

PROVINCIAL HOME MISSION COMMITTEE

A Paper for onward submission to the Mission & Ministry Board

GUEST WORKERS IN SCOTLAND

Introduction

The Committee commissioned this paper on the subject of migrant or guest workers in Scotland and the mission challenges and opportunities presented by them at its meeting in January 2007.

This paper has been prepared in conjunction with the Church in Society Committee. It addresses specifically the topic of those voluntarily choosing to come to Scotland for work purposes either under the Work Registration Programme or through the obtaining of Work Permits. It does not consider matters of asylum (political or economic) or refugees.

It contains some summary statistics relating to the numbers of guest workers in this country, an outline of perceived needs, the present response of the churches and a suggestion of ways forward for the Committee and Board.

It is only intended as an initial discussion document and further research work involving both Home Mission & Church in Society Committees will need to be done if a policy is to be presented to the College of Bishops and/or the General Synod for action.

The Present Situation

It has proved particularly difficult to obtain accurate statistics about migrant workers in Scotland as the Workers Registration Scheme is handled by the U.K. Home Office.

Full details can be found on www.statistics.gov.uk or www.homeoffice.gov.uk (Accession Monitoring Report). These figures are based on quarterly returns from May 2004 to July 2006 (a new summary will be available at the end of August 2007).

Scottish Statistics

Figures from the first quarter of 2004 until the second quarter of 2006 show a steady rise in migrant workers from the EU accession countries to Scotland, reaching 32,135. June and July proved the most popular months for application for Registration, December the least, indicating that perhaps this was for short-term agricultural or hospitality work. Numbers for 2006 were slightly reduced on 2004 and 2005. Recent newspaper reports indicate that figure has risen to 52,405 (Scotsman 23/08/07).

The biggest single contingent (8,540) were found in the hospitality and catering industry, followed by 6,410 in agricultural activities, 4,905 in administrative, business and management services, 4,185 in food, fish or meat processing, 2,040 in the construction industry and 1,485 in the health and medical services. (BBC News 22/08/06).

United Kingdom

In UK terms the trend seems to be for an increasing proportion of those coming to work in the administrative, business and management industries in contrast to agriculture and hospitality.

97% of registered workers who applied between May 2004 and June 2006 were working full time (more than 16 hours a week). The majority (78%) of registered workers were earning £4.50 - £5.99 per hour.

The largest proportion of migrant workers were from Poland (62%). Lithuania (12%) and Slovakia (10%) were also significant countries of origin. 43% were aged 18 to 24, 39% between 25 and 34 and 10% between 35 and 44. 58% were male, 42% female.

A small minority (7%) of registered workers who applied during that period declared that they had dependants living with them in the UK when they applied. Amongst those who did have dependants, the average number of dependants was 1.3. The number of dependants as a proportion of the number of registered workers has increased from 6% in 2004 to 12% in 2006, with an average of 8% over the period.

Another gauge of the situation is the issue of National Insurance numbers. These figures are larger than those for the Workers Registration Scheme as they include self-employed migrant workers.

From 2004 to 2007 65,338 NI numbers have been issued to EU workers coming to Scotland. The following Table (based on NI statistics 2005-6) shows the geographical distribution across Scotland:

	Number	% Scotland	%UK
UK	662,390		100%
Scotland	41,370	100%	6.25%
Edinburgh, City of	11,670	28.2%	1.76%
Glasgow City	6,660	16.1%	1.01%
Aberdeen City	3,860	9.3%	0.58%
Highland	2,640	6.4%	0.40%
Perth & Kinross	1,600	3.9%	0.24%
Aberdeenshire	1,590	3.8%	0.24%
Fife	1,530	3.7%	0.23%
Dundee City	1,460	3.5%	0.22%
West Lothian	1,140	2.8%	0.17%
North Lanarkshire	810	2.0%	0.12%
South Lanarkshire	770	1.9%	0.12%
Angus	740	1.8%	0.11%
Stirling	720	1.7%	0.11%
Renfrewshire	710	1.7%	0.11%
Argyll & Bute	700	1.7%	0.11%
Scottish Borders	650	1.6%	0.10%
Dumfries & Galloway	590	1.4%	0.09%
Moray	530	1.3%	0.08%
Falkirk	460	1.1%	0.07%
South Ayrshire	400	1.0%	0.06%
Inverclyde	320	0.8%	0.05%
East Lothian	300	0.7%	0.05%

North Ayrshire	280	0.7%	0.04%
Midlothian	210	0.5%	0.03%
East Dunbartonshire	170	0.4%	0.03%
West Dunbartonshire	160	0.4%	0.02%
East Ayrshire	150	0.4%	0.02%
Eilean Siar (Western Isles)	130	0.3%	0.02%
East Renfrewshire	130	0.3%	0.02%
Clackmannanshire	130	0.3%	0.02%
Shetland Islands	100	0.2%	0.02%
Orkney Islands	60	0.1%	0.01%

It is worthy of note that about one-third of all migrant workers have registered for NI numbers in the cities of Edinburgh and Aberdeen.

The Needs

1. The best analysis of the needs of guest workers is contained in a 2006 briefing paper from Citizens Advice Scotland. Their bureaux report “ increasing numbers of enquiries (being) brought to them by these workers – their problems worsened by their lack of familiarity with systems and language difficulties leaving them vulnerable”.

Options for complaining are limited, partly because false claims were made and false expectations raised while still in their countries of origin and partly because losing employment while in Scotland would lead to difficulties returning home.

Particular problems reported included:

1. Poor pay – sometimes below the national minimum wage levels
2. Irregular patterns of work and long hours; being encouraged to work more than the agreed hours.
3. Short term contracts and insecure work; contracts being summarily ended with no warning, rendering employees homeless when accommodation is provided with the job.
4. Illegal and unexpected deductions from wages, especially with accommodation costs.
5. Accommodation issues: where housing is provided with the job, this is often of very poor quality, overcrowded, expensive and with no security of tenure.
6. Problems getting statutory sick pay and holidays.
7. Problems getting P45s and P60s and last pay packets.
8. Problems relating to government departments: obtaining National Insurance numbers, work permits, accessing the benefits system.
9. Problems with accessing local services: opening bank accounts, using the Post Office to transfer money.

It is important to note that many of these problems are not unique to guest workers but common to all the most vulnerable sections of Scottish society. Language will always present difficulties, but experience of qualified professional workers coming to Scotland (e.g. engineers, lecturers, doctors, dentists) would indicate that such problems can be and historically have always been overcome when the rights (human and legal) are honoured and people are treated with respect and justice.

2. There are also problems for the receiving local community associated with the arrival of guest workers. Citizens Advice Scotland report that some local workers have had working hours reduced, wages depressed or have been made redundant due to an influx of foreign workers. Such are also likely to be some of the most vulnerable people in the community.

3. A third cluster of identifiable needs relates to how the arrival of guest workers is generally perceived. For many people in the United Kingdom (especially in parts of England) there have been real fears of loss

of “their” jobs and homes, of exploitation of the social security system, of the collapse of the National Health Service under pressure from new arrivals and of loss of national identity. The media have been quick to seize on stories that tend to reinforce these insecurities. This has led to reports of suspicion, community tensions, racial abuse, lack of hospitality and even violence.

4. The church also needs to be concerned to address the spiritual and religious needs of guest workers. Those involved with or committed to a particular faith community would normally expect to derive help and comfort from their religious faith, and from the faith communities to which they belong. In their new context the beliefs and rituals of their religion and the ministry of its leaders and members may often not be available to meet their spiritual needs.

There will also be those with no specific religious affiliation, yet who recognise their need for spiritual care in that they seek help in finding within themselves the resources to cope with difficulties (often related to displacement and loneliness) and the capacity to make positive use of their experiences in a strange land.

The Response

1. Government

The Scottish Executive formally welcomes guest workers to Scotland, especially where they are able to take up unfilled vacancies in critical demand in the expanding public sector. The National Health Service in Scotland has recruited professionally skilled workers and the healthcare industry relies heavily on migrant care workers.

In launching the Fresh Talent website in July 2004, the former First Minister said:

"The biggest single challenge facing Scotland is our falling population, and if we are to succeed in the global economy, we need a constant flow of fresh talent to flourish alongside our home-grown talent.

"The signs are that Scotland is already proving to be a magnet for people and we will build on that with our FreshTalent website. It is just one of the practical things we can do to help those interested in living and working in Scotland "

"Scotland is an exciting to be place to be just now - we can offer an unrivalled quality of life, our economy is growing, and our cities are amongst the most vibrant in Europe. Little wonder that so many people are keen to move to Scotland - they know that this is the time and Scotland is the place."

But there would appear to be no overall strategy to address the particular needs of this section of the work-force identified above. It could be that the assumptions being made are either that such workers will be very short-term (and so learn to live with the problems they experience) or that they will easily find their way into mainstream society. Both may be questionable.

The Citizens Advice Scotland briefing highlights three necessary and simple steps which could and should be taken to express in practical terms the hospitality for which Scotland is renowned :

1. Funding to advice agencies to allow them to produce information and advice to this specialized client group;
2. Funding to local organisations to develop support networks for migrant communities; and
3. Partnership links to be developed with employment agencies in the various countries of origin to provide workers with information before they arrive in Scotland.

The need for specific language training has been addressed by local authorities and Colleges of Higher Education. Scottish Colleges are the main providers of the course “English for Speakers of Other Languages”, running courses in their own premises and often in community centres or church halls. The OU in Scotland has produced a new folder entitled “Routes – Diverse routes into higher education in Scotland” targeted at newcomers to Scotland and including details of access courses, ESOL courses and the financial support available to undertake them, together with all necessary websites.

2. Church

The response of the church has been on 3 levels:

1. The World Council of Churches

The Council is aware that the flow of workers from one country (and continent) to another is a global and profoundly theological issue. It has recently addressed this in the establishment of the Global Environment Network on Migration (GEM) with representatives from all countries and churches. The first Network Conference met in June 2007 and the WCC reported:

At the conference, GEM members decided to visit each others' regions to raise awareness on the impact of migration among member churches, providing information on the legal, social and psychological situations of migrants in host countries, and the relationships between churches in home and host countries.

Several conference participants stated that the church must understand the problem of migration, advocate against racism, and educate their people on the challenges they may meet in countries of migration. They also want churches to speak out more forcefully on the human rights of migrants, and monitor their governments' observance of the conventions they have ratified.

On account of the urgency of the international situation, the WCC's new Global Platform for theological reflection and analysis has chosen Migration as its first subject. In an invitation to join this platform in July, the Programme Executive wrote:

Churches are challenged by migration not only to respond in advocacy and service but also in their own self-understanding as faith communities. There are many ecumenical partners responding to issues of migration but more theological reflection is necessary... we need to receive your...stories, methodologies, statements and questions

2. Ecumenically

a. **CBTI** published in July a useful guide to study, reflection and action on “Migration Principles”. This is described as “A Statement for churches working with migrants and engaging with migration issues”, and is edited by Paul Weller of the University of Derby. It provides a backcloth against which the more detailed consideration of guest workers can be examined.

b. The **Churches Rural Group** at the Arthur Rank Centre has compiled a comprehensive briefing on migrant labour which includes an examination of new government legislation and Health and Safety Regulations. In conjunction with DEFRA it has produced a leaflet entitled “Rural Migrant Workers – modern slavery?” with practical suggestions on “What can churches do?” which form the basis of the suggestions offered below.

c. **ACTS** highlighted “Immigration: a challenge for Scottish Churches” in the winter/spring 2007 edition of Together, containing an article by Dr Nelu Balaj, its Racial Justice Officer. He concluded:

A considerable number of immigrants are coming from a church related background in their own country and would love to attend and be involved in our local churches. Unfortunately this is often impossible because churches are ill prepared to make the migrant community feel welcome, and sometimes our obsession with the 'status quo' might turn them away from our church doors. Nevertheless, it is now accepted that migrants are making a positive impact on the church in Scotland.

d. The **Four Nations Forum for Evangelisation** which meets in Dublin in November 2007 has taken Migration as its main theme, acknowledging:

1 in 10 of the UK population are currently abroad while we see vast numbers from overseas joining us, often in rural as well as urban areas. What is the significance for the church? How have some churches planted new congregations with particular ethnic group identities? How can we reach migrant workers? And, most significantly, what is the challenge to us in our evangelization by people who come with greater passion that we sometimes have for the Gospel? If these are not significant issues for you yet, they may well be in the future.

e. A **British-Irish Reformed Consultation** is to take place in Cardiff in the early part of 2008 between the Presbyterian Church of Wales, the United Reformed Church and the Church of Scotland. Possible themes are relations with the Lutherans, national identity, mission, migrant workers, migration and asylum seekers, inter-faith relations, restructuring for mission, reconciliation and the limits of acceptable diversity, and worship and the place of a continuing Reformed ethos within it.

3. Denominationally

The Church of Scotland at its 2007 General Assembly passed a deliverance about welcoming immigrants into the life and leadership of the church. It has not been possible to find out how that will be implemented although action through the Churches Rural Group is anticipated.

Suggestions for the Scottish Episcopal Church

It is suggested that there are already a number of groups that are addressing this issue effectively at the ecumenical level and it would be unnecessary to duplicate these by establishing another body. But the fast-moving situation needs to be monitored for the sake of the SEC and communicated effectively to it.

To this end it is proposed that a member of the PMAT Team be allocated a “Guest Worker” portfolio. She/he should be responsible for

- Networking with other agencies about guest workers, especially the Rural Forum, ACTS and the Church of Scotland and Roman Catholic church (to identify, encourage and publicize good practise);
- Meeting regularly with representatives from the Church in Society and the JPIC Network to discuss and initiate areas of joint concern and action;
- Meeting with representatives of CROPOF to consider any necessary action to address spiritual needs of guest workers of other faiths.

- Meeting with the Ministry Development Committee to ensure the issue of guest workers is incorporated into diocesan Initial and Continuing Ministerial Development programmes;
- Reporting to PMAT and the Home Mission Committee;
- Offering advice to the College of Bishops on issues around Guest workers
- Speaking on behalf of the SEC when required on this subject, especially to government agencies.
- Communicating to the wider SEC the privileges and responsibilities of hosting guest workers in Scotland (through SEC website, inspires, mailings etc)

As an initial action, such a person might circulate the “Modern Slavery” leaflet to all rural churches in the SEC.

The following suggestions are taken from it and modified for both urban and rural congregations in response to the question: “What can churches do?”

- Invite migrant workers to be active members of the church, identify their faith and help them to find ways to practise it. Offer support and sanctuary if necessary;
- Fight prejudice in the local community and explain the positive role that migrant workers play;
- Be informed. Find out what labour local industry, commerce (hotels, restaurants, hospitals, homes) and farms use.
- Focus on the role and needs of guest workers during key festivals – One World Week, racial Justice Sunday, Rogation and Harvest.
- Is there a local IT centre or community sports facility available for guest workers at times when they might be able to use them?
- Ensure Health and Safety Regulations are being adhered to and offer to report infringements on behalf of guest workers so that they are not victimised;
- Share resources with other community and church organisations.

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Useful websites

http://www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk/publications_and_resources/rural_migrant_workers_resources/MW_leaflet.pdf

<http://www.argyllcommunities.org/MWF/>

<http://www.curbsproject.org.uk>

<http://www.crossreach.org.uk>

<http://www.hie.co.uk/Migrant-worker-information-pack-english-version.pdf?sksearchtext=migrant worker information pack>

http://www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk/publications_and_resources/rural_migrant_workers_resources/MW_report.pdf