

**STATISTICS PRESS NOTICE –
MIGRATION ESTIMATES
NORTHERN IRELAND (2007)**



Population grows by 10,000 new migrants

9:30am – Thursday, 31 July 2008

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) has published figures illustrating the impact of changing migration patterns in Northern Ireland.

Figures show 32,000 people came to live in Northern Ireland in the year to June 2007 and 22,000 people left. Migration has added almost 10,000 residents to the Northern Ireland population in each of the last two years and has a greater effect on the population than the excess of births over deaths. This change in demographic trends has implications for policy and service delivery.

Today NISRA has published a migration report alongside the new mid-2007 population estimates that examines these new migration figures in detail. Among some of the key points are:

- after decades of emigration exceeding immigration, and a period of balanced migration flows in the 1990s, the recent period from mid 2004 to mid 2007 has seen immigration exceed emigration by 26,000, or the equivalent of a town the size of Coleraine;
- the expansion of the EU in 2004 is the main source of the increased flows of migrants. Most people coming to Northern Ireland from one of the A8 countries to work must register through the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS). This shows that, in the year to June 2007, some 9,000 people registered to work in Northern Ireland, a similar level to the previous year. However, the latest

figures from the Home Office suggest that the flow is slowing (8,000 in the year to March 2008);

- around half of those registering with the WRS intended to stay for less than 3 months when they registered. Analysis of National Insurance data also suggests around 40% of foreign nationals who registered were no longer being picked up in tax or benefit returns a year later, and there is similar evidence from the Republic of Ireland;
- by number, Polish migrants are the largest group of migrants from the new EU states, accounting for about 60% of such migrants;
- Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU in 2007 and restrictions have been placed on their entry to the UK labour market. Home Office sources suggest that small numbers of Bulgarians and Romanians have come to live in Northern Ireland;
- non-EU residents coming to work in Northern Ireland require work permits, and there is a continued flow of about 2,000 persons per year, although numbers in the year to June 2007 are slightly down on previous years. Indian and Philippino are the largest nationalities applying for work permits;
- in 2007, 1,900 births here (8% of all births) were to mothers born outside the UK and Ireland, compared to 700 such births in 2001. Of these, 800 births in 2007 were to mothers from A8 countries, compared to 10 such births in 2001. Early indications are that births to A8 mothers are increasing further in 2008;
- the School Census (2007) shows that about 3,500 primary school children have a language other than English as their 'first' language. This is about 2% of the primary school population, and a large increase on the corresponding figure (2,400) for the previous year. For secondary school children, the

increase has been from 1,100 to 1,700 (1% of the secondary school population); and

- new registrations with GPs from migrants coming from outside the UK are still on the increase with almost 19,400 registrations in 2007, half of which were A8 migrants. Over half those registering with GPs gave their reason for coming to the UK as work related, while 20% came for family reasons, 7% for education and 20% gave another or no specific reason.

The overall migration trends described above vary across Northern Ireland. Flows around areas such as Botanic (Belfast), Jordanstown (Newtownabbey) and Strand (Derry) are driven by students, but work is the main reason given by people for coming to Northern Ireland. Information from registrations with GPs shows that in parts of Dungannon, Craigavon, Belfast and Newry and Mourne, annual immigration flows in 2007 exceed 1 in 30 of the resident population.

There is also variation in migration related statistics for children. In 2007 about 2% of primary school children did not have English as their 'first' language; however this figure for schools in Dungannon was 8%. Similarly, while births to mothers born outside Northern Ireland accounted for 8% of all 2007 births, in Dungannon the figure was 18%.

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Migration estimates relate to long-term migrants only. A long-term migrant is defined as someone who changes their residence for a year or more (Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration, United Nations, 1998)).
2. Eight Central and Eastern European countries (referred to as the “A8” countries) joined the European Union in May 2004. The A8 countries are the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. Malta and Cyprus also joined the EU on 1 May 2004 but are considered separately from the A8 in this report as they had full free movement rights to work in UK prior to enlargement.
3. Bulgaria and Romania joined the European Union in January 2007 and restrictions have been placed on their entry to the UK labour market by the UK Government.
4. A paper has been published today entitled “International Migration Estimates for Northern Ireland (2006-7) – Sources and Methodology”. This updates analysis undertaken by NISRA last year and provides more detailed statistics on measures of long-term international migration. This paper can be found at:
<http://www.nisra.gov.uk/demography/default.asp18.htm>
5. Alongside the migration estimates NISRA has published the 2007 mid-year population estimates today; further details can be found at:
<http://www.nisra.gov.uk/demography/default.asp17.htm>
6. All media enquiries should be directed to DFP Communications Office
Telephone: 028 9052 7374
7. Further statistical information can be obtained from NISRA Customer Services
Telephone: 028 9034 8160
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