change followed the death from exposure in South Belfast at Christmas 2009, of Robert Kowalski, a Polish man who had been in contact with statutory authorities and homelessness groups over a number of months. The **Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM)** immediately asked for more to be done to bridge the gap in providing welfare assistance. www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/breakingnews/breakingnews_ukandireland/call-for-migrants-crisis-fund-28508879.html

In light of the economic downturn leading to more migrants losing their jobs and thus heightening the potential for tragedy, NICEM strongly recommends that OFMDFM [the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister] set up a crisis fund to assist those workers who have been made unemployed but are unable to access public funds. Such measures would reduce the risk of poverty and ultimate destitution. Currently Charitable organisations mostly provide such support. ... Often the accommodation arrangements of migrant workers are tied to their jobs and as such they are more likely to become homeless if they become unemployed.

NICEM press release, 30 December 2009

Women from minority-ethnic backgrounds who experience abuse may have more difficulties than local women because language and cultural barriers make it more difficult for them to tell their stories and receive the full benefit of staff support and the solidarity of the other women. From April 2012 some victims of domestic violence who came into the country on spouse visas have been able to access public support for a limited time while they apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain under the **Destitution Domestic Violence (DDV)** concession. www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-to-settle-in-uk-form-setdv There is concern that under the more complex residence test (see pages 61 and 63), some women who are eligible may be unable to get the legal advice and guidance needed to make an application, and may once again have to remain in abusive relationships. Between 2002 and 2007 67% of applications under the DDV Concession were refused. www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2007-10-11b.156818.h; (This is of greater significance in GB as there is still greater access to legal aid in N Ireland.)

Research by Monica McWilliams and Priyamvada Yarnell prepared for a NICEM submission to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), *The Protection and Rights of Black and Minority Ethnic Women Experiencing Domestic Violence in Northern Ireland*, pointed out the isolation that migrant women can experience, the language barrier, their unfamiliarity with our laws and services as well as

‘The voluntary and community sector is supporting the state and they’re at saturation point. There is a human rights alliance between the voluntary sector and churches for support and accommodation – it is for bed and food, but this is only short-term, all the safeguards are gone.’

Interviewee quoted in No Home From Home

The Homeplus charity runs an outreach project in Belfast, which runs 365 nights of the year offering food, clothing, blankets and emotional support to rough sleepers in Belfast. (They also have a drop-in centre, see page 133.)

Women’s Aid Federation Northern Ireland

In the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013, 132 minority-ethnic women, including Irish Travellers, stayed in Women’s Aid refuges. A further 224 minority-ethnic women accessed Floating Support outreach services.

A total of 22 women with no recourse to public funds stayed in refuges, a decrease of 46 from 2011-12, partly due to lack of funds to support more of them. The Women’s Aid annual report states:

Women’s Aid strives to help as many women in this harrowing situation as possible. However without dedicated emergency funds to provide for their basic needs, many of these women are left with no choice but to stay in an abusive relationship.

Women’s Aid Federation Northern Ireland Annual Report 2012–2013
www.womensaidni.org/themainevent/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Womens-Aid-Annual-Report-12-13.pdf

The 24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline experienced a 22% increase in calls from foreign nationals and black and minority-ethnic women, a total of 272 from 34 countries or nationalities. The largest number were from Polish women, 64. In addition, 45 women from the Travelling community contacted the Helpline during this period.

24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline: 0808 802 1414

Email: 24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org

Text support: **07797 805 839**

The Helpline is free from all landlines and mobiles and open to *all women and men* affected by domestic & sexual violence. A translation service is available and there are information leaflets are available in 12 languages.

institutional ignorance and racism, including stereotyping attitudes such as ‘they’re not from here so they don’t really know any better’ or ‘that’s just part of their culture’. They also found a tendency for statutory authorities to see return to the country of origin as the best solution to the problem. <http://eprints.ulster.ac.uk/126542/1/BMEWomen%26DV-CEDAWsubmission.pdf>

There is additional evidence that women, already tending to be concentrated in the lower skilled jobs, in spite of their educational attainments, are likely to be doubly discriminated against as migrants and as women and so feel very vulnerable even when they are working. (Read the NICEM Break Out Blog: Gender, Race and the Workplace, 19 December 2013. <http://nicemwomenbreakout.wordpress.com/>)

The NI Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) report *The Experiences of Ethnic Minority Women In Northern Ireland*, by Sarah Isal (also prepared for submission to CEDAW in 2013), confirms the vulnerability of women whose immigration status depends on others, and other problems including the difficulty in having qualifications recognised (see also pages 94–6), high levels of economic inactivity, difficulty with childcare and finding accessible, affordable and appropriate language classes.

The draft strategy document, *Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland 2013-2020*, which was launched for consultation in January 2014, recognises the vulnerability of minority-ethnic women and quotes from research indicating that they are much less likely to report abuse. www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/dsva-strategy.pdf

There has been much agonizing about the welfare gap and a Law Centre

‘... women are being forced to choose between extreme poverty and remaining in potentially deadly relationships. The Commission has also encountered a number of people forced to sleep rough on the streets of Northern Ireland having being denied access to temporary accommodation.’

Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission evidence on the impact of the WRS, submitted to the UK Border Agency, 10 March 2009

'Lara is a Brazilian and is married to a man from Poland and is living in Craigavon. Lara came to Craigavon Intercultural Programme offices seeking assistance after she had been diagnosed with a serious illness. As a consequence her husband had to take time off work to help his wife and 3-month old child. A second child was born prematurely as a result of Lara's health. Although she has a visa to remain in the UK her passport has been mislaid by the Home Office. This had a negative impact on accessing welfare since without a passport or identity card Lara has been unable to obtain a national insurance number. The emergency fund helped the couple cover transportation costs and the initial expenses incurred with caring for their premature baby.'

Case Study from the report, OFMDFM Emergency Fund – Pilot: August 2011 – March 2012, by Jude McCann and Neil McKittrick, 2012 www.communityfoundationni.org/download/files/efundpilot2.pdf

paper Proposal on 'Plugging Gaps in Welfare Support for Migrant Workers', for the Racial Equality Forum, suggested resourcing a crisis fund through the UK Migration Impacts Fund which operated between April 2009 and March 2011. The paper also highlighted how having no welfare support makes it difficult to access other rights. For example, Eriks Prenclavs, an A8 national lost his sight in an accident at work. Because he was not in registered employment he was without welfare support while he tried to get financial compensation and continue his rehabilitation. The issue was discussed within the Immigration Sub Group of the Race Relations Panel at Stormont during 2010.

In 2011 a pilot **Emergency Fund** for foreign nationals who have no recourse to public funds was financed through the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) Minority Ethnic Development Fund. The **Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (CFNI)** received £21,000 and, in partnership with the **Red Cross**, drafted eligibility guidelines and identified support groups across N Ireland who could distribute the money. The initial feedback from groups is that the fund has made a big difference to individuals. In October 2011 a further £23,500 was made available within the pilot scheme, intended to provide stopgap support until foreign nationals get back on their feet. The fund has been invaluable but EMBRACE found no reduction in demands upon their Emergency Fund (see page 164). Some requests have been to assist people who have already had small one-off grants from the crisis fund. This funding and contributions from charities can only be effective stopgaps where the individuals concerned get back into employment quickly or return to their home country. They cannot prevent destitution where people are unemployed and have no recourse to public funds. After a gap of around two years, there are indications that the fund will be re-established in April 2014.

A report, *OFMDFM Emergency Fund – Pilot: August 2011 – March 2012*, reviewed the work of the fund. During the period described, £43,402.97 had been distributed to 646 individuals with 686 dependents. The largest number of recipients was 175 from Poland, with 92 from Romania and 87 from Somalia. The money was distributed through 13 selected groups throughout N Ireland. The main causes of financial hardship were lack of income, reduction of working hours or income, medical problems (often resulting in loss of work), rehousing/eviction and safety issues such as intimidation. The report contains 11 case studies highlighting the personal crises behind the figures. Charities, including EMBRACE are hard pressed to try to support some very needy people.

In January 2012 the Immigration Sub Group of the Racial Equality Forum heard a talk by Henry St Clair Miller of the London-based **No Recourse to Public Funds Network (NRPF)** of statutory bodies and NGOs, which tries to ensure that there are appropriate statutory responses to people with care needs and no entitlement to welfare benefits or public housing. www.islington.gov.uk/advice/asylum-immigration/refugees_migrants/nrpf/Pages/default.aspx There is the possibility that a regional NRPF network could be established here.

The **Simon Community NI** assists migrant workers and local people without distinction. They have an advice line: **0800 171 2222** that is

available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, enabling people who are in crisis to call the organisation for accommodation, advice or support. Paddy McGettigan, Director of Accommodation and Community Support said 'If people are at risk of becoming homeless, we are encouraging them to get in touch with us. If we can't help with a particular issue, we can signpost to a relevant organisation that can.' Assistance might include private rented accommodation or transport to the nearest project with a bed available. From 1 February 2012 to mid February 2013 there were 2,404 referrals to all services (all hostel, community based, rent deposit and harm reduction services). Of these, 193 (8.03%) were migrant workers. Of the 868 that became clients within their services, 47 (5.4%) were migrant workers. Demands for services were highest in: North/West Belfast, South East Belfast, Lisburn and South East Antrim, which made up 86.4% of migrant referrals. Sixty-four of the 193 were from Poland, the rest were split equally among all the other A8 countries (see page 7). 15 people were from outside Europe.

Poverty and Destitution in the Asylum System

People who come here seeking sanctuary often have no money when they arrive and it can take a while for them to be able to access support. They then receive payments and accommodation while their application is heard (see page 45). Most are not allowed to undertake paid employment.

In 2010 the UK group, **Refugee Action** reported that people on asylum support found it hard to provide enough food and clothing for their children, or afford expenses such as school uniforms. 70% had been unable to buy fresh food and vegetables in the previous week, 94% were still wearing the clothes they arrived in and more than 60% could not afford medical goods such as painkillers. http://refugee-action.org/documents/AsylumSupport_Refugee%20ActionFeb2010.pdf Failed asylum applicants are not entitled to work and usually lose their asylum support. They may be forced to live on handouts or slip into the black economy with all its dangers and potential for exploitation. Most are asked to leave the country as soon as possible but the Government is unable to enforce removal in all cases. In some cases it is not safe to do so and other countries will not accept people back and others have poor human rights records. The health of individual applicants may also be a factor.

The **Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust** undertook a major **Destitution Inquiry**, which reported that the system falls between two stools in terms of being too soft-hearted or too tough, and leaves 'an invisible population of destitute people who can neither go home nor contribute to British society'. The research in Leeds found people failed by 'a tattered safety net', rough sleeping, with grave social and health problems and many wrestling with thoughts of suicide. The report called for revocable licences giving permission for people to work until they can go home, and reasonable assistance such as basic food, shelter and care. The 2007 report *Moving on: From Destitution to Contribution*, and the 2009 report *Still Destitute; A Worsening Problem for Refused Asylum Seekers* are available online. www.jrct.org.uk/text.asp?section=0001000200030006

The Refugee Survival Trust and the British Red Cross in Scotland have highlighted the destitution experienced at various stages of the asylum system. *Destitution and the Asylum System: Application, Decision, Confusion,*

The **Welcome Organisation** in West Belfast tries to provide an alternative route for all people who are forced into a pattern of rough sleeping on the streets or in squats, through outreach and advice services and a drop in centre. In 2010 they assisted 186 people from 25 countries other than the UK and Ireland. Numbers were lower in 2011 at 125, partly because some longstanding clients were able to receive benefits and find accommodation. In 2012, 82 foreign nationals were assisted.

Between the beginning of January 2012 and the end of January 2013, of those who presented for help for the first time, 93 were foreign nationals from the European Union, from 18 countries. The largest number were 24 from Poland, 15 from Lithuania and 12 from Romania. During 2013 there were also 35 people from outside Europe, from at least 20 countries, who were more difficult to assist because they would have had no rights to benefits here (see page 61–4). www.homelessbelfast.org/

'Giving food to destitute asylum seekers here is not very different from handing out food from the back of lorries in the Sudan. The humanitarian need is the same.'

Red Cross international aid worker in Not Gone but Forgotten

'I eat once a day if friends can spare some food.'

'Adam' from Sudan, nine months destitute in Cardiff following the refusal of his asylum application, in Not Gone but Forgotten

'It was a nightmare not knowing where to go and thinking about night and how to find a warm place to sleep.'

'David' from the Sudan who was refused asylum in 2007 in Not Gone but Forgotten

Deprivation, Destitution, 21 Days Later is available online. www.redcross.org.uk/About-us/News/2009/February/New-refugee-report-focuses-on-destitution The Asylum Support Appeals Project (ASAP) report, *Not Destitute Enough*, documents UKBA's failure to apply the correct legal definitions of destitution in asylum support decisions and the poor quality of assessment. http://stillhumanstillhere.files.wordpress.com/2009/01/asap_not_destitute_enough_dec_2008.pdf

People whose claims have failed can sometimes access some support if they are co-operative, agree to leave the country, and can prove they are destitute (see page 47). They may then receive **Section 4 Support** which can include emergency accommodation and a contribution towards their food and other purchases, through pre-paid cards (see below). Rule changes in October 2009 seemed to create delays in the system. Examples of inability to access Section 4 support quickly in Belfast include the following.

A pregnant homeless woman was said to have applied too early because she was over eight weeks away from her due date.

Further submissions were required of a homeless, destitute man from Darfur who requires treatment for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

A homeless family of four was told that the case was awaiting review after three months.

According to a BBC documentary there were at least 20 families and 14 individuals on Section 4 support in Belfast in February 2014 (see also page 43). The scheme is administered by a private company, Sodexo. The personalised **Azure Cards** can be used in Sainsbury, Boots, Tesco and Asda and block the purchase of anything other than necessities such as groceries, household items and toiletries. There is no possibility of saving money out of the £35 per week. If there is more than £5 left at the end of the week Sodexo reclaims the money from the card. (Families receive one card and money is not reclaimed from family cards.) This cashless existence means that people have no possibility of buying even such basic items as bus tickets and phone cards. For more information on the impact on people's lives of the Section 4 payment card read *Your Inflexible Friend: The Cost of Living Without Cash*, an Asylum Support Partnership report, 2010: <http://stillhumanstillhere.files.wordpress.com/2009/01/your-inflexible-friend-the-cost-of-living-without-cash.pdf>

Agreement to return home voluntarily does not guarantee support. People who cannot return to countries such as Sudan or China may still end up facing destitution. The Red Cross, through the NI Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (NICRAS), will give people in this position

Food for Disadvantaged People

The **Council for the Homeless NI (CHNI)** has worked with the UK group **FareShare** to set up **FareShare Island of Ireland** community food network for voluntary, community and faith groups to work with the food industry in redistributing good quality food to organisations working with disadvantaged people. Their first depot is in Linfield Industrial Estate, Belfast. www.fareshare-oi.eu/ Individual churches also provide food for people in need and support projects like the Storehouse initiative of Belfast City Vineyard Church and many others. www.storehousebelfast.com/

£10 per week towards food. Some of those who have not agreed to leave receive no payments and live in fear of removal. They must rely on the generosity of others or starve. They are likely to avoid official bodies and recognised charities. They may stay with friends for a while, work in the black economy and only resurface if they are in desperation. It is not known how many such people are living locally. On a Radio Ulster programme which highlighted destitution in the asylum system here (see also page 39 and 55) Neil McKittrick of the Red Cross said

... if people weren't being seen by charities like the Red Cross, where else would they turn? ... For us the fear would be that the ultimate would happen and someone would die of starvation or could end up sleeping rough in Botanic Park in the cold weather.

In the programme, destitute people expressed gratitude for the generosity of local people, such as members of the Belfast Friendship Club (see page 179), and churches and charities such as St Vincent de Paul (see also pages 160 and 165). Radio Ulster presenter Chris Page said 'It's a limbo-like life with churches and charities filling the gap.' Some of the background to the programme content can be viewed online. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-26189348 An online article by Chris Page, described the situation for those who find themselves without support. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-26189348

The **Still Human Still Here** campaign was initiated to highlight the plight of tens of thousands of people in the UK who have been refused asylum and who are being forced into abject poverty in an attempt to drive them out of the country. stillhumanstillhere.wordpress.com/

In 2010 the Red Cross published a further report, *Not Gone but Forgotten; The Urgent Need for A More Humane Asylum System*. www.redcross.org.uk/About-us/News/2010/June/New-report-calls-for-end-to-asylum-seekers-destitution Of 100 people interviewed for the report, 59% had been destitute for more than a year. The report describes how they find shelter.

One respondent said she stayed with 'friends at first, but now I have the baby I sleep rough outside their home'. Many become dependent on 'goodwill' support from family and friends. However this can create strains on relationships, particularly if the resources of the family or friends are also very limited. ... Even where support from family and friends is available, it is often in poor conditions and overcrowded housing. Of those we interviewed, 42 per cent reported not being able to stay at their sleeping base during the day. Churches and mosques were also identified as an important source of shelter. 'We have also slept in a church. When we were in Coventry we stayed with a friend but we had to leave due to my wife's mental health problems. Then we stayed at the church.'

The authors of the report, *At the End of the Line; Restoring Integrity to the UK's Asylum System*, published by the Still Human Still Here consortium of NGOs, pointed out that back in 2006 the previous Government had considered allowing failed asylum applicants to work if they could not be sent back to their home country through no fault of their own. The report urged the present Government to allow this to happen. Amnesty International asked N Ireland MPs to sign a petition that people who have not had their asylum claim resolved within six months, and those whose

The Homeplus Drop-In Centre at 113 University Street, Belfast, is open seven days a week, 10 am to 4pm Monday to Friday (11.30 to 2pm at weekends), for destitute migrant workers, refugees and people who are seeking asylum. It provides a safe communal venue and a range of support services including hot meals; clothes, blankets, sleeping bags, showering facilities; healthcare clinics; advice on benefits and housing; assistance in finding employment and training; help completing application forms; advocacy and referral to mainstream services; practical, emotional and social support. The drop-in assisted up to 60 individuals per day in 2013, over 400 in total, most from Somalia, Sudan and Zimbabwe as well as other countries throughout Africa, Asia and Europe. (See also page 129) Tel: (028) 9024 8521 or 07857 332264

'For the benefit of everyone, there has to be urgent and pragmatic reform which brings these people in from the shadows so that they can be treated humanely, contribute to the community and remain inside the system.'

Destitution Inquiry chairperson Kate Adie, 28 March 2007

Writing about the difficulty of accessing support, Edith Shillue of the Bryson One Stop Service for Refugees and Asylum Seekers said

'In Northern Ireland, recent evidence requests include: bank statements, National Insurance numbers, names and addresses of employers, tenancy addresses and landlord contact details and letters from friends or charitable organizations refusing to provide support. Most applicants are unable to access any of the above, but applications will be delayed or refused without them.'

Frontline Social Welfare Law Quarterly, Summer 2010 www.lawcentreni.org/Publications/Frontline/Frontline%2076%20web%20version.pdf

'If you don't have acceptance, a paper from Home Office then you do not exist. As a human being your existence is gone.'

Afshin, a failed asylum applicant, speaking in the film on destitution, Still Human Still Here www.amnesty.org.uk/resources/still-human-still-here-film

application has failed, but are unable to return home, should be allowed to undertake paid employment. Some have done so.

In 2012 the Refugee Council produced yet another report, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The Dilemma Facing Failed Asylum Seekers*. It highlights the dangers that people may face if they go home, the fact that people are often unable to return home because their own governments will not cooperate and how the UKBA often lost touch with people and so could not enforce removals (see also page 68). It asked the Government to broaden the categories of Humanitarian Protection and Discretionary Leave so that they apply to people who have not been able to establish that they are refugees but whose return would be unsafe. The report also asks for financial support and accommodation and that

Priority should be given to developing appropriate safeguards to ensure that destitution does not force asylum seeking women into living arrangements that make them more vulnerable to sexual violence and exploitation.

Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The Dilemma Facing Failed Asylum Seekers, 2012 www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/latest/news/177_between_a_rock_and_a_hard_place

From week to week, she survived on a £10 food voucher from the British Red Cross and £5 cash from a friend. With this she could eat just once a day, sometimes twice. She sometimes slept on the floor of a friend's house and sometimes at a local church. She couldn't stay anywhere longer than a week and so she moved around a lot.

The experience of Aatifa, who had fled Eritrea because she had problems as an evangelical Christian, destitute in England for a year and a half. *Not Gone but Forgotten*

A parliamentary inquiry published in 2013 focussed on how children fare within the asylum support system.

... the panel was shocked to hear of instances where children were left destitute and homeless, entirely without institutional support and forced to rely on food parcels or charitable donations. Evidence received by the inquiry cited counts where children made up between 13-20% of the local destitute population. Some children become destitute when families gain refugee status and move from Home Office support to mainstream support. Other children are born into destitution because their parents are cut off from asylum support but are unable to leave the UK. Other periods of destitution are caused by administrative gaps and delays, which cause some families to go without income or a place to stay for weeks and months. This has severe implications for children's safety, physical and mental health, and leaves some families vulnerable to exploitation and serious harm as a result. In one serious case review submitted to the inquiry, a child died of starvation. Their family had been made destitute when Home Office support ended. Although this case was complex and involved a number of different factors, it is a stark example of the serious gaps in the current support structure.

Report of the Parliamentary Inquiry into Asylum Support for Children and Young People, (Executive Summary) www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/asylum_support_inquiry_report_executive_summary_final.pdf

While there was shock at destitution, the panel was also disturbed at the poverty experienced even where families are in receipt of full asylum support. They recommended that Section 4 should be abolished and that there should be a single cash-based support system, updated annually, that never falls below 70% of income support. They also supported the right to work of people who cannot be returned home. Read the full report: www.childrenssociety.org.uk/parliamentary-inquiry-asylum-support-children

On 5 February 2013 five N Ireland MPs were among 26 who signed an Early Day Motion asking for a restoration of the link between asylum support and Income Support and an end to Section 4 payments (see page 132) and the implementation of a single cash-based payments system. www.parliament.uk/edm/2012-13/1019

Mental Health and Suicide

It is important to stress that migrants in Northern Ireland generally self report their health to be good, no doubt partly because the vast majority are young. In the 2011 Census, while 5.8% of people born in N Ireland said their health was bad or very bad, this drops to 1.4% for Polish people, 1.5% for people born in Lithuania and only .4 % of Filipinos, of whom 96.9% said that their health was good or very good. www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/RaSe/Publications/2013/general/113813.pdf

There can nevertheless be health problems associated with migration:

Housing tends to be of poor quality and exploitation by landlords is common, and, while migrants tend to be younger and healthier compared with the host population, this declines at a rapid rate due to psychological and physical stresses, exploitation at work, poor housing and reduced access to health care.

Research to Identify Additional Difficulties

The association between migration and mental health issues has been observed and described by psychiatrists. (See for example <http://apt.rcpsych.org/content/71/3/216.full>) Support groups for foreign nationals locally report mental health problems among the people they work with. Migrant Voice is a migrant-led organisation and its newsletter (*Migrant Voice*) allows migrants and others to air issues of concern. In their 2010 election special, Aleksandra Lojek-Magdziarz reported on the growing number Polish people in Northern Ireland who were suffering from depression because of factors such as homesickness, financial problems and the language barriers that prevent proper integration. She stated that there was only one Polish-speaking psychologist for the whole Polish community, estimated then at around 25–30,000 people. Aleksandra, a community safety advocate, linked the problem with the difficulty that migrants have in getting recognition for qualifications obtained in other countries (see pages 94–6) The *Irish Times* reported Aleksandra's personal contribution to supporting people through her Polish women's Facebook network. ('Polish and lost in Ireland: the social media solution' 15 October 2013. www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/people/polish-and-lost-in-ireland-the-social-media-solution-1.1560454) The article also quotes Dr Justyna Bell, who studies Polish migrants, including their mental health.

There is a notion of shame of going back to Poland when you're a failed migrant, because you want to get this great job and then you become

'During my research ... I found that every migrant I spoke to had experienced various levels of depression, anxiety and stress during their relocation process. I was alarmed to hear that the majority of the migrants who struggled didn't get any help due to lack of awareness of what mental health was. They didn't know where to go, couldn't afford it or simply were too afraid to ask for help because of stigma.'

Dil Wickremasinghe, from Sri Lanka " 'A Migrant State of Mind' – emigration and mental health", in ireland.ie, 10 October 2013 <http://news.ie.msn.com/ireland/column-'a-migrant-state-of-mind'---emigration-and-mental-health>

unemployed,' she says. 'They prefer to stay here and suffer than to go back and show they failed.'

(This notion of shame would be familiar to people who study the history of Irish emigration.)

As part of the Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS) seminar on Migration (see also page 79), Dr Bell and her colleague Dr Anne Kouvonen from Queen's University Belfast, spoke about their research, at Stormont, in January 2014. They have found that many Polish people are socially isolated because they have lost ties with home but not yet put down roots, in spite of being here for almost ten years. Relationships can be strained because of lack of affordable childcare and the absence of extended family. There might also be a shift in gender roles in the family, with women as breadwinners, and a high level of relationship breakdown. Language difficulties can make people feel like 'a child in an adult's world'. There are few Polish speakers in mental health charities and it is lengthy and expensive for Polish psychologists to gain recognition of their qualifications here. It can be hard for people to open up in the presence of interpreters and different ways of expressing feelings and describing symptoms about health can make diagnosis difficult. The health systems in the two countries are different, and this can lead to misunderstandings about the appropriate nature of treatment. Some may prefer to go home to Poland to be treated, or seek help online. There can also be fears that if they are diagnosed as mentally ill here, their children may be taken away.

Some mental ill health can be directly connected to the process of becoming a migrant worker. When they were recruited in Poland they thought that they would come here for a short time and many were poorly prepared for migration. Seeing themselves, and being seen, just as workers not people and the side effects of working abroad have been underestimated. Many Eastern European people work long hours on shift work, which makes ordinary social life and access to language classes difficult. Drinking at home, accessing drugs in the factories, gambling in order to escape from their day-to-day life, increased levels of domestic violence, and high levels of common mental disorders have all been observed. The high level of suicide, often in clusters, is unsurprising.

A video of their presentation can be viewed online. www.niassembly.gov.uk/Assembly-Business/Research-and-Information-Service-RaISe/Knowledge-Exchange/Knowledge-Exchange-Seminars-Series-3/Dr-Anne-Kouvonen-Dr-Justyna-Bell-and-Dr-Michael-Donnelly/

It is widely accepted that having confidence in your place in society and a sense of self-esteem are plus factors in preventing mental health problems and suicide. Isolation is dangerous and feeling undermined, through workplace bullying and humiliation, or racist attacks, can be devastating. Money worries or fear of job loss can also be crucial in pushing someone over the edge. It is not possible to give statistics but, anecdotally at least, some of the suicides of migrant workers in recent years have been associated with a sense of humiliation through being publicly reprimanded at work – especially shameful in some cultures. The instability caused by the demands of working for unscrupulous agencies has also been blamed for producing suicidal thoughts (see page 137). Suicide among migrant workers is an international problem. Honorary consuls have reported

suicide as an area of concern and the Trade Unions have drawn attention to the vulnerability of migrants. Pamela Dooley of UNISON, speaking at an Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) conference said:

The failure of the British and Irish governments to protect migrant workers is leading some desperate immigrants to take their own lives, the biennial conference of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) heard yesterday. ... We recently faced the worst possible case of a nurse who took her own life because of the treatment she faced.

Michael Farrell, writing in the *Irish Examiner* in June 2005, noted that Ms Dooley's speech came just two days after three Polish workers were attacked in Fermanagh, and other harassment against Chinese, Pakistani, Ugandan, Portuguese, Filipino, Lithuanian and Latvian workers had been reported. archives.tcm.ie/irishexaminer/2005/06/22/story420103293.asp

The following year, the NI Committee of the ICTU, in response to the Department of Health and Personal Social Services (DHSSPS) NI Suicide Prevention Strategy, said that appropriate responses needed to be developed for vulnerable groups such as migrant workers:

Many migrant workers in Northern Ireland, for example, do not have the social supports of family and community that others enjoy and we are aware of significant levels of social disadvantage amongst this community.

There have been a disturbing number of suicides in the Craigavon/Portadown area and the *Portadown Times* reported two suicides from the town's migrant worker community. A Lithuanian man died near Seagoe and a Portuguese man, who had lived in Portadown for four years, had returned to Portugal where he jumped to his death from a train.

Jerome Mullen, Polish Honorary Consul, has been so disturbed by the number of suicides of Polish people that he is working with others to provide a support structure for Polish migrants suffering from depression or isolation. Speaking to the *Irish Times* in April 2013 he highlighted five suicides in the Newry area in the previous year and cited gambling and loan sharks as implicated in at least one of the deaths. www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/people/poles-apart-tackling-a-northern-irish-suicide-crisis-1.1368754

The situation can be even worse for people seeking asylum who are not allowed to work and are concerned about their future. They have little possibility of gaining control over their lives and helplessness and despair can take over. Research among women seeking asylum in Scotland, published in September 2009, revealed that 57% were suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, 22% had already attempted suicide, while one in five had considered ending their own life in the seven days prior to interview. www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/policy_and_research/research_reports/research_reports_archive An Institute of Race Relations report in 2006 catalogued 57 cases where people seeking asylum had killed themselves. See a *Guardian* article by Melanie Mc Fadyean, 10 March 2010. www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/libertycentral/2010/mar/10/asylum-blood-refugees-suicide

Minister for Justice in the Republic of Ireland, Alan Shatter, revealed in 2012 that 49 asylum applicants living in direct provision accommodation had taken their lives in the previous 10 years. www.irishtimes.com/

'We have people killing themselves who were working for agencies. They can't deal with these things – they lost their jobs and then they start to think in a bad way ...'

A Polish worker quoted in *Migrant Workers and their Families in Northern Ireland*; a Trade Union Response, by Robbie McVeigh [www.ictuni.org/uploads/67b098da-831b-4ef7-ba01-f5111705d2bc/Migrant%20Workers%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.ictuni.org/uploads/67b098da-831b-4ef7-ba01-f5111705d2bc/Migrant%20Workers%20(2).pdf)

'Living is not worthwhile anymore. Being dead would be much better.'

A woman interviewee in *Marchu Girma et al, Detained: Women Asylum Seekers Locked Up in the UK*

'I am made to feel as if I smell and there is zero tolerance for the non-existent smell of an asylum seeker. I escaped from Kenya because I wanted to live, but in Middlesbrough all I can think about is how much I want to die.'

Kamwaura Nygothi, a Kenyan businesswoman, on being 'dispersed' to Middlesbrough, *Guardian* 8 July 2004 www.allwomencount.net/EWC%20Immigrant/KamwauraArticle.htm

'Mistreatment because of racism can lead to depression. And depression is the number one cause for suicide.'

Kevin Caruso writing in a USA web site, *Suicide.org* www.suicide.org/racism-and-suicide.html

'I appear strong but I'm very damaged by all the things that have happened to me. My dream is to have a bed of my own to sleep in, not even a room of my own, just the bed. I don't think I've slept properly for a single night since I've been in England.'

Gealass, a refused asylum seeker from Iraq quoted in End of the Line

'... detainees, particularly those held for long periods, suffer from profound hopelessness, despair, and suicidal urges ... In many of these patients, both medical and psychiatric needs were frequently not adequately addressed.' *Médecins Sans Frontières and the BMJ quoted by Medical Justice Network* www.medicaljustice.org.uk/images/documents/medical-justice-booklet-july-2007.pdf

newspaperireland/2011/0608/1224298573378.html There is a very low expectancy of success in Irish asylum cases and this combines with poor conditions to produce hopelessness. Dr Syed Irtaza Hussain, a registrar at St Stephen's Hospital in Glanmire Co. Cork, found that most of the asylum applicants he saw in a 2012 study had some form of psychiatric problem ranging from post-traumatic stress and depression to chronic sleep disorder and anxiety. www.irishexaminer.com/lireland/asylum-seekers-claim-centre-is-like-a-prison-176043.html

People who are detained in UK **Removal Centres** also come under severe stress. In 2004 it was noted that 10 people had taken their own lives in the centres since 2000. www.irr.org.uk/news/failing-the-vulnerable-the-death-of-ten-asylum-seekers-and-other-foreign-nationals-in-uk-detention/ Helen Ireland, **Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees (AVID)**, told the Independent Asylum Commission that 'Our visitors ... see the profound hopelessness, despair and suicidal urges caused by the experience of detention.' *3rd IAC Report, Deserving Dignity, p.16.* www.independentasylumcommission.org.uk/ The 2012 briefing paper by AVID and BID (Bail for Detainees), 'Positive duty of care? The mental health crisis in immigration detention' is highly critical of the procedures for the care of detainees and the culture of disbelief about self-harm and suicide. www.aviddetention.org.uk/images/positive%20duty%20of%20care%20final.pdf

When Prince Ofose died in October 2012 (possibly following forcible restraint) he was the seventh detainee to die in Harmondsworth immigration removal centre, from a variety of causes including suicide and murder, according to the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns. <http://incadc.org.uk/blog/prince-ofosu-another-death-in-detention/>

In January 2014, **Women for Refugee Women** published a report on women in the UK detention system which found alarming levels of depression and suicidal thoughts. The report is critical of the detention of women who have been raped or tortured, and the fact that they are often guarded by men.

All of the women in our sample told us that detention made them unhappy, 93% felt depressed, 85% felt scared, and more than half thought about killing themselves. Ten women, more than one in five, had tried to kill themselves. One third had been on suicide watch in detention.

Detained: Women Asylum Seekers Locked Up in the UK. London: Women for Refugee Women, by Marchu Girma et al, 2014. <http://refugeewomen.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/WRWDetained.pdf>

Foreigners in any prison system can suffer from depression and be vulnerable to thoughts of suicide. As the numbers of foreign nationals living here has increased, it is inevitable that some would be convicted of criminal offences. Numbers have risen in recent years and although there was a slight drop in 2012 there were 113 foreign national prisoners in custody in N Ireland at the end of December (53 sentenced and 60 on remand), out of a total prison population of 1683. www.dojni.gov.uk/index/ni-prison-service/nips-population-statistics-2/population-statistics-01-october-2011-to-31-december-2012.pdf By the end of 2013 there were 142 foreign national prisoners out of a total of 1796 (63 sentenced and 79 on remand), eleven of the total were female. www.dojni.gov.uk/index/ni-prison-service/nips-population-statistics-2/population-snapshot.pdf

Patrick Yu of NICEM told the Stormont All Party Group on Ethnic Minority Communities in November 2011 that numbers were high partly due the high proportion on remand. Many at that time were Chinese nationals taken into custody following the dismantling of cannabis factories. In these cases preparation for trial is complex. 'Many of these prisoners have no passports or formal identification and the gang element makes it difficult to identify the victims of trafficking.' <http://nicem.org.uk/files?category=All%20Party%20Group%20on%20Ethnic%20Minority%20Communities>

For foreign national prisoners, and the staff looking after them, there can be difficulties in the following areas:

- Lack of information about the legal system and their rights within the immigration system, knowledge about resettlement etc.
- Delays in deportation that lead to indefinite detention after the end of their sentence
- Language barriers that can have consequences for self-harm as well as order and discipline
- Isolation from distant families and culture
- Lack of appropriate toiletries, dietary needs etc.
- Racism
- Religious observance

These difficulties were identified in the NI Prison Service Draft Foreign Prisoner Strategy, 2008 which also acknowledged the need to build links between the prison service and community support organisations, churches and faith groups. In its response to the draft strategy the NI Human Rights Commission expressed concerns, especially about the reliance on the UK Border Agency, rather than an independent organisation, to provide specialist immigration advice. *The Law Centre NI contribution to the Prison Review also mentioned poor access to independent immigration advice.* www.lawcentreni.org/policy/consultation-responses/715.htm In 2008–09 the NI Prison Service claimed the strategy was being rolled out effectively.

The Foreign National Strategy is being implemented across all establishments. Contracts for interpreting and translating are in place. A large quantity of written material has been translated and forms a library; a face to face interpreting service is used for interaction with individual prisoners and for groups where prisoners with the same language are brought together for appropriate sessions, and some English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes are offered at each establishment.

NI Prison Service Annual Report and Accounts, 2008/09

By 2009–10 however the annual report states that the objective of implementing the strategy had been only partially met with aspects, including the language support, in place and working well. All three prison-service establishments hold regular Equality and Diversity meetings at which external organisations (including EMBRACE) are represented.

The 2013 NICEM report, *Race Crime and Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland* (see page 116), recommended the recruitment of prison officers from minority-ethnic communities and, at the report launch, it was reported

that some had been recruited in 2012.

The affects of incarceration can be severe. In November 2010 Justice Minister David Ford expressed his regret at the death by suicide of an unnamed man (Prisoner B) in March 2009. He acknowledged that he was 'a vulnerable prisoner who had the added difficulties of having little or no English and being so far from home.' www.dojni.gov.uk/index/media-centre/minister_regrets_death_of_foreign_national_prisoner.htm Prisoner B was one of 48 Chinese prisoners taken into custody at the same time. He had been nine months on remand, was distressed about the delay in coming to trial, the possible length of his sentence and about what would happen to his family if the £18,000 he had paid in order to be brought to the UK was not repaid. www.niprisonerombudsman.com/current/downloads/PrisonerBSummary.PDF

The Quaker Service has a volunteer visiting scheme for isolated prisoners in Maghaberry, including foreign nationals. www.quakerservice.com/contact.php

Public Policy

Incomers and members of minority-ethnic groups have not always felt welcome locally and report negative attitudes and unequal treatment by official bodies as well as individuals in society (see pages 112–3) **Institutional Racism** is where there is collective failure to deal with people fairly, similar to **Systemic Racism** where policies, practices and systems that work against certain groups of people become embedded in organisations. For example, deciding to treat everyone in exactly the same way may sound fair, but may disadvantage a group whose needs are not met by this policy. This is known as **Indirect Discrimination**. Policies and legislation locally have tried to address this range of potential problems.

Until recently we had a focus on **Community Relations** strategies that addressed the divisions between Protestant and Catholic communities. The term **Good Relations** has been applied to dealing positively with all forms of different identity including nationality or ethnicity. **The Belfast Agreement** of 1998 refers to equality and parity of esteem for people from different social, religious and ethnic backgrounds. This has been given legal backing. **Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998** obliges public bodies to promote equality of opportunity between different groups of people, including 'racial groups'. They must also promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. Public bodies are obliged to have **Equality Schemes** and to submit their policies to **Equality Impact Assessments** that are open to public scrutiny. There is more detailed information on equality and other issues related to immigration on the Migration Information Portal policy and legislation page. The challenge is to ensure that provision for minority-ethnic people is mainstreamed, targeted, and monitored. www.migrationni.org/policy-and-legislation#mainstreaming

Under the **Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997** it is unlawful to discriminate either directly or indirectly on racial grounds, in terms of employment and training; education; provision of goods and services; and the disposal and management of premises and advertisements. The **Human Rights Act 1998** gave people an additional right not to be subject to discriminatory practices in some instances, under the European Convention on Human Rights. A **Human Rights Commission** and **Equality Commission** have been set up in N Ireland to ensure that existing legislation and practice protect and uphold human rights and equality. They also have an advisory role on these issues. During 2013 the Equality Commission consulted on its policy priorities for racial equality. In January 2014 the Chief Commissioner, Michael Wardlow, urged the NI Executive to undertake special measures to reduce prejudicial attitudes following a spate of racist attacks in Belfast. His remarks can be read online, along with the Commission's recommendations on racial policy priorities. www.equalityni.org/sections/Default.asp?cms=News%5FNews&cmsid=1_2&id=442&secid=1_1

There is frustration in the voluntary sector that a **Single Equality Act** has not been achieved here in order to provide more consistency in the protection of rights and equalities (see also margins, pages 122 and 142). There is a single Equality Act in GB.

'We are concerned about the whole equality legislation. ... As I said before, we are already nearly 13 years behind the UK amendment; the last one was in 2000. That is creating a lot of problems ... I do not see any prospect of a single equality Bill, which we would wholeheartedly support. However, if we do not get one, we need to amend our race law. ... There should be a greater sense of urgency. I have been to this Committee three or four times to talk about the same thing – reviewing race legislation.'

Patrick Yu, Executive Director of NICE, giving evidence to the Committee for the OFMDFM, 18 April 2012 www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/Official-Reports/OFMDFM/2011-2012/Ethnic%20Minorities%20in%20Northern%20Ireland.pdf

'The need for reform of the race equality legislation in Northern Ireland has been heightened by developments in Great Britain. In particular, the introduction of the Equality Act 2010 in October 2010 has addressed in Great Britain a number of previous recommendations made by the Commission for law reform in Northern Ireland. This has resulted in individuals in Northern Ireland now having less protection against racial harassment and discrimination than people in other parts of the UK.'

Paul Noonan, of the Equality Commission writing about its latest racial equality policy recommendations in Frontline 90, Winter 2013–14 www.lawcentreni.org/Publications/Frontline/Frontline-90.pdf

There have also been concerns that rights bodies here may come under threat from the Executive. In July 2009 Finance Minister Sammy Wilson attacked the 'wasteful equality industry' and reiterated DUP policy that bodies such as the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, the Equality Commission and the Office of the Children's Commissioner should be merged in order to save money. www.newsletter.co.uk/news/headlines/wilson-attacks-wasteful-equality-industry-1-1886464 Following racist incidents in South Belfast (see pages 119–21), he accused groups of exaggerating the race problem in order to sustain public funding. Patrick Yu of the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities responded that the Finance Minister was playing into the hands of racists, that the number of incidents can be seen from PSNI figures, and that many anti-racism groups received no public funding. www.newsletter.co.uk/news/local/campaigners_talk_up_racism_wilson_1-1887624

The UK Government published **A Shared Future Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland** in 2005. www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/index/equality/community-relations/a-shared-future-strategy.htm It carried the aspiration that, through time, we will achieve 'a normal civic society, in which all individuals are considered as equals' ... 'A society where there is equity, respect for diversity and recognition of our interdependence'. The first policy objective flowing from this is to 'eliminate sectarianism, racism and all forms of prejudice and to enable people to live and work without fear or intimidation'. N Ireland was seen no longer as a bipolar society but one that is enriched by being more culturally diverse. It was also recognised however, that racism had emerged as a problem. The Shared Future strategy recognised the role that churches and other faith-based organisations have to play in developing good relations at local level. The 2007 ministerial pledge of office included the words 'and will promote a shared future'.

Government set up an inter-departmental **Good Relations Panel** to shape policies and institutions. It included faith representatives. The **Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM)** has a leading policy role and is responsible for challenging racism, undertaking research and monitoring progress.

In 2012 **Community Safety Partnerships** and **District Policing Partnerships** were merged in new **Policing and Community Safety Partnerships** that have a role in responding to hate crime at local level. The **Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)** used to have dedicated **Minority Liaison Officers** in each area to respond to racial incidents. Officers in the neighbourhood teams now undertake their roles and there should be two sergeants in each district to carry out the role of **Hate and Signal Crime Officers** (see also pages 116–117). Signal crimes are those that make communities feel they are at risk.

A number of agencies respond to exploitation of foreign national and other workers (see pages 90–1).

The **Community Relations Council** has a role in good relations work, independent of Government and is representative of civic society. **Good Relations Officers (GROs)** in district councils often fund good relations activities at local level.

In July 2005, to complement *A Shared Future*, the Government published

A Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005-2010 with six aims:

- To eliminate racial inequality through ensuring equality of opportunity in all aspects of life
- To provide equal protection and redress against racism and racist crime
- To ensure equality of service provision for minority-ethnic people in accessing public services
- To increase the sense of participation and belonging of people from minority-ethnic backgrounds in public, political, economic, social and cultural life.
- To promote dialogue and mutual understanding between people of different faiths and cultural backgrounds
- To build capacity within minority-ethnic communities

OFMDFM announced in January 2008 that it would bring forward detailed proposals for a 'programme of cohesion and integration for a shared and better future'. A draft **Cohesion Sharing and Integration (CSI)** programme was published in 2010 and consultation closed in October of that year. www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/reformatted_final_print_version_csi_-_26.07.10.pdf Concerns were expressed that the document did not live up to the aspirations of the Shared Future strategy. There was no longer encouragement for the role of faith-based organisations.

In May 2013 a strategy document was published finally, under the title **Together: Building a United Community (TBUC)**, which 'reflects the Executive's commitment to improving community relations and building a united and shared society.' www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/together-building-a-united-community-strategy.pdf The vision is of

a united community, based on equality of opportunity, the desirability of good relations and reconciliation – one which is strengthened by its diversity, where cultural expression is celebrated and embraced and where everyone can live, learn, work and socialise together, free from prejudice, hate and intolerance.

It contains plans to replace the existing Equality Commission and the Community Relations Council with a single **Equality and Good Relations Commission**. The strategy is more limited in its aims than the draft CSI programme and will complement a new Racial Equality Strategy, which is to go out to consultation in April 2014.

In the meantime the **Racial Equality Unit** within OFMDFM manages the **Minority Ethnic Development Fund** that is targeted at helping minority-ethnic groups and other groups in the wider community to work to foster integration. EMBRACE has been among the groups to receive funding. Between 2010 and 2014 this finance has supported a Development Worker post and associated development work, and the funding of additional hours for its Administrative Assistant (see page 164). The fund has remained at £1.1million per annum for a number of years. In 2011 a pilot **Emergency Fund** for foreign nationals who have no recourse to public funds was financed through the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) Minority Ethnic Development Fund. After a gap of around two years, there are indications that this fund will be

The UK Department of Communities and Local Government has published *Guidance on Building a Local Sense of Belonging*. <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120919132719/http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/1112832.pdf> There is also *Guidance on Meaningful Interaction*, which is intended to increase community cohesion. <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120919132719/http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/1112887.pdf>

'... we propose that future work on the best ways of integrating minority communities into broader society should focus on everyday sites where identities are constructed and reconstructed and where new possibilities of group allegiance are continually developed.' Miriam Cherti and Clare McNeil, *Rethinking Integration, an Institute for Public Policy Research briefing, 2012*, who argue for work in the areas of early-years childcare, shopping and consumption, leisure activities and supplementary education. www.ippr.org/publication/5519761/rethinking-integration

'As an organisation which reaches every community in Ireland the GAA has a responsibility to ensure that racism does not happen in all its clubs and grounds.'

Denise Charlton, Immigrant Council of Ireland responding positively to the news that the Gaelic Athletic Association Council had voted to make racist or sectarian language a sending off offence for players, February 2014
www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-26310713

re-established in April 2014 (for more detail see pages 129–30).

As well as the Racial Equality Unit, a **Racial Equality Forum** was set up to help draw up an action plan, to implement the initial strategy, and to monitor and review progress. The **Department of Employment and Learning** co-ordinates a **Migrant Worker Thematic Sub-Group** of the Racial Equality Forum. This has been re-evaluating its role recently. In this sub-group, people from civil service departments, voluntary and statutory bodies, business and trade unions meet to network, highlight events, information and research, government policy and its application, and best practice, relating to migrant workers. As the sub-group had completed most of the actions arising from the Migrant Worker Strategy and action plan, its future was discussed with OFMDFM and it was agreed that its functions would be better served, for the present, through the on-going work of the Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership.

DEL has developed good practice guidelines on the use of interpreters and in January 2010 published a brief guide to *Living and Working in Northern Ireland*. www.delni.gov.uk/living_and_working_in_northern_ireland_09_10.pdf

They have also sponsored useful research including three major reports, published in December 2009: *The Economic, Labour Market and Skills Impacts of Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland*; *The Experiences of Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland*; and *Attitudes to Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland: Results from the Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey 2009*. These can be accessed online. www.northernireland.gov.uk/index/media-centre/news-departments/news-del-december-2009/news-del-221209-department-publishes-reports.htm

The Racial Equality Forum was in abeyance for some time but on 5 October 2009, the NI Assembly passed the following resolution:

That this Assembly notes the economic, social and cultural contributions from migrant workers; and calls on the Executive to review the migrant workers strategy and to re-establish the Racial Equality Forum to consider further support for immigrants.

www.theyworkforyou.com/nil?id=2009-10-05.9.1

In November 2009 the forum began to meet again with themed sub-groups to make it more effective. EMBRACE is represented on the **Immigration Sub-Group** that considers policy issues such as destitution for people with no recourse to public funds and access to English language classes. The Law Centre NI provides secretarial back up for this group.

There is an **All Party Assembly Group on Ethnic Minority Communities** at Stormont that aims to promote and monitor the establishment of appropriate racial equality strategies within Government departments and in society in general. It is comprised of representatives of black and minority-ethnic support groups and political representatives. This group is administered by the NI Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) and some of the minutes of meetings are available online. <http://nicem.org.uk/files?category=All%20Party%20Group%20on%20Ethnic%20Minority%20Communities> Issues raised in 2012 included the rights of immigration detainees; the difficulties of new refugees; exploitation of

foreign national fishermen; the Minority Ethnic Development Fund; delays in the revision of the Racial Equality Strategy; and free language classes for people who are seeking asylum. In 2013 the format of meetings was changed in order to involve MLAs (Members of the Legislative Assembly) more, and during the year, topics included the criminal justice system; the results of the census; the Minority Ethnic Development Fund; and PSNI hate crime policy.

OFMDFM, the Equality Commission, Community Relations Council, Northern Ireland Office Community Safety Unit and the PSNI initiated the **Unite against Hate** campaign in September 2009, in order to challenge the prejudices that result in hate crimes. This campaign provided opportunities for ordinary people to demonstrate their opposition to the minority who carry out all forms of hate crime, including racism. Many groups have pledged support for the campaign. www.uniteagainsthate.org.uk/ There have been calls for the initiative to be revived.

The **Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership (NISMP)** was launched in October 2011. It brings together representatives from the UK Border Agency; NI Local Government Association (NILGA); OFMDFM; the Departments of Education, Employment and Learning, Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Justice, and Social Development; the NI Housing Executive, PSNI, the NI Human Rights Commission, NI Congress of Trade Unions, the Law Centre NI, the Multi-Cultural Resource Centre (now renamed Bryson Intercultural) and the Community Relations Council. Such partnerships exist throughout the UK in order to ensure that immigration policy and its implementation meet local needs. It is a forum where local issues can be raised. The lead partner is NILGA. The first NISMP conference in March 2012 was on Localism and Migration and included speakers from Scotland and England.

The beginning of the day explored the potential of the Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership to help emphasise and address the specific regional needs of Northern Ireland in regards to immigration and integration, while the afternoon sessions featured specific actions on how the Partnership, the statutory and voluntary sectors can collaborate and cooperate to promote integration and support migrants.

www.migrationni.org/nismp-conference-2012

A section of the NISMP web site, the **Migration Information Portal**, is a hub for finding information on immigration statistics, issues and policies, and contact details for relevant agencies and groups. www.migrationni.org/ EMBRACE was the community organisation chosen to feature in the first NISMP newsletter, *Migration News*, January 2012.

NISMP's key projects for 2013–2014 are Community Safety, Health, Education, Community Mapping, Community Planning, Future Strategy and the Migration Policy Seminar Series (see page 148).

The European Union has a web site that includes examples of integration practices throughout the EU. <http://ec.europa.eu/ews/en/practice/index.cfm>

'The social and economic benefits of immigration are clear and we are all acutely aware of the profound impact that immigration has had here. Immigrants have brought a new dynamism and many ideas from which we all benefit. However, it is up to us all – the Executive; Government Departments; Councils; Community Groups; and individual citizens to ensure that we are adequately prepared to welcome the arrival of newcomers.'

OFMDFM Junior Minister Jonathan Bell at the launch of the NISMP, October 2011 www.northernireland.gov.uk/index/media-centre/news-departments/news-ofmdfm/news-ofmdfm-211011-anderson-and-bell.htm?WT_mc_id=rss-news

Positive Developments

It is easy to be critical of the lack of preparation for large-scale immigration but there have now been many positive initiatives across the public sector and other areas in society. There is an increasing body of research, collaboration, and support initiatives. It would be difficult to be comprehensive, so only a few examples are listed here.

District Councils have been developing strategies to deal with integration at local level and administering Peace III funding, some of which has been used to further integration and social cohesion. Belfast City Council's **Migrant and Minority Ethnic Project**, for example, includes the **Belfast Migrant Forum** that has allowed council staff and representatives of statutory and voluntary bodies to network and share best practice. They have consulted migrant groups and honorary consuls about issues of concern for migrant workers, commissioned research, and hosted receptions for local cultural and national groups. The Council's Good Relations Unit also offers Migrant Awareness and Ending Hate in our Communities training in conjunction with the South Belfast Roundtable, and works to ensure that comprehensive information of relevance to migrant workers is available on its web site. www.belfastcity.gov.uk/community/advice/migrants.aspx Under the Peace III programme, the Council commissioned a programme to support the employment-related needs of migrant workers. Like other towns and cities they published a welcome guide, as well as a guide documenting projects and support organisations available for newcomers to Belfast.

The Council has also funded the **Belfast Friendship Club**, the **Living in Belfast Integration and Orientation Programme**, as well as other initiatives to support the integration and inclusion of newcomers and the concept of integration as a two-way process, providing opportunities for the wider community to understand issues around migration. In February 2012 the **Growing Respect** programme was announced, with the aim of breaking down racial and sectarian stereotypes through gardening together. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-16898204 As part of the Peace III Programme Belfast City Council funded the **Belfast Integration and Participation Project (BIPP)** which included the training of advice workers at the Law Centre, the development of economic opportunities through GEMS and the social aspects of integration through the Belfast Friendship Club. In October 2013 a seminar was held to capture some of the learning from BIPP and the employment project. The City Council also funded the initial phase of the **Creating Cohesive Communities Project** (see pages 54 and 103). Throughout 2013 Belfast City Council ran the 'Don't Turn Your Back on Hate Crime', through the Belfast Tension Monitoring Project. This encouraged the reporting of all types of hate crime through a billboard and Adshel campaign and a video that was shared via Youtube and social media. The North Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) also ran this campaign in early 2014 with Adshel posters and the distribution of leaflets.

Most Peace III projects ended in December 2013 but the council continues to support activity that promotes good relations between people from

different backgrounds, including minority-ethnic people, through the district councils Good Relations Programme.

Belfast City Council also led the **Open Cities** project, along with nine other European cities and the British Council. This explored how cities can become more open and attract and retain migrant workers in order to become more successful cities. The Belfast Open Cities **Local Action Plan** is available online. http://urbact.eu/fileadmin/Projects/Open_Cities/documents_media/Belfast.pdf

Most other local authorities have also been active in undertaking consultations with migrant workers and commissioning research in order to inform their integration strategies, welcome packs and information events. Some areas have inter-ethnic forums or other networks and there are examples of councils working together in clusters on integration issues. As well as **Good Relations Officers** and Equality Officers, some have had Migrant Worker Support Officers or Diversity Officers and a few have had additional staff such as an Anti-Racism Officer or Ethnic Minorities Co-ordinator. Free advice sessions for people from other countries are run at local level, assisting people with issues concerning immigration, benefit and housing entitlements, and employment rights.

It has been a mixed experience for national support groups. New groups continue to emerge, but even well established organisations, that supply advice and advocacy, have found it hard to maintain their services in a difficult funding climate. Others probably need more support for capacity building if they are to survive and thrive. The Polish Association in Belfast felt forced to dissolve in early 2013. Meanwhile, the **Consular Association of Northern Ireland** involves local honorary consuls for Belgium, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Mauritius, Mongolia, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States of America. <http://ca-ni.org/>

Some 'minority' events have become part of the local cultural landscape: including the Chinese New Year and the Belfast Mela in Botanic Gardens, which is enjoyed by so many local people that it had to be run over two days in August 2013.

It is only possible to give a few examples of the many cultural events that take place here. India Week in Belfast, June 2013, included the exploration of N Ireland connections with the sub continent. In August 2013 the African and Caribbean Support Organisation NI (ACSONI) along with the Association of Caribbean Nationals (ACANI) presented a Caribbean Food Fest and concert in the Crescent Arts Centre, Belfast. Magherafelt's first Multi-Cultural Festival took place in October 2013.

In autumn 2013 the British Council provided an opportunity for Muslim women from throughout Ireland and local people to hear each other's stories in Belfast. Neighbourhood relationships are fostered by events such as the 'Walk in My Shoes' event in Omagh between 8 and 22 February 2013, organised by the Omagh Ethnic Communities Support Group and the Equality Commission. Members of the local

'It [the OPENCities Project] was initiated because of a belief that cities that attract international populations are more competitive than cities that don't. By attracting new international populations, cities will inevitably attract more international events, investors and visitors.'

Belfast OPENCities Local Action Plan
http://urbact.eu/fileadmin/Projects/Open_Cities/outputs_media/Belfast.pdf

'Our aim is to facilitate greater involvement of people from black and minority ethnic communities in civic, community and political life, and increase community cohesion.'

Challenge of Change Co-ordinator, Justyna McCabe of Newry & Mourne District Council at the Challenge of Change project launch, November 2009

Research shows that, in spite of some difficulties migrants who have been surveyed find this a pleasant welcoming place.

'Northern Ireland was seen by many of the respondents as a friendly place, providing a good quality of life and welcoming atmosphere. Generally, local people were described in very positive terms, and were seen as polite, helpful and welcoming. Unfortunately, the research also recorded instances of discrimination in daily life in Northern Ireland, with verbal attacks being the most prevalent form.'

"... Easy Life, Great People, Bad Weather" www.delni.gov.uk/a_report_on_the_experiences_of_migrant_workers_in_northern_ireland.pdf

Chinese, Hungarian, Lithuanian, Polish and Filipino communities prepared an exhibition for the event. www.equalityni.org/sections/Default.asp?cms=News%5FPress+Releases&cmsid=1_9&id=369&secid=1_1

Some events are run by groups representing quite small populations. For example, there was a religious service to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Jamaican Independence in summer 2012, hosted by the Place of Victory for All Nations Christian congregation, which worships in the Europa Hotel Conference Centre. The three main Malaysian student organisations organised a charity programme, Malaysia and You, over a few days in March 2012, with the support, among others of the National Malaya Borneo Veterans Association (Mid Ulster and Ireland Branch). As part of culture night in Armagh, in September 2013 there was a Hungarian Folk display and traditional Hungarian folk-embroidered tablecloths and paintings and a display of traditional children's and adult Hungarian dance.

There were an increasing number of summer programmes focussed on children and young people in 2013, such as the Chinese Welfare Association's 'Kids Summer Fun' and Cookstown's international family mornings. Craigavon Intercultural Programme (CIP) launched a 5-year 'Step Up' programme, to enhance the lives of more than 300 black and minority-ethnic young people aged 11-20, through mentoring, life skills and vocational training. The BELONG programme has a project for black and minority-ethnic children, including Travellers, for children who are transferring to secondary school, in Dungannon, Craigavon and Newry.

A number of projects have concerned health and mental health, for example, the Mood Matters Mental Health workshops run in various centres by Stronger Together (see also page 149).

Below are just a few examples of positive developments during 2013 –14, including the development of a number of seminar series which link the wider minority-ethnic support sector, local politicians and public servants, with academics and statisticians.

- The NI Assembly **Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)** of lectures has the aim of 'Promoting evidence-led policy and law-making within Northern Ireland' and is supported by both Queen's University, Belfast and the University of Ulster. On 9 January 2014 the topic was Migration. www.niassembly.gov.uk/Assembly-Business/Research-and-Information-Service-RaSe/Knowledge-Exchange/
- The **NI Strategic Migration Partnership (NISMP)** has developed a series of seminars with the theme of Immigration in Post [EU] Accession Northern Ireland, running from November 2013 to September 2014. Topics include immigration law, devolution and N Ireland; improving opportunities in education for migrant children; engaging migrants and BME groups in the political system; immigration control and safeguarding vulnerable children and adults; and building sustainable social cohesion through diversity. www.migrationni.org/newsfeature/25/nismp-hosting-seminar-series.aspx
- The **ARK (Access Research Knowledge)** seminar series included one entitled 'A Truly Shared Future? Attitudes towards

Migrant Communities and Minority Ethnic People in Northern Ireland', an overview of a recent NI Life and Times attitude survey (see page 97). www.ark.ac.uk/events/

- The Law Centre online resource, **Migrants and Benefits: An Advisers Guide**, was launched at a celebration of the Belfast Integration and Inclusion Project (BIPP) (see page 146) during Refugee Week, June 2013. The resource was updated in February 2014. www.lawcentreni.org/Publications/Migrant%20Workers/Migrants-and-Benefits-2014.pdf An ISSUU version is also available, to be read on screen. http://issuu.com/lawcentreni/docs/migrants_and_benefits_2014?e=7540520/6787874 Patricia Carty, wrote about the need for the publication in *Frontline* 88. www.lawcentreni.org/Publications/Frontline/Frontline-88.pdf
- The **Stronger Together** network for minority-ethnic groups and support groups has launched its web site. [www.strongertogetherni.org](http://strongertogetherni.org) The events calendar is especially effective. Members receive frequent information bulletins about what is happening in the sector throughout N Ireland. The Stronger Together conference in February 2014, on the changing role of leadership in Black and Minority-Ethnic Communities was attended by people from at least 50 organisations.
- The new draft **Racial Equality Strategy** (see page 143) and the discussion about a local **Refugee Integration Strategy** (see page 55) provide hope of a more focussed coordination of responsibilities in the public and NGO sectors.
- As more detailed local information from the **2011 Census** becomes available, it is possible to get a fuller picture of the lives of people who were born elsewhere (see pages 2, 3, 94, 101, 135 and 150).
- The scheme allowing asylum applicants access to **Free English Classes** has been allowed to continue. (see page 124).
- The Law Centre's **Anti-Trafficking Children and Young People Project** to assist trafficked children and young people (see page 85) ensures that vulnerable youngsters will get the best support possible.
- The *Living in Belfast* guide for migrants was updated as part of the **Belfast Integration and Inclusion Project (BIPP)** (see page 146). www.gemsni.org.uk/bipp/
- Three **City of Sanctuary** groups now exist in N Ireland: Belfast, Derry~Londonderry and Causeway to help create a climate where everyone can feel safe and respected (see page 53, margin).
- **Justin Kouame**, Chairperson of the NI Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (NICRAS) (see page 54) has received a Community Foundation Stephen Pittam Social Justice Award. As well as volunteering with NICRAS, Justin also acts as a tribunal representative for Citizens Advice.
- The African and Caribbean Support Organisation (ACSONI) has set up a **Women's Intercultural Network** as a forum for the interchange of information and ideas, and to help to empower the women involved. <http://acsoni.org/projects.php>

'I like this school a lot because the students are very helpful ... if someone come to do something evil to us or start to make fun of us because we are not Irish they would protect us.'

A Portuguese post-primary student quoted in Promoting Racial Equality in Northern Ireland's Post-Primary Schools

Good neighbours

'I think we were very surprised by local people being so helpful. We really didn't experience that back in the Czech Republic. It was three years ago and there wasn't any support initiatives, no interpreting services. I remember our first day – it was an empty house, totally unfurnished and our neighbours, local retired people coming to our house and offering us help. Them bringing us furniture. It was wonderful.'

A Czech person in Newry & Mourne, quoted in Dr Robbie McVeigh 'We Asked for Workers but Human Beings Came', 2008

'... a woman described how her neighbours and work colleagues helped with Christmas presents for their two children during their first year in Belfast when they had very little money. These positive deeds engender a sense of belonging and are critical for individuals if they are to feel settled within a community.'

Ruth McAreavy, policy briefing, Knowledge Exchange Seminar on Migration, Stormont, January 2014 (see also page 95)

- The **Craigavon Intercultural Programme (CIP) Freedom Acts** project has produced a series of short animated films about sexual exploitation and child labour in N Ireland on DVD. www.craigavonintercultural.org/content/freedom-acts-human-trafficking-dvd
- **Extern**, the homelessness support organization has been able to fund some English language classes for young refugees.

Signs of growing integration:

Putting down roots

The 2011 Census indicated that many of the people who came here when the European Union was enlarged in 2004 have made this a more permanent home. One measure of this is the number of those who have become home owners (although this is hard to measure because the figures include those sharing accommodation with the owner). For example, 13.1% of Polish people and 33.9% of Filipino people lived in owner-occupied accommodation by 2011. See Dr Raymond Russell's NI Assembly Research and Information Service Research Paper, *Census 2011: Detailed Characteristics of Ethnicity and Country of Birth at the Northern Ireland Level* www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/RalSe/Publications/2013/general/13813.pdf

Cross-cultural relationships

'One of the things we have noticed here are the number of cross-cultural relationships and marriages ... that just came out of people working together. People were working on the same line and they met, fell in love and got married, That impacts on families and communities and it changes perceptions. So there is a lot of stuff like that that has moved people into being more accommodating.'

Interviewee from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Poverty and Ethnicity Research, quoted in Dr Ruth McAreavy's policy briefing, Knowledge Exchange Seminar (see also page 95) on Migration at Stormont in January 2014, 'Poverty, ethnicity and international migrants to Northern Ireland: new opportunities or new vulnerabilities?'

Language

While lack of competent English has been seen as a problem (see pages 122–4), in the 2011 Census a considerable number of incomers said that they could speak English well or very well including, for example, 58.9% of Polish people and 64.3% of Filipino people. Only 4.3% of migrants from the countries that joined the European Union in 2004 said that they could not speak English at all. www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/RalSe/Publications/2013/general/13813.pdf

Social change

In some areas it seems that people have got used to newcomers.

'Anti-Polish prejudice in Derry is on the decline, according to welfare group Polish Abroad.

Ewelina O'Donnell, an interpreter and English teacher with the Foyle Language School based welfare group, says Derry has become a city where Poles feel "very welcome".

"Attitudes and the way of thinking has definitely changed", she says.

"People in Derry want Polish people to feel welcome. They know Poles choose to come here to work hard, to do 12 hour days, to the benefit of this country."

"People in Derry understand Polish people are not here to take jobs. Poles do different kinds of jobs, hold different qualifications. Attitudes have changed, people here are so open. Derry is much more welcoming than Belfast,"...

This story from the *Derry Journal*, 27 March 2009, also stressed the importance of the help Polish Abroad had received in setting up language classes from the SEEDS support group in the city. www.derryjournal.com/news/local/anti_polish_prejudice_on_wane_in_derry_1_2136168

Good employment practice

'"Many of the skills required to produce these breads are provided by foreign nationals who are mainly Polish," Damian McErlain, Genesis operations manager said. "These individuals are a key part of the Genesis operation and the management have made great efforts to ensure they settle and enjoy work and life in Northern Ireland."'

Practical steps taken included:

- All foreign national staff were given assistance in finding good accommodation, setting up bank accounts and local GP services
- All inductions and internal communications are carried out in Polish
- HR helps book flights home for Polish staff at holiday periods
- There is flexibility in holidays to allow staff longer periods to go home
- English classes were set up for staff to attend at the local college

Belfast Telegraph, 20 October 2009 in Anti-Racist Workplace Week www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/business/business-news/working-together-to-stamp-out-racism-14536467.html

Interest in politics

People from 25 countries registered to vote before the May 2011 elections, nearly 2000 from Poland, 900 from Portugal and 800 from Lithuania. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/6341471.stm Some have been chosen to stand for election. For example The SDLP selected several Polish candidates including Anna Ochal-Molanda who stood for election in Craigavon in the 2011 local government elections. She said

There is a great appetite among the Polish community to get involved in local politics in Craigavon and I will try my best to represent and give a voice to migrant people and indeed everyone in our community on the issues that matter most to them.

As a wife and a young mother I am very aware of how hard things are for families at the moment and the difficulties that people are facing trying to retain and get work to simply make ends meet.

www.sdlp.ie/index.php/newsroom_media/newsarticle/sdlp_selects_polish_craigavon_council_candidate/

Daniel Konieczny is also from Poland and addressed the DUP party conference in 2008 as a supporter. He said

The Cities of Migration web site contains ideas for integration and inclusion from throughout the world. <http://citiesofmigration.ca/>

'To improve co-existence among locals and new immigrants, the Barcelona city council relies on a clever public service campaign to contradict misinformation. Among the Spanish city's "weapons of myth destruction" (WMD) are trained anti-rumour agents who contradict wrong ideas about immigrants with facts and good humour. Working through local organizations, they spread their message while negotiating through the business of daily life in the city's neighbourhoods.'

http://citiesofmigration.ca/ezine_stories/from-barcelona-to-toronto-myth-busting-and-migration/

We are not coming here just to save the money and go back home ... We are buying houses now and people know this – that we are part of the community and we are living here and are contributing to the economy and want to be involved as well with the politics.

Story by Martina Purdy, BBC www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-12780447

In October 2012 there were just over 19,000 people, born outside the UK or Ireland, who were registered to vote in Westminster elections. www.migrationni.org/integration-and-social-cohesion

There was a concerted effort in 2013–14, by the NI Strategic Migration Partnership and other groups to ensure that minority-ethnic people were encouraged to register to vote before the 2014 European and local elections. Polish organisations initiated the **Vote! You are at Home!** campaign, designed to persuade people from minority-ethnic communities to register.

Naomi Long MP has announced that a Polish speaker will be available to assist constituents at her East Belfast constituency office. www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/northern-ireland/mp-naomi-long-launches-new-service-for-polish-community-after-race-attacks-in-east-belfast-29931423.html

Feeling at home

Some people begin, quite quickly, to regard this as their home.

I feel here at home, I like this country's people. It's different the people here and in England, people here are more like Lithuanian people. In England, people are more closed. People and neighbours are very friendly here, people say hello, hello, it's so nice.

"... *Easy Life, Great People, Bad Weather*" www.delni.gov.uk/a_report_on_the_experiences_of_migrant_workers_in_northern_ireland.pdf

Second generation or long-term migrants comment on helpful new developments such as the celebration of festivals and specialist shops. Abby whose father came from Cape Verde was asked about changes she had seen and commented about the increased cultural diversity:

I'm glad to see it because there are things like the multicultural shops and music and I feel that it just makes the place so much richer culturally.

In spite of what she says was 'a year and a half of absolute hell' because of bullying and racism when she came here as a child, Abby wants to live here for good.

People have been so friendly here. And the landscape I just absolutely love all of the landscapes ... love it. I've met a lot of brilliant people and the talent of people is exciting and for me many people are creative and that really feeds myself.

Voices from the Global South; A Research Report on Migration, Belfast, 2010
https://docs.google.com/file/d/0Bwa0-yj_NbZGMTBhZWQwOGEtNjgwMi00Y2QwLWEyMWQyZzQ0ODk3NWl0ZWVj/edit?pli=1

A more recent migrant, Justyna from Poland, says

Life in a foreign country is easier for migrants when some parts of its reality relate to their own culture. That's why there are a growing

number of shops selling Polish food. Tesco and Dunne's Stores have a range of Polish products. Almost every Polish family has access to Polish TV, people have a chance to go to a Polish mass at least once a month, there are Polish nights at some bars, Polish welfare associations are increasing in number.

Justyna Pers from the British Council Ordinary Lives Project, 2008. Read more at www.britishcouncil.org/northernireland-society-ordinarylives-poland1.htm?mtklink=northernireland-society-ordinarylives-poland1

An Idea to Try

The NI Housing Executive launched a **Living Library** project in 2009. Minority-ethnic people become 'living books' for a few hours so that staff can chat to them and find out more about them. While this can be light-hearted it is an easy way of having questions answered and stereotypes challenged. NIHE Race Relations Officer Linda Hutchinson said

Looking at the 2008 Life and Times Survey, 63% of people do not socialise with, or have friends from a minority-ethnic background and 41% of people said that none of the people they regularly come in contact with at work are from a minority-ethnic background. When asked about the type of contact with people from the main minority-ethnic communities only 22% had a close interaction such as a lengthy conversation. Living Library is about starting such conversations.

The **Living Library** has now been renamed the **Human Library**. It has strict rules (and copyright) but you could adapt the idea locally. Could your local library or other community or church building be used as a safe space where incomers can gain/ increase knowledge about the area from local people, or migrant workers could talk about their lives to people they do not usually get to meet? Find out more from <http://humanlibrary.org/>

Christian Responses

'Being exiled is a fundamentally biblical experience. God protects the poorest and hears the cries of those abandoned and in search of protection. These words are the highest point of that journey. We are all but travellers, all but pilgrims, foreigners here, and our final destination is with God in his kingdom. This care to migrants and refugees is born out of this biblical experience. Jesus has identified that this welcoming or not welcoming of these people will determine whether we ourselves will be welcomed in God's kingdom or not.'

Fr Maurizio Pettená, Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office, *Kairos* Catholic Journal Volume 22, Issue 21 (ACMRO), 2011

What the Bible Says about Welcoming Outsiders

At the first EMBRACE Annual General Meeting in 2004 Sr Brighde Vallely (then EMBRACE Vice-Chairperson) reflected how, in John's Gospel, while Peter warmed himself by a charcoal fire, in the in-group, Jesus was in the out-group, among the demonised. After the resurrection, it was Jesus who cooked breakfast on a charcoal fire for the disciples, and Peter, following his earlier denials of Christ, had the opportunity to make his threefold response to Jesus' question: 'Do you love me?'

Brighde then asked 'So what must we do?' and answered:

- Repent of sectarianism, racism and prejudice
- Be informed and learn to ask the right questions, of Churches, politicians and policy makers
- Churches and church communities should be communities of the inclusive charcoal fire.
- Wash the feet of others

Embracing the Stranger

God is portrayed in the scriptures as identifying with fallen and broken humanity. God revealed Himself as the God of the outsider when He intervened in the lives of the Israelites in Egypt. His liberation of His people from their oppression displayed His commitment to the marginalized and the vulnerable. And it is this concern, compassion and commitment that God holds up as a blueprint for His followers. ...

The Israelites themselves are portrayed as sojourners or tenants on the land that God has given them and their tenancy is linked to their obedience to God. Indeed, the way in which the stranger, together with the widow and the orphan, is treated, is an indicator of the Israelites' obedience to the law of God and it is this commitment to justice and the defence of the weak that the prophets highlight repeatedly. God doesn't want lip service; He desires obedience. He requires us to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with Him (Micah 6:8). The stranger provides the opportunity for the Israelite to reciprocate the heart of God for the downtrodden and the oppressed. ...

Jesus takes this a step further when he tells his disciples that what they do to the stranger, they do to Him. He is in the guise of the stranger, the poor and the weak and His call is to treat all people as

we would treat Him. In the incarnation Jesus comes as a stranger into this world. ... Jesus understands those who seek refuge and asylum and identifies with them. As the stranger on the road to Emmaus, He draws alongside and supports the weak. His great call is to hospitality, a central theme of scripture. Jesus epitomised hospitality in his welcome and treatment of those on the fringes of society. But it was more than a welcome. His hospitality was about reconciliation and the transformation from stranger to guest and from guest to friend.

Part of an article by the then EMBRACE chairperson, Richard Kerr, in *lion & lamb: racism and religious liberty*, Autumn 2004 www.contemporarychristianity.net/econiroot/LionLamb/037/lionlamb037.html

Some Christian Resources

What the Bible Says about the Stranger

An expanded version of *What the Bible Says about the Stranger: Biblical Perspectives on Racism, Migration, Asylum and Cross-Community Issues*, by Kieran J O'Mahony OSA, was put together by the All-Ireland Churches' Consultative Meeting on Racism (AICCMR), and published in 2009 by the Irish Inter-Church Meeting. This is a mixture of Bible studies, questions for reflection, prayers, suggestions for dramatisation and group work. The biblical themes start with the 'God of All Creation' and move through the Bible to conclude with Pentecost. There is a useful index of biblical citations and a users guide. Copies are available from the Inter-Church Centre, 48 Elmwood Avenue, Belfast and EMBRACE. The price is £5.00, or less, if buying multiple copies. It is available online. www.irishchurches.org/cmsfiles/resources/Reports/StrangerBook.pdf

Unity and Diversity in Our Churches

The **Parish-Based Integration Project** in Dublin published *Unity and Diversity in Our Churches*, to assist local parishes and congregations with the integration of new residents into their faith communities and Irish society. Topics include diversity in the early church, guidelines for integrating immigrants into a local parish and models of good practice. www.irishchurches.org/cmsfiles/resources/Reports/PIPmanual.pdf

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI)

CTBI hosts the **Racial Justice Sunday** resources, which contain worship and background material. See the 2013 resources. www.ctbi.org.uk/644 They also have an **Asylum Toolbox** to assist churches acting in support of individuals who are seeking asylum. www.ctbi.org.uk/102

Women's World Day of Prayer 2013

The theme for Women's World Day of Prayer on 1 March 2013 was 'I was a stranger and you welcomed me'. The background material and resources were prepared by the women of France and include a Bible study and children's activities and this journal shows how they were used. http://worlddayofprayer.net/index_images/WDP%20Journal%202013%20Final.pdf

EMBRACE Resources

'Hear My Voice' DVD

This resource was produced from interviews with migrants and people who are seeking asylum in N Ireland. The six-minute animation provides insight into newcomers' perceptions of life here, highlighting some

'Christians believe that all people are created equal in dignity, made in the image of God.'

One of the core principles in Migration Principles; Statement for Churches Working on Migration Issues

'Nationality is not irrelevant in the Bible, but nationhood comes a firm second to identity as God's created beings. ... our default position [towards immigrants] should be one of compassion and openness, rather than defensiveness and hostility.'

Guy Brandon, A Christian Response to Migration, 2011 www.jubilee-centre.org/resources/a_christian_response_to_immigration

'Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so some have entertained angels without knowing it.'
Hebrews 13: 1-2

'Our challenge today is to make sure that our churches are guided by a Biblical culture which encourages people from other countries and cultures to feel welcome, rather than a church culture which rejects anyone who is not like "us". The church of Jesus Christ that he has bought with his own blood is from every tribe and language and people and nation. Let us begin to build churches like that now!'

EMBRACE prayer letter, February 2013, contributed by Pastor Philip Brown, Baptist Church, Newry www.embraceni.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Feb13-Prayer-Letter.pdf

'What can we do to help people coming into our country? ... From a Christian perspective, I think genuine love is the key, the Bible says "Love your neighbour as yourself." I think this is the fundamental answer to your question. I will say that you can help people coming into this country by showing them genuine love. I think that it is important that Northern Irish people love themselves first and then perhaps this love can be genuinely extended to 'foreigners' coming here, ... a genuine love that will cut across communities, sectarianism, racism and other related intolerance.'

Extract from an interview with Alfred Albolarin (originally from Nigeria) interviewed in Once We Were Strangers

of their struggles and challenges as well as the ways in which they feel at home. The DVD can be accessed on Youtube. www.youtube.com/watch?v=nm52GnLlk7Y&feature=youtu.be Or you can get copies from the EMBRACE office.

'Hear My Voice' Migrant Story Leaflets

A series of six leaflets about how it feels to move to a new country and how local people can ease the process of integration. www.embraceni.org/category/about-us/embrace-resources/

Welcome and Christmas Posters

The EMBRACE multi-lingual 'Welcome' poster has translations of 'welcome' in 28 commonly recognized languages. It is accompanied by A Word of Welcome booklet with phrases in 20 languages to help make people feel welcome. www.embraceni.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/welcome-poster.jpg The booklet has been used by Belfast City Council staff during several weddings of foreign nationals and has been reprinted by the NI Housing Executive for use by their staff and by EMBRACE. www.embraceni.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Words-of-Welcome-Booklet-2013.pdf There is also a Christmas poster with greetings in around 50 languages.

Strangers in Need: Advice for Assisting People from Other Countries who are Experiencing Difficulties

This online resource is updated as circumstances change and aims to give clergy and pastoral workers some options for signposting people who are in crisis situations. We sometimes hear about instances where church people have given inappropriate immigration advice. This resource emphasises the fact that it is illegal to give immigration advice without a licence. Bad advice can have very severe consequences. www.embraceni.org/category/christian-response/advice-for-churches/

Information Sheets

From 2012 on, a series of leaflets was developed, providing concise information on the topics of trafficking, migration, asylum, racism, the Roma community and the Polish community. Others will follow. Leaflets are updated as new information is obtained. The Who's Who? Who's Here? leaflet provides information on migration terminology, numbers and nationalities. The most up-to-date versions are on the web site. www.embraceni.org/category/about-us/embrace-resources/

'A Stitch in Time': Responding to Racism at a Local Level (including Bible study ideas)

This series of cards charts how a happy home can be transformed negatively by outside threats and how racism can include a process of escalation. The notes for leaders suggest how the cards can be used to stimulate discussion and it is hoped that they will help people to think through how to respond to racism in practical ways.

'A Fish out of Water': Exploring the Impact of Migration at a Personal Level (including Bible study ideas)

This second series of cards uses imagery to help people understand how it feels to move to a new country.

Most EMBRACE resources, including prayer letters, newsletters, information updates, and lists of English classes in the Belfast area are available to download from the EMBRACE web site. www.embraceni.org/

category/about-us/embrace-resources/ Hard copies, including cards with greetings in a number of languages, are available on request from the office.

Bible resources for migrants

The United Bible Societies has produced an illustrated resource, *On the Road: a Journey through the Bible for Migrants*, put together by the French Bible Society, in conjunction with a group of migrant people. It is a combination of Bible stories, prayers and personal experiences and suggested questions for discussion. It could be used for personal or group work, by migrants, or local people – or to help bring them together. www.la-bible.net/doc/dons08072.pdf

Representatives of EMBRACE, the Lord Mayor, and other guests read from the scriptures in different languages at a celebration of the digital Bible at Belfast City Hall in November 2013. The event was organised by the Bible Society. The *YouVersion* of the scriptures is now free to download to smart phones or tablets in more than 400 languages. <https://www.bible.com/>

The **Bible Society** Northern Ireland (27 Howard Street Belfast, BT1 6NB, Tel. (028) 9032 6577 E-mail communications@bsni.co.uk) stocks Bibles in approximately 50 languages, including some children's editions, and can order scriptures in some 100 languages. Some bi-lingual texts are available. www.bsni.co.uk/pages/20-non-english-scriptures The Bible Society also stocks *On the Road: a Journey through the Bible for Migrants*, in English, Turkish and Arabic (see above).

Some biblical sources:

Who is my neighbour?	Luke 10 25–37
How to treat a foreigner	Leviticus 19 33–34
How foreigners can be a blessing	The book of Ruth
Justice love and fellowship	Micah 6: 8
Treating others as we treat the Lord	Matthew 25: 31–46
The gift of hospitality	Hebrews 13: 2
Breaking down barriers	Ephesians 2: 11–22

Source: Policy on Asylum Seekers and Refugees; a Report by the Race Relations Committee to the 2003 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Presbyterian Church in Ireland
www.embraceni.org/wp-content/uploads/2006/06/PCI%20asylumpolicy03.pdf%202%20Christian%20response.pdf

The Role of the Church

Christians in Northern Ireland are living in a changed environment. While many young people still leave these shores every year, the last decade has seen an increasing number of people coming from other countries and cultures, not just to Belfast but to other cities, towns, villages and countryside. Many people work here for a short time and leave but others are now bringing up their families here. According to the 2011 Census there are now around 4.51% of people living in N Ireland were born outside the UK or ROI: 45,407 from the rest of the European Union, and 36,046 from other countries.

In helping to build a welcoming community it is important not just to

Prayer of a migrant

I don't know what lies ahead,
But I believe that in your love
You will give me
a new start in life,
Somewhere far away from the pain
That pushed me to leave

A Tunisian proverb

When I saw him from a distance,
I thought he was my enemy.
When he came closer,
I recognised a human being.
When I shook his hand,
I found a brother.
Two extracts from *On the Road*

'When a stranger lives with you in your land, do not ill-treat him. The stranger living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were strangers in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.'
Leviticus 19: 33

'The heart of Christianity is hospitality.'

Jean Vanier in 'Something Understood', BBC Radio 4, Palm Sunday, 2009

'The "hospitality myth" has been trivialised by the tourist industry, but its roots go back to the origin of Christian faith in Ireland, probably even further. In its original form it modelled inclusive and unconditional hospitality as taught in Scripture, and it was widespread in the 'Celtic church', especially in monastic settlements ... As 'new Ireland' seeks to define its twenty-first century, as politicians make speeches about interculturalism, the church has an opportunity to re-discover its own inclusive roots and creatively share them with society.'

Margaret Anne Tiffy Allen, Welcoming the Stranger: Ireland's Hospitality Myth Under Scrutiny, M. Phil. Thesis, Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity College, Dublin

provide a welcome for newcomers but also to help existing populations to adjust to this change. Cultural shock is acute for people who have left their home country, but the arrival of numbers of people who are different can also cause a range of emotions in local people, from unease and fear, to hostility and aggression. It is part of Christian leadership to acknowledge all these emotions and needs, and to find ways of creating mutual understanding and fellowship. Research by STEP in 2010 found that 20% of their interviewees mixed socially with people through church attendance (*Research to Identify Additional Difficulties Faced by Minority Ethnic Groups and Migrant Workers because of the Conflict in N. Ireland*).

Politicians appear to see a role for the Churches. Speaking at the Church of Ireland conference on migration, Junior Minister in the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), Gerry Kelly, said in 2008, that the Church had a key role in being able to deliver in areas where government may not be able to.

Diversity involves new people, living down the street, shopping at local shops, attending local schools and working alongside us and sharing our places of worship. It is at this level that the real level of integration must happen. ... It is important for us all to work together to promote good relations but Church and Government, in partnership, could provide the focused leadership.

www.northernireland.gov.uk/news/news-ofmndfm/news-210108-church-and-government 19 January 2008

In February 2010 there was a NI Assembly debate on the role of faith groups in the wider community. Many tributes were paid by MLAs from all parties to volunteers and charities, including the following from Anna Lo:

We are well known for our generosity in helping people in developing countries ... At home, the Northern Ireland Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (NICRAS) has told me that faith-based organisations have been the main source of support for the destitute in our community and that, without the generosity of those organisations, it would be facing a much more serious crisis ... Those organisations have also been proactive in opening their doors to refugees and other migrant groups and in providing them with opportunities to meet others and seek advice. They have also made their premises available for groups to use. Indeed, the City Church in south Belfast and the interfaith organisation Embrace Northern Ireland were very active in helping the Roma families when they were targeted by racists in June 2009 [see pages 120–1].

www.theyworkforyou.com/ni/?id=2010-02-02.1

A Community Faiths' Forum was established following the debate.

The authors of *Unity in Diversity in our Churches* also identify the potential but post a warning:

Churches and other faith communities in a receiving country have a role to play in the migration process. They can become a resource to bridge different cultures and communities, but if they shun this responsibility, or if they are too exclusive or dominant, or do not share values, power and resources, then they may exacerbate negative experiences of alienation, frustration and marginalization on the part of migrants.

Each year, since we began to experience greater immigration, there has been an increase in the numbers of Christians from other countries living here. They have choices. They may integrate into the local congregations of their own denomination or the closest to the form of theology and worship that they were used to, or they can attend churches with other people from their own ethnic or national background (see pages 165–6). Some may do a bit of both. For example Polish Catholics may attend local Catholic parishes during the year, but go to a Polish language mass to have their Easter food blessed. Either way they bring blessings.

While some newcomers have had negative experiences in local churches (see pages 108–9), others have found unconditional welcome.

I have been living in Northern Ireland for almost 10 years now. In 2004 when European Union was enlarged, Irish Catholics were confronted by a large influx of Polish Catholics and you were all very welcoming. I represent a parish which is integrating very well, parish of St Anthony's in East Belfast which is integrating Polish people ... Our parish is actually growing not only by Polish people who joined the parish in large numbers ... but also by local people who are coming back to the church. ... You certainly still understand what does it mean 'Love one another'.

A Polish doctor speaking in a discussion on the future of the Catholic Church, on Sunday Sequence, Radio Ulster, 21 February, 2010

Churches' Responses to Immigration, Asylum and Racism

The main Churches in Ireland have responded in different ways.

The document *Erga migrantes caritas Christi* (The love of Christ towards migrants), published in 2004 by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, examines the challenge for the Church of human mobility and the pastoral implications. www.vatican.va/roman_curial/pontifical_councils/migrants/documents/rc_pc_migrants_doc_20040514-erga-migrantes-caritas-christi_en.html

Every **Catholic** diocese in Ireland now has a priest in charge of the pastoral care of migrants. As well as priests who have served abroad, there are also chaplains from several of the main countries of origin of migrants who ensure liturgical celebrations and pastoral care for different language groups. The Church also used to have a Refugee and Migrant Project centred in Maynooth. This was replaced by the **Irish Episcopal Council for Immigrants (IECI)**, which was formed in 2009 in order to develop and foster initiatives in relation to outreach and pastoral care of immigrants. Its **Field Officer** is Dr Helen Young. Between 2012–13 the Council for Immigrants ran a parish pilot programme encouraging different levels of engagement with pastoral work to promote the inclusion and participation of migrants. Themes include resourcing the welcome of migrants at liturgical level and ideas for working with parishes and schools in relation to the sacraments. Parishes are encouraged to hold events such as an international liturgical celebration.

A resource pack was made available to parishes to help them celebrate World Migrant and Refugee Day, 20 January, 2013. The theme was

'The first Mass specifically for the Polish community in Derry was held in St Eugene's in October 2005. Although it was to be conducted in Polish local members of the parish were also invited to attend in order to welcome the Poles into the community. Mass began at 9.00 pm with half an hour set aside beforehand for hearing confession. The local community was amazed to see rows of young men waiting to have their confessions heard – a sight not seen in Irish churches since the 1960s.'

'New Communities in Northern Ireland: The Christian Response' by Mary Delargy, in *Shared Space Issue 5*, March 2008 www.community-relations.org.uk/research-publication/shared-space-5-2/

'World Migrant Sunday and parishioners' National Holidays or Patron Saint Feast Days are an opportunity for a congregation to celebrate diversity. Do this by using hymns and prayers from the languages of your congregation and by asking a member of your parish to talk about their journey to live in Ireland.'

A suggestion from the Catholic, Journeying Together Parish Migration Resource Pack, Christmas 2013 and World Migrant Sunday 19th January 2014 www.catholicbishops.ie/2013/12/20/resources-christmas-migrant-sunday/

Migrations: Pilgrimage of Faith and Hope. www.catholicbishops.ie/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/CFI-WMS-2013-Resource-Pack.pdf (In the light of increased numbers of people leaving Ireland the Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants (IECE) also produced an *Emigrant Information Pack 2012* to assist parishes and dioceses in raising awareness about the issues affecting emigrants and to ask for the prayers and support of parishioners. www.catholicbishops.ie/2013/03/05/emigrant-information-pack-2013/) For Christmas 2013 and for World Migrant and Refugee Day on 19 January 2014 a further resource pack was prepared with prayers, homily notes and suggested parish activities. www.catholicbishops.ie/2013/12/20/resources-christmas-migrant-sunday/

'... we remember and pray for all those who have travelled far from their homeland in search of a better life. We remember those who have left our shores in the hope of making a new life for themselves abroad; and also, those who have joined us to begin their new life in Ireland.

... Many people are forced to leave all they know because of forces outside of their control. This affects not only the migrant themselves, but also those they have left behind...'

Statement by Bishop Kirby and Bishop Field for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, January 2014 www.catholicbishops.ie/2014/01/17/statement-bishop-kirby-bishop-field-world-day-migrants-refugees/

In February 2014 the Council for Emigrants (IECE) joined with the Council for Immigrants (IECI) to organise a conference, Journeying Together – Challenges Facing the Migrant Today, to explore both emigration and immigration and offer a platform to discuss the effects of migration on undocumented people, families, prisoners and victims of trafficking. The conference speeches are available online. www.catholicbishops.ie/2014/02/19/speeches-conference-journeying-together-challenges-facing-migrant-today/

Among other issues, the **NI Catholic Council on Social Affairs (NICCOSA)** is concerned about the increasing amount of poverty and human trafficking www.catholicbishops.ie/niccosa/ and **St Vincent de Paul** continues to play a valuable role in helping people throughout local communities who find themselves affected by poverty, including destitute foreign nationals. Extra money has been set aside in the South Belfast area to support the special needs of refugees and people who are seeking asylum, as many people in the asylum system live in the south of the city.

The **Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI)** adopted a document, *Policy on Asylum Seekers and Refugees; a Report by the Race Relations Committee to the 2003 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*. www.embraceni.org/wp-content/uploads/2006/06/PCI%20asylumpolicy03pdf%202%20Christian%20response.pdf It is more comprehensive than the title suggests, as it also explores issues of immigration, racism and welcome. The responsibility in this area lies with the **Race Relations Panel** whose brief is to

- **Research** and keep a watching brief on issues relating to race relations and immigration
- **Resource** and inform the wider church, enabling it to respond as appropriate

- **Respond** to selected specific and strategic issues

They have been actively concerned with how immigration enforcement has impacted on people at congregational level (see for example Mountpottinger, pages 70–1), and have had ongoing meetings with UKBA/ Home Office officials.

Reflecting concern at congregational level, a paper on undocumented workers was put before the General Assembly in 2009 and the following resolution was passed:

That the General Assembly commend the paper entitled “Irregular Immigration: responding to a dilemma faced by congregations and individuals” as a source of information and a contribution to encouraging engagement with this topical issue.

Keith Preston, an Irish Mission worker for the PCI Board of Mission in Ireland working in South and East Belfast, opened a successful drop-in centre, the **International Meeting Point** for migrant people on the Lisburn Road, Belfast, in 2010. It serves people from many countries and has upwards of 60 volunteers from 15 churches. www.presbyterianireland.org/Mission/People/Keith-Preston Details of the activities are on Facebook. www.facebook.com/TheMeetingpoint133

The **‘and You welcomed Me’** DVD was produced in 2013 and is an important resource from the Presbyterian Church’s Race Relations Panel. It features first hand stories of people from Lithuania, Russia, Malaysia, The Philippines, India, Nigeria and South Africa, and reflects on what it means to be welcomed and accepted into congregational life. The accompanying resource includes bible study material, suggestions for engagement and sources of further information. Copies available from Rev. Richard Kerr rkerr@presbyterianireland.org for the nominal price of £5 and it can also be viewed online. www.presbyterianireland.org/Resources/Congregational-Life-and-Administration/Good-Relations/And-You-Welcomed-Me?ID=4229

The **Methodist Church in Ireland** adopted the Presbyterian policy document and addresses the issues through their **Council on Social Responsibility**. The **Reconciliation Programme** at Edgehill Theological College is in partnership with EMBRACE. The Programme has a specific focus on integration and hosts EMBRACE Committee meetings and AGMs, as well as co-ordinating the EMBRACE on the Street project. Their blogspot has resources relating to welcome, hospitality and immigration and the Bible. <http://edgehillreconciliationprogramme.blogspot.co.uk/> The Reconciliation Programme also contributed to the work with the All-Ireland Churches Consultative Meeting on Racism (see below pages 167–8).

With the support of the Reconciliation Programme in Edgehill College and the Home Mission Department, a one-day conference was organised in Portlaoise in October 2012, to address the question ‘What’s next for multi-ethnic churches?’ (Multi-ethnic Methodist churches are defined as a church where 25% of the congregation is made up of people of other ethnic groups or cultures and are more common south of the border.) There are a number of factors that influence new migrants’ choice in choosing a place to worship. For some it is their link with their denomination back home, while for others it is the desire to worship

‘This is the challenge of hospitality, an active first step towards the other that allows for, in the words of John O’Donohue, the “transfiguration of anonymity into intimacy and presence”. It offers community, where in the sharing of the simplest everyday events and concerns, something deeper happens: the “host” becomes the “guest” and the “guest” the “host”.

Being part of a community means learning to live with the dignity of difference in mutual love and respect, and a way of participation that develops everyone’s sense of belonging.’

Part of a reflection by Helen Young (IECI) for the Women’s World Day of Prayer, 2013 www.catholicbishops.ie/2013/02/05/womens-world-day-prayer-2013/

'When you get into problems you get a label and people looked at me as that label instead of an individual. I was labelled as an illegal immigrant and as such they didn't want to know. However, Christians look at the person themselves and want to help them as an individual. When I got out [of prison] I had no job, no place, nothing. Christians are the only people who will help you out of these situations. They fight for our human rights as a person and embrace you as a person. How many people have strangers in their homes when they don't know anything about them? They took that risk when they took me in – they didn't know me – that is being a Christian.'

Mavis Henry, a South African nurse now living in Belfast, talking about her experience following imprisonment while her papers were sorted out www.eauk.org/_nostrangers/stories/mavis-henry.html

in their native language. These topics were addressed at the conference as participants looked at the biblical basis of multi-ethnic churches and affirmed that the church in Antioch in Acts 11 is a picture of a fellowship of Christ-followers which cuts across society barriers of race, religion and culture. It was this radically diverse group that was first given the name 'Christian'. The hope was that conversations started at the conference would be continued in local congregations as the parish representatives travelled back to their churches. As one person noted, 'The most valuable part of the day was time for group conversation, as together we grappled with local problems and possibilities.'

A further conference was held in 2013. Kwadwo Akuffo from Waterford said

Our churches should be home to all ... multi-ethnic churches should be a great place to reach out and offer Christ's compassion. Let us stand united and be the change we want to see. ... Our society is changing, not static, and becoming increasingly diverse. It has become imperative that we embrace people from different cultures.

www.edgehillcollege.org/reconciliation-programme/whats-now-for-multi-ethnic-churches/

It is hoped to hold a similar gathering Northern Ireland, involving churches across the denominations.

Dublin Central Mission, Home Missions and the Methodist Missionary Society have been exploring how best to support multi-ethnic congregations. Early in 2014 there was a survey of ministers and lay people, about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges created because of increasing diversity within the church in Ireland.

The **Church of Ireland** three-year Hard Gospel project (2005–2008) aimed to improve the ways in which the church deals with difference, at all levels, including the challenge of immigration and ethnic difference. A six-part course on *Loving our Neighbours* was distributed to all rectors and it included a session on 'Welcoming the Stranger'. In 2007–08 diocesan consultations culminated in an all-Ireland 'Pilgrim People' conference on immigration in January 2008 (see also page 158). Some dioceses planned welcome strategies and appointed advisers on diversity and migration. It was hoped that Reflect and Act Courses would help parishes to identify the needs of migrants and engage at a local level.

Embracing Difference: the Church of Ireland in a Plural Society by Patrick Comerford was published in 2007 under the auspices of the Society and Justice Theology (Republic of Ireland) Group of the Church in Society Committee. While the background material is about the southern experiences, the Bible studies, worship materials and action points are valid north of the border. http://ireland.anglican.org/cmsfiles/pdf/Information/CIPLeimb_diff.pdf

Numbers of people from world faiths other than Christianity have increased, especially in the Republic of Ireland. The Church of Ireland set up an Inter Faith Working Group, which held a series of workshops in different venues in 2012–13. The one in Belfast focussed on 'Education for Understanding'. The Church of Ireland had already produced *Guidelines for Interfaith Events & Dialogue* in 2008 <http://ireland.anglican.org/index.php?do=information&id=158>

(In the 2011 census there were 16,592 people who said they were brought up in a religion other than Christian in Northern Ireland, compared to 6569 who acknowledged another religion or philosophy in 2001.)

The Presbyterian, Methodist, Church of Ireland and Catholic Churches and Belfast City Vineyard Church have contributed money over a three-year period towards an EMBRACE development worker and administrative work. This funding, plus a grant from the OFMDFM Minority Ethnic Development Fund, has enabled the employment of Aneta Dabek as development worker with the churches. You can read more about Aneta and her work in the EMBRACE newsletters from Summer 2010 onwards on the EMBRACE web site. www.embraceni.org/category/about-us/embrace-resources/ You can also see what Aneta can deliver at www.embraceni.org/category/about-us/talks-training-workshops/

Quakers raise awareness among their members through workshops, seminars and regular exchange of information. They also work closely with other churches and faiths. With the co-operation of the NI Prison Service, Quaker Service has a volunteer programme, **Quaker Connections**, to provide visits to isolated individuals in Maghaberry Prison, including visits to foreign nationals who often have no friends or family within reach. It is hoped that this service may be extended to other sites in the future. Volunteers from are also available at Maghaberry to provide support to family and friends coming to visit their loved ones in prison. www.ulsterquakerservice.com/index.php

Christian groups such as **Evangelical Alliance** have worked to raise consciousness around social justice issues. They produced a briefing advice booklet, *Alltogether for Asylum Justice: Asylum Seekers' Conversion to Christianity*, which examines how persecuted Christians and Christian converts are treated in the UK asylum system. www.eauk.org/current-affairs/publications/alltogether-for-asylum-justice.cfm Evangelical Alliance also initiated the important 'Don't Be A Stranger' campaign in 2008, to challenge and inspire Christians by showcasing the stories of migrants who have come to the UK and those who are working to make them feel welcome. www.eauk.org/_nostrangers/upload/DBAS-Booklet-pdf.pdf In January 2009 Evangelical Alliance facilitated The 'World on our Doorstep' (WOOD) event, with **Mission Agencies Partnership (MAP)**, which aimed to educate and empower Christians to reach out to the ever-growing numbers of minority-ethnic people coming here. MAP has gone on to run two more WOOD events. In February 2011 their keynote speaker, Dick Dowsett, warned of the danger of mono-cultural churches 'where everyone thinks like me and I can understand them all', an attitude that runs counter to the internationalism of the early Church.

As the N Ireland sub office of **Global Connections**, the UK evangelical network for world mission (www.globalconnections.org.uk), MAP is a group of around 45 mission agencies. They can offer churches tailor made events to suit their congregation and community and have mission resources for children, youth, young adults, families and retirees. To find out more visit www.mapmission.org, E-mail info@mapmission.org or telephone 07545235991.

The **Irish Churches Peace Project (ICPP)** was launched in September 2013. It is a partnership between the Roman Catholic,

'For me the Bible actually speaks about people moving across lands in very positive ways. It challenges the Israelites that if they did not welcome the stranger – or orphan, or widow, or people who are moving from country to country – with respect and dignity, then their own identity, their own sense of who God is for them, was brought into question.'

Rev Arlington Trotman quoted in the Don't be a Stranger booklet www.eauk.org/_nostrangers/upload/DBAS-Booklet-pdf.pdf

EMBRACE Activities

Information

EMBRACE produces regular newsletters, circulated electronically and through our mailing list, this annual information update, a monthly prayer letter, fact sheets and leaflets on particular issues, and information on the web site, including advice to churches on signposting people from other countries who are in crisis situations. There is also a small resource library that you can use if you contact **Jill Marrs**, Administrative Assistant, in advance. Committee members are also involved in speaking engagements, workshops and training events. Since 2011 EMBRACE has been able to offer a **Migration Awareness** session to churches and has recently added training on **Responding to Racism at a Local Level**. For more about resources see pages 155–7.

Translation Service for Church Notices

EMBRACE development worker Aneta Dabek has set up a service to help churches to communicate information about events and activities (up to 60 words). This is available for languages commonly used in Northern Ireland. Maybe you would be able to offer your services in translating church notices? You can contact Aneta at 077 3137 8037 or aneta@embraceni.org.

Workshop Events

Since 2010 EMBRACE has run workshops events for church people in Templepatrick, Newry, South Belfast, Bangor, Derry~Londonderry, Ballymena, Craigavon, Antrim, Carrickfergus, Newtownabbey, Markethill and Enniskillen, to help build confidence for people in churches who want to make a start in their own setting by say, organising a language class, or a friendship club, learning more about hospitality etc. and finding out a little about some of the problems that may face vulnerable migrants. Wherever people are eager to learn, EMBRACE should be able to organise a local event.

Emergency Fund

There are gaps in provision for foreign nationals who find themselves in crisis situations and are ineligible for state support (see pages 126–35). This fund receives donations from groups and individuals. EMBRACE distributes money to meet a range of needs, following requests from organisations such as NICRAS (the NI Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers), NICEM, The Welcome Organisation, Homeplus, Bryson One Stop Service, CWA (Chinese Welfare Association) and Belfast Education and Library Board, Education Welfare. In each case there is no recourse to public funds to meet the needs. The fund has paid for flights home for destitute migrant workers to a range of countries and provided hostel accommodation and food for destitute migrant workers and people seeking asylum. It has also contributed towards repatriation and funeral costs and paid prescription charges. It has paid for bus fares for Roma children and children seeking asylum who would otherwise be unable to attend secondary school, as well as providing school uniforms (see pages 8 and 63–4).

Contributions from the Dean of Belfast's Black Santa Christmas Sitouts from 2010 to 2013, have allowed EMBRACE to offer support to some very vulnerable people during the worst of the winter weather.

EMBRACE On the Street

This EMBRACE project raises awareness of migrant destitution and provides practical assistance through the donation of items such as clothing, bedding, sleeping bags, towels, toiletries and non-perishable foodstuffs. Collections are undertaken by a variety of churches on a rota basis. The regular contributors include (in Belfast unless otherwise stated) Crescent Church; Fitzroy Presbyterian; Kirkpatrick Memorial Presbyterian; Lowe Memorial Presbyterian (Finaghy); Portaferry and Glaslough Methodist Church; Templepatrick Presbyterian;

Waringstown Presbyterian; and Carnlough Methodist Fellowship, with others contributing from time to time. Special thanks are due to Edgehill Theological College where the items have been stored before being distributed via specific aid organisations (for example Homeplus, the Simon Community, St Vincent de Paul, the Welcome Organisation and the NI Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (NICRAS)) to destitute people. The actual requests for donations vary depending on the time of year and current need of the aid organisations.

If you would like your church to be involved in the EMBRACE On the Street project contact **Ashleigh Hunter** at Edgehill College. Tel. **028 90686933** or E-mail rec@edgehillcollege.org or contact the EMBRACE office Tel. (028) 9066 3145 or E-mail info@embraceni.org

Presbyterian, Church of Ireland and Methodist Churches and the Irish Council of Churches, with the vision statement 'A peaceful and stable society, ... a shared and better future'. The project will map existing good relations work, including that led by churches. The major focus is on addressing our local community conflict but the project should help to produce a better-integrated society for everyone and EMBRACE has already been working on a pilot project along with the Good Relations Officer for Newry and Mourne. Read more about the ICPP at www.icpp.info. Find the project worker in your area at www.icpp.info/contact

The **Corrymeela Community** continues to provide annual holiday breaks for refugees and people seeking asylum and some of its members are involved in the City of Sanctuary movement here (see page 53).

In January 2011 **North Down YMCA** hosted a Good Relations conference, 'Challenges for Integration'. Minority Ethnic Development Worker, Elaine Rowan said 'It's about opening up our community to all ... We have a unique opportunity here, to really experience the richness of our increasingly diverse social fabric and today's conference is a chance for us to talk about how we can make the most of this in the future.' They run a renewal project in the Harbour Ward, Bangor, which includes activities such as advice, information and integration support for minority-ethnic people; English language classes; an international homework club for migrant children; a migrant youth club; and a meeting point and resource centre for the Polish Association of Co. Down. <http://northdownymca.org/index.php/community/harbour-renewal-project>

Across the denominations, congregations, inter-church forums, parish and community projects, individuals and specialist groups continue to be involved in a range of activities from diversity training, language teaching, conversation classes and parent and toddler groups, to Bible study and drop-in centres. It would be helpful if a mapping exercise could identify all these activities so that people could be inspired by examples of good practice.

Migrant-Led Churches

Some local churches are led by migrant people. In December 2008 the All-Ireland Churches Consultative Meeting on Racism (AICCMR) (see pages 155 and 167) produced a **Directory of Migrant-led Churches and Chaplaincies**. Dr Scott Boldt (then EMBRACE chairperson), Yvonne Naylor, Rob Fairmichael and Naomi Brown carried out the research in

'What was the most valuable aspect of the workshops for you and why?

"To find like-minded people who are willing to reach out and have a vision of inclusion".

Feedback from an EMBRACE workshop event

the north. The booklet provides a snapshot in time, but has been updated from time to time on the Irish Council of Churches web site. At the time of publication the group identified 361 new local Christian communities, congregations or chaplaincies run by migrants and for migrants in Ireland, of which 33 were in Northern Ireland. There is some work being done at present to check the entries on the database, as these Christian groups are liable to change over the years. Entries from the directory can be found on the Irish Council of Churches web site. www.irishchurches.org/resources/migrant-churches

Fr Irenaeus du Plessis, of the Antiochian Church of St Ignatius Belfast, launched the booklet, with an address emphasising the positive potential in the situation. Christians are all strangers on this earth with a theology that instructs them to make foreigners welcome. 'If we despise people here, what will we say to them in the hereafter?' 'The womb of the church is much wider than our concept.' He described his own church of St Ignatius in North Belfast as a house of prayer for all nations. It is housed in the former St James' Church of Ireland building on the corner of Antrim Road and Cliftonville Road, Belfast. People from many countries, including Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine attend services and find fellowship there. They have a pan-orthodox policy and a Romanian Orthodox congregation also uses the church. www.antiochian-orthodox.co.uk/Parishes/belfast.htm

Other churches listed in the directory include the Chinese church in Belfast, as well as African congregations; Indian Orthodox; a Polish Mission Church and Chaplaincies; Romanian Orthodox and Romanian Pentecostal; and Syrian Orthodox congregations.

Inter-Church Structures

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) is an umbrella body for Christian Churches. It liaises with ecumenical bodies in Great Britain and Ireland as well as ecumenical organisations at European and world levels. It provides a forum for joint decision-making, and enables the Churches to take action together. www.ctbi.org.uk An inter-denominational study group convened by CTBI has published a pamphlet on *Asylum Principles* and more recently *Migration Principles: Statement for Churches Working on Migration Issues*, a broad statement of principles and suggested action. www.ctbi.org.uk/253 There used to be a CTBI **Racial Justice Network** but it has ceased to exist recently along with other CTBI networks. There are still a number of useful resources on the CTBI web site, including materials for use by churches on Racial Justice Sunday, each September. www.ctbi.org.uk/ICB/14 The asylum toolbox includes advice for ministers called to give evidence in support of asylum applications, particularly regarding the basis of the applicant's Christian faith. www.ctbi.org.uk/102

In Ireland, the **Irish Council of Churches** includes the mainstream Protestant churches. The **Irish Inter-Church Meeting** includes the Catholic Church and the ICC members.

The Irish Council of Churches organised a study day in 2010 in Belfast, with the theme, A World on the Move – Migration and Mission. Keynote speaker Dr Afe Adogame of the University of Edinburgh, gave two wide-ranging presentations which included analysis of the relationship of religion

to migration, the similarity in the processes of migration and mission, and the positive nature of reverse mission, as evangelists from Africa, for example, bring their gifts to what they see as the new 'dark continent' of Europe. A number of EMBRACE members and people from local churches with migrant membership contributed, including Pastor Chris Ifonlaja of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (Place of Victory for All Nations) whose congregation meets in the Europa Hotel, Belfast.

The **All-Ireland Churches Consultative on Racism (AICCMR)** was set up in 2003 to 'provide an all-island focus and vision' to complement the work of other Christian agencies in the field such as the Parish-based Integration Project (PIP) (see page 155) and Refugee and Migrant Project (see page 159) (both no longer in existence), Churches Asylum Network (CAN), and EMBRACE. Research by the late Fee Ching Leong was published by the AICCMR in November 2005 as *The Experiences, Expectations and Aspirations of Black and Minority-Ethnic People in Relation to the Churches' Role in Tackling Racism*. The interviews undertaken for this research reveal the shortcomings within the Churches in responding to the needs of minority-ethnic people, and this was discussed at a major conference in November 2005, **Challenged by Difference: Threat or Enrichment**. Initiatives such as this two-day conference, as well as Taste and See, an inter-church, inter-cultural worship/prayer celebration held in Dublin and Belfast, gave an opportunity to explore new inter-church connections through input, dialogue and informal conversation. In 2011 the AICCMR brought together 45 church leaders from across Ireland at Wood Quay, Dublin for a day of 'Listening and Learning.' The gathering intentionally brought together people from newer, migrant-led churches and the longer established churches in Ireland. Participants explored the changing landscape of the church as well as inter-church connections that already exist. The gathering provided an opportunity for people to begin building relationships with others across the denominations.

AICCMR publications include *Inter-Cultural Insights: Christian Reflections on Racism, Hospitality and Identity from the Island of Ireland* edited by Scott Boldt. www.embraceni.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/InterCultural%20Insights%5B1%5D1.pdf Their *Directory of Migrant-led Churches and Chaplaincies* documented over 360 new faith communities (see page 165–6). Recognising the key role of Scripture in exploring the Christian response to the presence of newcomers, AICCMR also produced a revised and expanded edition of *What the Bible Says about the Stranger* (see page 155). In looking at the new realities, AICCMR came to recognise that the modest foundation which it had laid was now being built on by diverse groups and in a variety of ways; so it felt that its work had come to an end and it was time to encourage and support 'new things' whose time had come.

The Dublin-based **Parish-Based Integration Project (PIP)** ran between 2007–10 to assist Churches with the practical integration of immigrants in parishes and congregations. They published *Unity and Diversity in Our Churches* (see page 155). PIP Integration Officer, Adrian Cristea had a major role in the development of the Affirmations on Migration Diversity and Interculturalism (see below page 168).

The Churches have been invited to report on their progress in taking action on the issues raised by the affirmations.

Being An Inclusive Church

'We gather as one local worshipping community, just one small part of the whole People of God, one wonderful snapshot of the rich diversity of Jesus' followers today. We represent just some of the colours and customs, backgrounds and cultures, histories and traditions that together form the Church.'

Worship resources for Racial Justice Sunday 2012 www.ctbi.org.uk/BCBA/588

'For Christians coming from various parts of the world, attention to the religious dimension also entails ecumenical dialogue and the care of new communities, while for the Catholic faithful it involves, among other things, establishing new pastoral structures and showing esteem for the various rites, so as to foster full participation in the life of the local ecclesial community.'

Message of Pope Benedict XVI for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 2013 www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/migration/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20121012_world-migrants-day_en.html

'I am both amazed and impressed at the innovative role that Churches and faith-based communities have played in providing a positive response to migration and supporting the integration of new communities. ... Within this City, Churches and faith communities have had a long tradition of hospitality and inclusiveness. Following the recent increase in migration to Belfast they were one of the first to quickly apply this tradition of welcome to new communities. Within a short space of time, many Churches were providing advocacy and support initiatives. English language classes were organised. Opportunities to encourage dialogue and understanding between communities were developed. Much of this work was going on below the radar, without funding and dependent on the good will of volunteers.'

Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Pat Convery, at the launch of the Churches' Affirmations Building a Welcoming Community No. 18, 2010 www.embraceni.org/wp-content/uploads/2006/04/8885-Embrace-NL-AW-FINAL.pdf

(Similar sets of affirmations have been developed elsewhere e.g. in Australia. www.icmc.net/system/files/news/welcoming_the_stranger_affirmations_for_faith_lea_11422.pdf)

The Churches' Affirmations

The Irish Inter-Church Committee and its constituent churches, in issuing these Affirmations, recognise the significant changes over the past decade in the fabric of our Church communities and of society as a whole. We are seeking to ensure that the following Affirmations, founded on Gospel values, will inform and drive the plans, processes and programmes of our Churches as they, individually and together, strive to live out the mission of Christ in an increasingly diverse and intercultural society. We affirm our commitment as Christian Churches:

1. *To recognise and appreciate cultural and ethnic diversity as gifts of God, and to ensure that these gifts are reflected in the life of the Church.*
2. *To foster faith communities where the rights of each person are respected and where scope is provided for each person's potential to be realised.*
3. *To work towards inclusive communities, paying particular attention to addressing racism and xenophobia in attitudes, actions, practices and policies.*
4. *To explore and adopt ways of worship, systems of administration and other structures so that they fully respond to and reflect the Church membership.*
5. *To defend the rights of migrants in accordance with international and national laws and standards on migration.*
6. *To advocate for the rights of all migrants, and in particular their right to family life.*
7. *To support and assist migrants in appropriate, practical ways in their efforts to integrate in Church and society.*
8. *To establish networks with migrant-led Churches and chaplaincies by fostering co-operation and collaboration with them in providing pastoral care and support to migrants.*
9. *To seek the development of appropriate services for migrants and to draw attention to the need for public services generally to be responsive to the circumstances of migrants.*
10. *To work together as Churches and to network with people of other faiths and none to promote a greater understanding between denominations and other faiths and none, ensuring the growth of a society based on respect, dignity and equal rights for all its members.*

Research on Church Responses to Migration

Many churches have already responded to the challenge of increased migration and diversity with warmth and imagination, but a survey of faith leaders and laity in Ireland in 2009, by Dr Gladys Glaniel of the Irish School of Ecumenics, revealed that such actions are patchy. www.ecumenics.ie/research/visioning-21st-century-ecumenism/

The northern survey revealed that

- 62% of lay people stated that there are immigrants or minority-ethnic people in their congregations.
- 55% of clergy and faith leaders said that they had preached or taught on immigration, diversity or welcoming strangers in the previous 12 months.
- 44% of clergy, pastors, ministers, and faith leaders said they had never done anything to accommodate minority-ethnic people.
- 19% said that the languages of minority-ethnic people had been used in services during the last 12 months. (This was more common under the heading 'Other Christians' which may well include migrant-led churches.)

We ... asked clergy to provide examples of what they had done, that was out of the ordinary, to accommodate ethnic minorities. Examples included assisting with asylum claims/tribunal hearings, financial support for accommodation, education, transportation or other needs, assistance in finding jobs, translation of bibles, sermons, or other reading materials, providing English language classes, conducting open air religious services in areas where ethnic minorities live, visiting Chinese takeaways with religious materials, organising cultural evenings in which people share food and customs from their native lands; inviting ethnic minorities to take part in St Patrick's Day celebrations; visiting their homes; organizing special welcoming committees or parish groups; encouraging prayer during worship services in native languages; using the music and dance from immigrants' home countries in religious services; helping children settle into schools; use of church buildings, halls and car parks; and including special sections for newcomers on congregational websites. Some clergy remarked that such activities should not be considered out of the ordinary – for them, these were the 'ordinary' works of charity with which Christians should be engaged.

Extract from the faith leader survey
www.ecumenics.ie/wp-content/uploads/Clergy-Survey-Report.pdf

Clergy were asked about how they had preached and taught about immigration, diversity and welcoming strangers and some included the practical difficulties facing people. These are some of the northern responses.

'Preached about justice in and outside the workplace, especially with rents and accommodation.'

On the other hand, some leaders reported that their preaching focus came partly because of resistance in their congregations to making special accommodation for minority-ethnic people.

'Matthew 25 (welcoming the stranger) is very important to me, especially as one of my churches has a habit of getting rid of strangers.'

Others regretted their own shortcomings.

'I cannot minister very effectively – can only smile, and speak & pray in English.'

'One might say that the mustard seed which gave birth to AICCMR has died and given birth to a tree with many branches – signs of the presence of many new inter-church initiatives which in diverse ways strive to promote an integrated, inclusive society where each person finds a place and where the dignity of each is recognised and respected.'

Sr Joan Roddy, chairperson of AICCMR reflecting on the end of its work

'The immigration and integration issue is not merely a challenge: it is an opportunity to lead. ... A new model is emerging: the multicultural parish, driven by the increasing diversification of immigrant groups. It is a model for the future.'

Extracts from Adrian Cristea's final report and reflections on the Parish-Based Integration Project in the Irish Council of Churches 2010 Annual Report www.irishchurches.org/cmsfiles/resources/Reports/2010AnnualWeb.pdf

'The Affirmations are important because their aim is fundamental to Christian life and witness; the ministry to the newcomer in any community is the clear call of the Gospel.'

Editorial in the Church of Ireland Gazette, 2 July 2010 www.gazette.ireland.anglican.org/2010/020710/index020710.html

'Churches that have reached out and embraced newcomers have been re-vitalised, grown in numbers and been blessed. Churches who have learned to share their space, to face the challenges of inter-culturalism and to accept people warmly into their community are reaping the rewards of their love. They are also being challenged to confront serious social issues (e.g. racism and human trafficking) and to look at their way of doing things (e.g. welcome and worship).'

Part of a theological reflection on migration by Dr Scott Boldt, Director of Edgehill Reconciliation Programme, Belfast, 2007

The lay survey also revealed a mixture of responses. Here are two contributions from Belfast:

'Immigrants give us a global perspective on our faith and remind the church of our underlying unity in Christ. ... A church composed of such people is a foretaste of heaven which will consist of people of every race, tribe and language.'

'The most challenging aspect of ethnic minorities is to keep all of them equally cared for and happy. All tend to have slight variations on practices such as prostrations and bowing or kneeling ... however our priest states repeatedly that there is no need to conform to Antiochian practices and that it is equally acceptable to stand or to kneel if this is what people are used to.'

European Churches and Migrants

In 2008, the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) – A branch of the **Conference of European Churches (CEC)** – and the Nova Research Centre produced a study, *Mapping Migration, Mapping Churches' Responses; Europe Study*. As well as describing patterns of migration in modern Europe, it examined theological approaches to migration, the differing church responses to migrants and migration and stories from some migrant Christians. One emphasis is on migration and Pentecost:

If the Gospel is to speak to people with intimacy and more than a veneer of spirituality then it must be spoken in their mother tongue. This stresses the importance and beauty of the language and culture of every person who is addressed.

The authors suggest that an appropriate Christian response to policy-makers must pay proper attention to

- The essential unity of the 'one human race' (or humanity)
- The reality of nationhood
- The fact that national borders are permeable to people but not necessarily to values
- The loving care and welfare of the alien
- The rights of immigrants
- Reminding immigrants of their responsibilities within the host society
- Urging a willingness to integrate the migrant
- Urging a similar willingness on the part of the migrant to accept integration
- Compassion for the vulnerable
- The Church as a model of cross-cultural community.

www.ccme.be/fileadmin/filer/ccme/20_Areas_of_Work/30_Migration_2010/2009-07-04_CCME_Publ_-_Mapping_migration_-_Mapping_Churches_responses.pdf

See also the multi-lingual *Theological Reflections on Migration; a CCME Reader*, Brussels 2008. http://migration.ceceurope.org/fileadmin/filer/mig/10_migration_2010/2008_CCME_Reader_-_Theological_Reflections_on_Migration.pdf

Under the auspices of CCME, 30 representatives of churches (including migrant-led churches) from six European countries met in 2009 to

Aneta's Story

I am a migrant and I was a stranger. ... When you are a stranger you don't feel secure and safe – you don't know what to expect from the people around you and the place where you are. ... I am from Poland. My husband and I came to Northern Ireland six years ago ... we found a local church and started to go there regularly. I don't know for whom our presence at the church was more difficult, for the church or for us. Having someone in your congregation who doesn't speak and understand almost any English is hard, very hard. Understanding hardly any word from the sermon is hard too. Later on someone told me that at that time I was a 'funny' girl, because whatever I was told or asked I always just smiled. I couldn't even say a word – people at church didn't stop to talk to me. They invited us for meals and they tried to have contact with us – even though we didn't speak English very well. It was a struggle for both sides. But it was very good for us and allowed us to learn the language. And it gave us something more – this feeling that we were not alone, that someone cares about us, and the knowledge that if you are in trouble you can count on someone. It gave a kind of security to our lives. I felt, and feel, very welcome in this country and I found that local people are very nice.

Aneta Dabek, EMBRACE development worker

discuss best practice models for the active participation of migrants in the life of European churches. They considered concepts like 'integration', 'identity', 'mainstream churches' and 'migrant churches'. Recent migrants underlined the importance of the initial welcome in traditional European churches, which is often disappointing. 'Newly arrived are knocking on the doors of European churches – can we still hear them?' one participant asked. Others highlighted the need for greater inclusiveness: 'We cannot limit ourselves to filling empty church benches.' Some other participants asked, self-critically, if migrant-led churches tended to be too self-sufficient and not making enough effort to relate to traditional churches. Participants learned about secular methods of attracting migrants to become members of political parties and trade unions and about a project to test these methods in a religious context. Over the following 15 months, a series of events and training examined how best to become united in diversity. www.ceceurope.org/news-and-media/news/?tx_ttnews%5BpS%5D=1237545471&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=141&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=229&cHash=51ae331922

The pilot **Miracle Project** (Models of Integration through Religion, Cultural Learning and Exchange) was co-ordinated by CCME. It examined the processes by which Churches and other faith groups can assist the process of the integration of migrants, and how secular models of migrant participation can be adapted by churches. It produced a Miracle Guide for churches. www.ccme.be/areas-of-work/uniting-in-diversity/miracle/

The CCME web site also contains material on immigration and asylum issues such as trafficking and the right to residence of long-term migrants. www.ccme.be/

In a press release after the **Thirteenth Conference of European Churches (CEC)** in Lyon in 2009, the following declaration was made.

While we eagerly work for, and anticipate, a reconciled and united Europe, we mourn that new walls of separation are being erected between nations, cultures and religions. We see new divisions appearing – between the settled and the migrating, rich and poor,

The Light of Christ shines upon all!

'We recommend that our Churches should recognize that Christian immigrants are not just the recipients of religious care but that they can play a full and active role in the life of the Church and of society; offer better pastoral care for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees; and promote the rights of ethnic minorities in Europe, particularly the Roma people.'

One of the recommendations accompanying the message from the 3rd European Ecumenical Assembly, Sibiu, Romania, September 2007 www.eea3.org/document/final/FinalmessageEN.pdf

‘... many believe that the Lord dispersed languages in order to punish the human beings, but the exact opposite is true. He saw that uniformity made them disdainful and used to excessive and useless activities. Therefore He realised that humanity needed a remedy and gave us the gift of differences ...’

Wu Ming quoted in the MIRACLE Guide www.ccme.be/fileadmin/filer/ccme/70_DOWNLOADS/20_Publications/2010-06-Guide_English_final.pdf

‘Migration is an intrinsic part of the DNA of a globalised economy and a globalised world. Do we really accept this and what are the consequences? ... At the root of this affirmation is the fundamental principle of the interdependence of all of us as members of the one human family. When God created humankind he created us as a family, with obligations and responsibilities toward each other.’

Address by Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, Diarmuid Martin at the Journeying Together Conference, 2014, (see page 160) www.catholicbishops.ie/2014/02/19/speeches-conference-journeying-together-challenges-facing-migrant-today/

employed and unemployed, those whose rights are respected and those whose rights are put aside. ... At this CEC Assembly we have celebrated closer co-operation with the Churches’ Commission for Migrants in Europe. This will be further manifested in 2010, a year of ‘European churches responding to migration’, when together we have the opportunity to witness to our Christian commitment to refugees and migrants.

There were monthly themes on the **Migration 2010** web site. <http://migration.ceceurope.org/index.php?id=627>

The CEC call to value migrant people was accompanied by the following commitment for churches:

- to speak out publicly against violations of migrants’ rights and to denounce any acts of racial discrimination and institutional racism
- to set up and maintain services for the vulnerable among migrants and refugees in Europe
- to address fears in societies about migration and to facilitate churches’ initiatives on finding ways to live peacefully together
- to include migrants who are fellow Christians as equal members of our churches and to encourage their full participation and leadership within the churches, and to promote fraternal relations with migrants and minority-ethnic churches
- to commemorate those who have died on their journey to find a dignified life in Europe through an annual day of prayer
- to support and accompany churches living under critical conditions in other parts of the world

They agreed as churches in Europe to ask the public authorities

- to improve the social and legal protection of the most vulnerable migrants in particular of trafficked persons
 - to ensure basic human rights of undocumented migrants, particularly those in detention centres
 - to remove legal and other obstacles to the family life of migrant
 - to guarantee effective access to refugee protection for those in need
 - to create a clear legal framework to combat racism
 - to refrain from any discriminatory legal or administrative measures which result in the singling out of particular racial groups
 - to strengthen development aid amongst the poorest of the world
- assembly.ceceurope.org/fileadmin/filer/asse/Assembly/Documents/Official_documents/GEN_PUB_1_EN_Migration_Final.pdf

The 14th CEC Assembly took place in Budapest, Hungary, 3–8 July 2013. Its theme was “And now what are you waiting for?” CEC and its Mission in a Changing Europe, ‘inspired by the passage from Acts 22:14-16 which refers to witness, a sense of urgency, mission and the challenges of a changing Europe.’ <http://assembly2013.ceceurope.org/>

An extract from the message from the conference to member Churches:

Be transformed by the renewing of your minds

(Romans 12.2)

... This transformation is ... a call to solidarity. We reaffirm our Christian commitment to welcome the stranger and offer hospitality and shelter to those who are in need. Our aim is therefore to reinforce the Christian witness in a secularising Europe. We will also comfort the sufferings of the oppressed, seek justice, build reconciliation and grow peace. ...

http://assembly2013.ceceurope.org/fileadmin/filer/cec/2013_Assembly-Documents/2013_Assembly_Documents/GEN_MES_03_Final_Report_Message_Committee_EN_FINAL__2_.pdf

CCME has responded to a European Union consultation on the Future of Home Affairs Policies: ‘An open and safe Europe – what next?’ They make the following points about the treatment of people from outside Europe.

- **Family life** and the **right to family reunification** should be seen as crucial in refugee protection, migration procedures and integration.
- **Anti-discrimination policies** must be an integral part of asylum and migration policy
- **Preventing and addressing destitution:** CCME regards the right to benefit from basic services as a human right regardless of residence status (see also pages 126–35).
- **Legislation to prevent criminalisation of humanitarian assistance to migrants** (This is partly a reaction to the threat of prosecution for ships captains who pick up irregular migrants in distress in the Mediterranean Sea, see also page 38.)
- **The implementation of a Common European Asylum System (CEAS):** (The EU has been working towards a CEAS since 1999. http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum/index_en.htm)
- **The resettlement of refugees:** CCME would like to see the number of resettlement refugees increased and reach 20,000. (See also information about programme refugees page 48)
- **Alternatives to the current ‘Dublin’ system:** This refers to the regulation by which refugees must seek asylum in the first European country they reach, even if it does not have the mechanisms to protect their needs (see page 44).

‘There are three major themes in this conversation on Diaspora. Around the globe, 200 million people now live and work outside their homeland. God is moving people around demographically and moving them spiritually to be receptive to the gospel (Acts 17: 26-27). The Church is uniquely called, empowered and mandated for this task of discipling the diaspora people. Second, to reach people on the move by identifying opportunities and challenges we are facing in this borderless world – geographically, digitally, organizationally. People on the move are highly receptive to change and to explore new alternatives, including reexamining traditional religious worldviews. Third, to explain the important mission strategy of mobilizing Christians in the diasporas to be kingdom influences.’

The Lausanne Movement Global Conversation in connection with the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization, Cape Town 2010

'Churches, as well as NGOs and service providers, are often confronted with the dilemma of not being able to provide services for migrants due to a lack resources or restrictions on the use public funding for people who do not have a regular migration status. The EU should develop instruments to guarantee migrants' access to basic services and facilities including food, healthcare, accommodation and other homeless services (such as hygiene facilities, laundry and storage), debt counselling, and free or affordable language courses. The necessary financial and human resources should be put at the disposal of service-providing organisations to enable them to work effectively with all people experiencing destitution, including migrants.'

Contribution by Christian organisations to the consultation on the Future of Home Affairs Policies: An Open and Safe Europe – What Next?, CCME, 2014

- **A comprehensive rights-based framework for labour migration:** CCME argues that, in spite of current high levels of unemployment, greater numbers of migrant workers will be needed in future and that a specific directive about the conditions of entry and residence of people from outside Europe would be helpful.
- **Assisted voluntary return should be prioritised** over forced return. 'Where return is not possible for technical or other reasons, or where it would be inhumane, people should not be left in limbo and should be granted a legal status to remain.'
- **Integration** should be a two-way process which must go hand-in-hand with social inclusion.
- **Alternatives** to detention (see pages 70 and 71) should be developed and integrated.
- The **EU Anti-Trafficking Directive** should be fully implemented, especially the elements of prevention and protection.
- **Free movement** needs clearer rules with regard to EU citizens who are economically inactive.

The document also stresses the need for 'a facts-based debate' about migration so that alarmist discourse does not allow scapegoating and the erosion of human rights in Europe.

www.ccme.be/fileadmin/filer/ccme/20_Areas_of_Work/01_Refugee_Protection/2014-01-21-Christian_org_Future_Migration-Asylum.pdf

Building Welcoming Congregations

Richard Kerr of the Presbyterian Race Relations Panel and EMBRACE has the following suggestions:

Use initiative in exploring options. Find out what is appropriate in your situation and for those you meet. What works elsewhere may be a good pointer, but may well need adaptation for your situation and your gifts and resources. Perseverance is an important attribute; if at first you don't succeed try and try again. Some things may work, others (perhaps inexplicably) won't. It is important to network with other churches, statutory organisations and non-government organisations (NICEM, MCRC [now Bryson Intercultural], Law Centre and ourselves in EMBRACE for example). Commitment is required to make things happen and to build relationships. Within your congregation there will be a need to inform and persuade members and leaders of the importance of reaching out. This will inevitably demand patience. Being involved may well involve risk; it will not necessarily be easy. Yet, the challenges and opportunities are there to be met, and provide us with an opportunity to share and show the love of Christ.

The authors of *Welcoming Angels*, published by the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin's Working Group on Combating Racism outline 3 stages of Christian welcome

'Genuinely outward-looking': a social welcome

The welcome beginning in the wider society

'Truly welcoming': a welcoming church event

How people are made welcome when they choose to attend a service

'Seriously inclusive': a structural welcome

Celebrating diversity and encouraging participation

Welcoming Angels, Dublin 2005

Some Ideas for Congregational Welcome

(Including some from *Welcoming Angels* and others from Parish-Based Integration Project material)

Some Christians from other countries find that it takes time before they feel fully accepted and at home in a new parish, especially when it comes to being given responsibility (see also page 160). Cecilia Taylor-Camara is now a senior policy advisor on migration for the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. She told the Journeying Together Conference (see page 160) of the delay in feeling welcome in the Catholic church she joined after her family was forced to flee from Sierra Leone to England. Small responsibilities seemed very important.

One morning I was asked to do the First Reading at Mass. Shortly afterwards, I responded to a call for volunteers to staple the booklets for Holy Week. I began to feel a sense of purpose and belonging in the parish community. A few weeks later the parish priest asked to see me in the sacristy after Mass. It was the first day I entered the sacristy and he asked if I would like to become a Catechist for the Saturday class. ... This was a breakthrough. My reply was an emphatic 'Yes Father'.

www.catholicbishops.ie/2014/02/19/speeches-conference-journeying-together-challenges-facing-migrant-today/

- Analyse your local circumstances carefully in order to be able to provide a meaningful welcome for newcomers. Where you find it hard to get a picture of what is happening locally, it may help to talk to others such as community leaders and employers to find out about incomers and how best to get to meet them.
- Ensure that the building is welcoming from the outside, with clear, meaningful, welcoming signs.
- As well as having individuals responsible for welcoming at services, involve the whole congregation in learning about the importance of welcome.
- Welcome should never be overwhelming; people need to take their time before they decide to make a congregation their home.
- Language is very important, and it is helpful if people can be greeted with a phrase or two in their own language. Use plain English in services in order to help those with limited language skills to participate better.
- When praying for people in difficult situations in other countries, ensure that the words do not imply an attitude of patronising pity. It may be helpful to use prayers originating in the country concerned.
- Encourage newcomers to participate, for example, in reading the Bible or taking up the collection/ offertory – small, visible signs of acceptance.
- Include some aspect of the worship tradition from the country of origin, such as a song or a prayer.

'A treasure in your mouth'

... many new people have come to Northern Ireland. ... One of the biggest problems for them is the language barrier – many can't understand and speak English. ... It is very difficult to get necessary information about benefits, legal issues, housing etc. Simple things, such as going to a doctor are not simple because they have to have interpreters. (In emergency cases it is especially difficult.) Helping children with their schoolwork is impossible. Finding a job in a new economic situation is a big achievement. Language problems have also impacted on their mental health and lots of newcomers are experiencing depression. It is not easy to make friends, so many feel very lonely. English-speaking people have treasures in their mouths that are so precious for people who came here recently. Every, even very small, conversation is like an English lesson and an encouragement to learn more.

Aneta Dabek, EMBRACE Development Worker, 2010 [www.embraceni.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/8543_Embrace_NL\[3\].pdf](http://www.embraceni.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/8543_Embrace_NL[3].pdf)

In research with migrant groups in Mid Ulster Dr Ruth McAreavey found that local organisations in civil society were providing an important support role for newcomers and that English language classes in particular 'typically form a gateway to other types of social participation'. Social links and word of mouth are important in settling in and accessing services, and 'at a local level church groups were cited as being extremely positive in acknowledging newcomers'.

Life as a Stranger; the Personal Stories of Migrants to Northern Ireland www.qub.ac.uk/research-centres/TheInstituteofSpatialandEnvironmentalPlanning/FileStore/Fileupload,208543,en.pdf

'So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God.'

Ephesians 2: 19

'The authentic Christian community must always be asking, "Who is being excluded?"'

Archbishop Rowan Williams quoted in Inter-Cultural Insights

- Encourage the participation of newcomers in leadership and promote a sense of belonging and being appreciated.
- Invite members of minority-ethnic churches to take part in special services.
- Hold special services for example, in Refugee Week, Racial Justice Sunday, or Holocaust Memorial Day, and invite members of minority groups to speak or attend.
- Stress the universal nature of your church, as a church for all nations.
- Expect blessings, such as enthusiasm and sense of fellowship, not just problems.

What churches can do together

- Work jointly on information to let new residents know about local churches, church services and activities.
- It is helpful if local church leaders have an agreed policy so that they can respond jointly and immediately if a racist incident occurs. See also below under 'pastoral considerations' and the EMBRACE leaflet 'Responding to Racism' www.embraceni.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Responding-to-Racism-Spring-2013.pdf

Pastoral Considerations

Many people who come here will adjust easily. We need to bear in mind, however, that others find a change of country very difficult. In addition, people who have been forced to flee here, destitute migrant workers or undocumented people all have special difficulties. It is not always easy to understand people's feelings of insecurity, bewilderment, loneliness, suspicion, fears, hopes and needs, when their stories are so different from ours. We need an attitude of openness, respect and sensitivity.

- You may need to do *research* in order to find out where to access expertise – legal, social, and medical.
- You may be pressed to find *time* for people whose multiple problems leave them very emotionally dependent.
- You will need to be aware of special sensitivities, for example, regarding *confidentiality*. Someone left a congregation permanently because he felt shamed at being introduced as 'an asylum seeker' by a person who probably only wanted him to be made especially welcome.
- In responding to a racist incident the natural instinct is to make public your sense of outrage. The victim of the attack must be consulted and may ask for *privacy*. The victim's wishes must then be paramount.
- In some cultures women should never be visited by a man on his own, so it is helpful to make at least initial *pastoral visits in pairs*, a man and a woman.
- Be aware that immigrants and *minority-ethnic groups are not homogeneous*; there is great diversity, and sometimes animosity, within and between ethnic groups.
- It is important to *listen with empathy*. It can be a challenge to hear what someone is feeling and not just the words they are

saying. Different cultures invariably include different modes of expression, even similar words can be understood in different ways, and body language can be significant.

- *You may never know if what people tell you is completely true*, and it is hard to measure up a story when the normal parameters do not apply. You have to take a certain amount on trust, and you may find *cultural signals confusing*. For example, failure to make eye contact may appear a sign of untrustworthiness or trauma, when in reality it may be what is regarded as respectful in the country of origin.
- We all make *cultural mistakes*, whether in assumptions, language or behaviour, such as simply forgetting to remove shoes in an Asian house.
- You may be confronted by *new unpleasant issues*, such as human trafficking. (See pages 73–85)
- You may find yourself *acting at or beyond the edge of the law* and uncertain where the moral and legal boundaries lie, especially when you are relating to people who are here without proper documents.
- Above all you would not be human if you do not experience *frustration and anger, pain and guilt*, as there is often little that can be done to assist in immigration cases, governed by laws and procedures which seem beyond influence.
- You may find yourself involved in *campaigning and advocacy* on behalf of people, such as refused asylum applicants, who may be detained under immigration legislation and ultimately removed or deported. Ensure that you involve other people and groups who have appropriate expertise. Your campaign may not succeed. Seek prayer support and a listening ear for yourself and other supporters who may be left with a deep sense of pain and disillusionment.

There is advice on how best to signpost people from other countries in crisis situations on the EMBRACE web site. www.embraceni.org/category/christian-response/advice-for-churches/

The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust **Multicultural & Beliefs Handbook** may be helpful when relating to people from different cultures or faith backgrounds, especially in the case of illness or bereavement. www.belfasttrust.hscni.net/pdf/BHSCT_MultiCultural_Beliefs_Handbook.pdf

Helping to Build More Inclusive Communities

Christians are not just called to be welcoming within their congregations but also within their private lives and in how they act as part of the wider community.

The command to love your neighbour extends to everybody who lives near you and everybody you meet in the six days between attending church. ... We should avoid thinking of 'church' as simply a 'church' building and instead think of ourselves as the active, committed people of God.

Welcoming Angels, Dublin 2005

'Liturgical expression can ... be very mono-cultural with music and movement (or lack of it) from one tradition. In the parish where I now serve as Parish Priest, we have three choirs, a "folk" choir, an African choir and a Filipino choir. The Filipino choir sings at the main Sunday service on the second Sunday of the month and the African choir on the last Sunday of the month. There would always, however, be at least three hymns in English on those days. This aspect of affirming identity needs to be mainstreamed so that it pervades all that we do.'

Rev. Philip T Sumner from Oldham in England speaking at the All Ireland Churches' Consultative Meeting on Racism (AICCMR) conference, *Challenged by Difference: Threat or Enrichment at Dromantine*, November 2005

'Acts 2:11 "And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" All heard in their own tongue. Members of the early church spoke a variety of languages and came from different cultural backgrounds yet still had a strong sense of belonging.'

From the Parish-Based Integration Project, Unity and Diversity in Our Churches, *advising on the use of language in church*

The value of encouraging contact

Researchers on cross-community projects and their outcomes have concluded that the reduction of sectarianism has an effect on other forms of prejudice.

'Neighbourhood contact had an impact not only on attitude to the other community, but also on attitude to racial minority outgroups: more positive cross-community contact led to less racial prejudice towards ethnic minorities in Northern Ireland.'

Can Contact Promote Better Relations? Evidence from Mixed and Segregated Areas of Belfast, (Summary Report) page 4 www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/can_contact_promote_better_relations_evidence_from_mixed_and_segregated_areas_of_belfast_-_summary_report.pdf

'People deprived of familiar rootedness in family, culture, tradition and geography deserve the next best thing, which is welcome, hospitality and compassionate concern in their new environment.'

Paul Surlis, 'Exile', The Furrow, April 2000 (reproduced in Inter-Cultural Insights)

Extracts from some suggestions by Rt Rev. Dr Ken Newell, former Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland on the subject of racism:

Refocus on the life God calls you to live in your community: 'live a life of love'.

Assess your emotional involvement with the issue: 'Before Hlaleleni from Zimbabwe described the hell of racist abuse she had been put through in an estate in East Belfast, I felt emotionally detached from the problem of racism. After hearing her story of windows smashed, doors kicked in and dog's dirt shovelled in piles on her doorstep, I changed.'

Change your lifestyle: 'Become more socially inclusive. If you rarely have people from different ethnic, religious or cultural backgrounds to your home for a meal, why not adopt a different approach? Open your heart and your home. ... There is nothing more powerful than your neighbours seeing you enjoy the friendship of people from different ethnic and racial backgrounds.'

Open up the issue in your church: 'Compile a dossier of racial attacks in your area. Share this material with your friends in church. Present it to your minister and church leaders. Ask them to discuss it and initiate a positive response in your area. ... Would Jesus be passive if he lived in your neighbourhood? He does!'

From *lion & lamb: racism and religious liberty*, Autumn 2004

At the EMBRACE AGM and Spring Meeting in 2013, keynote speaker Dr Duncan Morrow, former Chief Executive of the Community Relations Council and currently Community Engagement Lead, in the Politics Department at the University of Ulster spoke about the potential role of churches.

There is a key role for churches in building relationships and offering space for people to celebrate their diversity in all its complexity. ... Churches are places which offer sanctuary to the world. ... Language barriers need to be overcome through translation and the tools of learning English. People need places where they can articulate issues. Churches can provide an environment where love is at the core and transformation can take place.

View his presentation at www.embraceni.org/category/about-us/embrace-news/

How We Can Learn from Each Other

- Encourage cultural and ethnic awareness and undertake intercultural, anti-racism or migration awareness training.
- Link with schools and community groups in developing good relationships and planning programmes.
- Hold celebration meals such as harvest suppers where you might invite people from minority-ethnic groups to share their cooking traditions with you.
- Celebrate festivals such as Chinese New Year.
- Visit cultural centres together. For example, people from a rural background, anywhere in the world, may find something in common at somewhere like the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, or the Ulster-American Folk Park, which has exhibits about migration.

- Visit the cultural centres of minority-ethnic communities – such as the Indian Community Centre in Belfast, to learn, and affirm their presence as part of a shared society.
- Learn about other people's religious beliefs and practices by, visiting religious centres, or inviting members of other faiths to explain their religious beliefs.
- Take part in a course about inter-faith dialogue.
- Encourage young people to study the languages, cultures and religions of people from local minority-ethnic populations.
- Find ways of celebrating and honouring the achievement of individuals and groups from minority-ethnic populations in your community.
- Use any forum: e.g. inter-church groups, Policing and Community Safety Partnerships, to make sure that even minor acts of racism are taken seriously and to foster good relationships at local community level.
- When you are planning a project remember that small grants may be available from your local authority for good relations activities. For other advice on looking for funding or drawing up grant applications go to **NICVA** (the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action), 61 Duncairn Gardens Belfast, BT15 2GB, Tel: **(028) 9087 7777**, E-mail: nicva@nicva.org, www.nicva.org/ There is also information on the **GrantTracker** web site. www.grant-tracker.org/

Diane Dodds, MEP, has published *Signposts to Funding for Churches and Faith-Based Organisations*. To find out more phone her office **(028) 9266 7733**. www.dianedodds.co.uk/

Friendship Clubs

The South Belfast Roundtable has established the **Belfast Friendship Club** that meets at the Common Grounds Café in the South Belfast. They say 'New to Belfast or just want to meet some new people? Come along and join us. All welcome.' To find out more about how to set up a club contact Stephanie Mitchell who co-ordinates this initiative on **(028) 9024 4070** or E-mail stephanie.mitchell@sbrtr.org.uk There are friendship clubs in Derry/Londonderry, Coleraine and Ballymena at present, as well as Belfast. They probably work best where there are large numbers of incomers.

'I discovered that what is important to human beings is to celebrate life together.'

Jean Vanier in 'Something Understood', BBC Radio 4, Palm Sunday, 2009

'I didn't come here as a journalist, more as a proud member of the human race and couldn't praise the people behind this enough, I hope to be back soon and once again make more friends in two hours than a normal citizen of my home town of Stockholm would make in a lifetime.'

Henrik, from Sweden
www.belfastfriendshipclub.org/about-us/

'Some of the strangers we welcome will eventually go home and, depending on the welcome they receive from us, will become involved in the life of the churches in their own home areas. ... But some of those strangers will stay on in Ireland, and will contribute greatly to the social, cultural, political, economic and religious life of this island, their children will marry our children, and their grandchildren will be our grandchildren. In welcoming strangers we will soon discover we are bringing angels into our churches and into our families.'

Patrick Comerford,
Embracing Difference

'Paul takes part in a weekly multicultural football game organised by a local church. Transport is provided and the gathering is an opportunity to meet people from all over the world, most of whom are also seeking asylum.'

Conversations Around the Kitchen Table

'The youth have no facilities or sport activities ... Our youth have less opportunities than the locals and sport is one area that the communities could integrate'.

Young male interviewee in The Horn of Africa in Belfast: A Needs Assessment

The Use of Church Premises and Other Resources

Churches form part of the social capital of a community and many already make their buildings, facilities and the skills of their members available to other groups. These are some initiatives that parishes and congregations have tried.

- A community audit of local needs
- Working with others on a welcome pack for new residents
- Drop-in centres or regular events that give people the chance to meet and integrate
- Parent and toddler groups for refugees or the families of migrant workers
- After-school clubs, helping incoming children to adjust to the differences in our education system
- Language and conversation classes
- Advice centres for newcomers run by those who are nominated by the local authority to do so – such as Citizens' Advice
- Recreational / sports facilities for minority-ethnic groups

The Experience of Newcomers

As a community interpreter working for the NHS I get to know many Polish migrants and hear about their stories. In the waiting area of a hospital or a surgery, people often open up and tell me about how they came to live/work in Northern Ireland. Some people had it easier, some had to struggle and went through hell. ...

Life in a foreign country is easier for migrants when some parts of its reality relate to their own culture. That's why there are a growing number of shops selling Polish food. Tesco and Dunne's Stores have a range of Polish products. Almost every Polish family has access to Polish TV, people have a chance to go to a Polish mass at least once a month, there are Polish nights at some bars, Polish welfare associations are increasing in number.

... Migration is much easier for people when they can speak the other country's language. They assimilate more quickly, get involved in social life, get to know the locals. At work, they are able to ask for a pay rise, make sure their rights are respected. They can get a better job; are more independent and so much more. ... But there is help available. People from Northern Ireland have turned out to be sensitive to the needs of migrant families. Churches or technical colleges run English classes. ...

Justyna Pers from Poland, speaking as part of the British Council's Ordinary Lives project.

Read more of her story and those of people from other countries at www.britishcouncil.org/northernireland-society-ordinarylives-poland1.htm or read Ordinary Lives by Malachi O'Doherty, Belfast 2008

Difference or sameness?

'There is a tendency here in Northern Ireland to speak about difference. I want to speak about sameness. No matter where we go in the world, to Poland or wherever, the great lesson we learn is that people everywhere are looking for the exact same things in life. People everywhere of all ages especially young people have the same wish to be respected and to be understood.

Whether from Eastern Europe or Africa or America, whether from the Falls Road or the Shankill Road, they all want the same basic rights and opportunities of life, just as you do.

They want to follow their football team, play their music, and dance to their favourite tunes just as you do. They want to watch their films, enjoy their holidays, visit their friends, play their games with the same interest and passion as you do. When you meet or see a group of people from whatever part of the world, you are looking at a mirror image of yourself. These are people with the exact same longing for self worth, the same sense of happiness, the same willingness to accept responsibility, to be creative, to contribute to society.

You are not seeing difference. You are seeing sameness. I hope there are some lessons there for us all.'

Conclusion of a speech by Jerome Mullen, Polish Honorary Consul, at the Lord Mayor's reception for the Belfast Migrant Forum, 2 March 2010

'Even if we are always strangers (foreigners), when we truly believe and know for a fact that God is in control and has placed us where we are, it enables us to overcome each obstacle that arises.

Even if always strangers in Ireland, in God's eyes we belong. It is not easy but by faith when we place ourselves in God's hands, we have hope to face another tomorrow.'

Florence Muthoni Hegarty in part of a reflection on the Book of Esther in Inter-Cultural Insights

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Some Useful Sources and Resources

Web Sites

Belfast City Council, Migrant and Minority Ethnic Project resources

www.belfastcity.gov.uk/community/advice/migrants.aspx

Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration

www.cream-migration.org/index.php

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI)

www.ctbi.org.uk/12/

Citizens for Sanctuary

www.citizensforsanctuary.org.uk/

City of Sanctuary

www.cityofsanctuary.org

Independent Asylum Commission

www.independentasylumcommission.org.uk

Institute of Race Relations

www.irr.org.uk

Law Centre NI

www.lawcentreni.org/

Medical Justice Network

www.medicaljustice.org.uk

Migration Observatory

www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/

Migrant Rights Network

www.migrantsrights.org.uk/news

National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns

www.ncadc.org.uk

NI Direct

www.nidirect.gov.uk

Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service (NINIS)

www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk

Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)

www.nisra.gov.uk

Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership (NISMP)

(and Migration Information Portal)

www.migrationni.org/

Police Service of Northern Ireland

www.psni.police.uk

Refugee Council (UK)

www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

UK Home Office/ Immigration

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration

UK Immigration (News Section)

www.ukimmigration.com/news/news.htm

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Further lists of useful addresses can be found on our web site, www.embraceni.org

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