STATISTICS PRESS NOTICE – MIGRATION ESTIMATES NORTHERN IRELAND (2008)

Population grows by nearly 6,000 new migrants

9:30am – Thursday, 27 August 2009

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) today published detailed figures on population migration to and from Northern Ireland.

In total 27,500 people came to live in Northern Ireland in the year to June 2008 and 21,700 people left Northern Ireland to live elsewhere. Population migration therefore added 5,700 residents to the Northern Ireland population; this is significantly lower than the 9,000 residents added through migration in both 2005-6 and 2006-7. This recent fall is related to less people coming to live in Northern Ireland from outside the UK.

NISRA published a detailed migration report "Long-term International Migration Estimates for Northern Ireland (2007-8)" which examines these new migration figures in detail. Among some of the key points are:

- after a long period through the 1970s and 1980s of emigration from Northern Ireland exceeding immigration, and a period of balanced migration flows during the 1990s, the recent period since 2004 has seen significant population growth due to migration;

- migrants from the expanded EU are the main source of increased migration. Most people from the new EU states coming to Northern Ireland to work must register with the Home Office Worker Registration Scheme (WRS). The WRS shows that, in the year to June 2008, some 7,800 people registered to work in Northern Ireland, compared to 9,100 people in the year to June 2007. The

latest figures from the WRS suggest that these figures are slowing further (4,800 WRS registrations in the year to March 2009);

- by number, Polish migrants are the largest group of migrants from the new EU states, accounting for nearly 60% of such migrants;

- new registrations with GPs from migrants coming from outside the UK have fallen from 19,400 registrations in 2007 to 15,400 in 2008, more than half of which were A8 migrants. Over half those registering with GPs gave their reason for coming here as work related, while 27% came for family reasons, 9% for education and 10% gave another or no specific reason.

Children

- in 2008, 2,300 births here (9% of all births) were to mothers born outside the UK and Ireland, compared to 700 such births (3% of all births) in 2001. Of these, 1,100 births in 2008 were to mothers from the new EU states, compared to 10 such births in 2001. Indications are that in 2009 births to mothers born outside the UK and Ireland will be at a similar level to that seen in 2008;

- the School Census (2008) shows that about 4,300 primary school children have a language other than English as their 'first' language. This is nearly 2% of the primary school population, and an increase on the corresponding figure (3,500) for 2007. For secondary school children, the increase has been from 1,700 pupils to 2,100 pupils (1% of the secondary school population);

Spatial Differences

- overall migration trends vary across Northern Ireland. Flows around areas such as Botanic (Belfast), Jordanstown (Newtownabbey) and Strand (Derry) are driven by students. Information from registrations with GPs shows that in parts of Belfast, Craigavon and Dungannon, annual immigration flows in 2008 exceed 1 in 20 of the resident population.

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 "Long-term International Migration Estimates for Northern Ireland (2007-8)". 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/archive/demography/population/migration/NI_Migration_Report(2008).pdf

5. All media enquiries should be directed to DFP Communications Office
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6. Further statistical information can be obtained from NISRA Customer Services
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