

Long-term International Migration Estimates for Northern Ireland (2005-6)



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Introduction

1. There has been significant interest in the levels of international migration in the United Kingdom (UK) and in Northern Ireland (NI). In particular, this interest has increased following the accession of eight Central and Eastern European countries¹ (referred to as the “A8” countries) to the European Union in May 2004. Of the 15 member states of the EU before accession, initially only Ireland, Sweden and the UK have granted A8 nationals access to work. Other EU-15 countries are beginning to follow suit with Finland, Greece, Portugal and Spain allowing free movement from May 2006. Full free movement within the EU of A8 nationals should be in place by 2011.

2. In recent years the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) has undertaken research to assist measurement of the levels of international migration in Northern Ireland. This resulted in a first report published in July 2006². This shorter paper updates this report and where possible provides similar but more up to date statistics for the period 2005-6 and where possible 2006-7.

3. The definition of migration in use for population estimates comes from the United Nations statistical definition of a long-term international migrant³:

“A person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year (12 months), so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence. From the perspective of the country of departure the person will be a long-term emigrant and from that of the country of arrival the person will be a long-term immigrant.”

¹ 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 have full free movement rights to work throughout the EU.

² NISRA produced a research paper entitled “Long-term International Migration Estimates for Northern Ireland (2004-5) – Sources and Methodology” which can be found at:
[http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/migration/NI_Migration_Report\(2005\).pdf](http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/migration/NI_Migration_Report(2005).pdf)

³ Taken from “Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration. UN 1998” available at
[http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sconcerns/migration/http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/migration/NI_Migration_Report\(2005\).pdfmigrmethods.htm#B](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sconcerns/migration/http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/migration/NI_Migration_Report(2005).pdfmigrmethods.htm#B)

4. The United Nations also defines “short-term international migration” and the concept of a “Migrant Worker” – these definitions are given in detail in Annex A. The differences between the United Nations definitions create difficulties with interpretation. For example a migrant worker who works in Northern Ireland for a short period of time strictly is not defined to be a long-term international migrant. All official migration estimates for Northern Ireland population statistics refer to long-term migration; at present there are no official statistical estimates of the number of short-term migrants or migrant workers coming to Northern Ireland – however see section 4 for further discussion on this point.

5. The remainder of this paper looks at a number of administrative/statistical sources, which NISRA have assessed to help estimate long-term international migration. The paper is divided into four sections:

- administrative/statistical data which is related to international in-migration to Northern Ireland (section 1);
- administrative/statistical data which can be related to international out-migration from Northern Ireland (section 2);
- estimates of international migration (section 3); and
- further research and conclusions (section 4).

1. International In-Migration

1.1. NISRA have assessed statistics from a number of sources to help estimate long-term international in-migration:

- the Home Office Worker Registration Scheme for A8 nationals;
- the Home Office Work Permits Scheme;
- new National Insurance Numbers registered to foreign nationals;
- the Department of Education Annual School Census;
- the country of birth of new Northern Ireland mothers; and
- new registrations with a family doctor.

These sources are described in detail in last year's report².

1.2. The key results from these data sources are outlined below. Where possible the data for the 2005/6 year is presented alongside trend data – more detailed tables on the data sources can be found at:

http://www.nisra.gov.uk/demography/default.asp?cmsid=20_21_191&cms=demography_Population%20statistics_Migration+Statistics&release

1.1 Worker Registration Scheme

- the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS), managed by the Home Office, is used to formally register migrant workers from the eight new EU Eastern European Accession countries that acceded in May 2004;
- between 1 May 2004 and 31 March 2007, a total of 605,000 people registered with the WRS in the UK. Of these just under 24,000 people (4%) were working in Northern Ireland – in contrast the NI population makes up 3% of the UK population. Over the lifespan of the WRS, around half of registered workers were in temporary employment;

- between mid-2005 and mid-2006 8,700 people registered who were working in Northern Ireland, this is an increase from the 7,200 people who registered in the mid-2004 to mid-2005 period;
- WRS statistics available by area of employer, show that most workers are employed in the Belfast, Dungannon, Newry & Mourne and Craigavon Local Government Districts;
- most people registered on the WRS in Northern Ireland are from Poland (c13,000 registered in NI). However based on UK population share, NI has received markedly more registrations from Lithuania than the UK as a whole; and
- WRS statistics are available by clicking [here](#).

1.2 Worker Permits Scheme

- Work permits are issued by Work Permits (UK), part of the Home Office's Immigration and Nationality Directorate. A work permit relates to a specific person and a specific job. The work permit scheme lets UK employers recruit or transfer people from outside the European Economic Area (EEA), while still protecting the interests of resident workers in the UK;
- between 1 April 2004 and 31 March 2006, a total of 321,000 work permits were approved and of these there were just over 6,700 (2.1%) to people working in Northern Ireland;
- in the financial year 2005/6 there were 2,800 permits issued to people working in Northern Ireland, this is a decrease from the 3,900 people who registered in 2004/5 period;
- work permits were available by area of employer and show that most workers are employed in the Belfast, Ballymena, Newry and Mourne and North Down Local Government Districts;

- a significant element of NI based work permits were for Indian and Filipino nationals; and
- work permits statistics are available by clicking [here](#).

1.3 National Insurance Number registrations

- National Insurance Numbers are required for employment purposes or to claim benefits and tax credits. Foreign nationals living in Northern Ireland apply to their local Social Security or Jobs and Benefits Office for the issue of a National Insurance Number;
- just over 10,400 people arrived in the UK in the 2004/5 financial year and registered for a National Insurance Number with a Northern Ireland address by the end of 2006. Further registrations are expected and NISRA estimate the final total to be around 12,300 people;
- it is too early to say how many people will register for a National Insurance Number with a Northern Ireland address and who arrived in the UK in the 2005/6 financial year. However to date 6,700 such registrations have been made;
- most National Insurance Numbers registered were to non-UK nationals living in Belfast, Craigavon, Dungannon and Newry and Mourne Local Government Districts;
- A8 countries account for roughly two-thirds of National Insurance Numbers allocated to Non-UK nationals, with the highest numbers for Polish, Lithuanian and Slovakian nationals; and
- National insurance number statistics are available by clicking [here](#).

1.4 Annual School Census

- Each year the Department for Education in Northern Ireland undertake a School Census exercise. Information is collected on the number of pupils who have English as an additional language and a breakdown of their “first” language. Statistics from the 2006 School Census are detailed below, these do not directly reflect the number of school children migrating to Northern Ireland²;

Primary School

- the statistics for the 2006 School Census show that, in total, over 2,400 “primary” school children have a language other than English as their “first” language, this is an increase from the 1,800 children in the 2005 School Census. The 2,400 population equates to around 1.5% of the “primary” school population;
- in the 2006 School Census, Polish was the most common additional language (600 primary school children, with A8 languages (e.g. Polish, Lithuanian etc.) making up almost 45% of this primary school total - with over 1,000 children having an A8 language as their first language;

Secondary School

- in the 2006 School Census, 1,100 post primary school children had a language other than English as their “first” language, this is an increase from 700 children in the 2005 School Census. The 1,100 school children equates to around 0.75% of the post primary school population;
- A8 languages (e.g. Polish, Lithuanian etc.) make up 40% of this post primary school total - with over 400 children having an A8 language as their first language; and
- School Census statistics are available by clicking [here](#).

1.5 Births to Mothers Born outside Northern Ireland

- All births occurring in Northern Ireland are by law registered with the General Register Office. When registering the birth the mother supplies information on her country of birth;
- births to new Northern Ireland mothers who themselves were born outside the United Kingdom and Ireland has risen markedly in recent years. In total around 700 such births occurred in 2001 and this has risen to 1,400 births in 2006;
- within these figures there has been an even more marked increase in births to mothers born in the A8 countries, with around 10 such births in 2001 compared to 390 births in 2006;
- figures for the first six months of 2007 show a further significant rise in births to Northern Ireland resident mothers who themselves were born in the A8 countries. In total there were 321 births to A8 born mothers in the first 6 months of 2007 compared to 390 in the whole of 2006; and
- birth statistics by mother's country of birth are available by clicking [here](#).

1.6 New registrations with a family doctor

- To register with a family doctor in Northern Ireland someone must provide information on his or her age, place of residence and time of stay in Northern Ireland to the Central Services Agency (CSA). Registration forms are available in 7 languages (English, Portuguese, Polish, Latvian, Lithuanian, Russian and Czech);
- the number of registrations of people from outside the United Kingdom has risen from 7,200 in 2003 to 13,600 in 2005 and again to 18,000 in 2006;
- most non-UK registrations were to people living in Belfast, Craigavon, Dungannon and Newry and Mourne Local Government Districts;

- A8 countries account for half of non-UK registrations, with the highest numbers for people from Poland, Lithuania and Slovakia; and
- statistics on new registrations with a family doctor are available by clicking [here](#).

2. International out-migration

2.1. NISRA have assessed data from a number of sources to help estimate long-term international out-migration:

- deregistrations from the family doctor system – health cards;
- new National Insurance Numbers registered to foreign nationals which are no longer in use; and
- new questions on household surveys in Northern Ireland.

2.2. The key results from the data sources are outlined below. Detailed tables on the data sources can be found at:

http://www.nisra.gov.uk/demography/default.asp?cmsid=20_21_191&cms=demography_Population%20statistics_Migration+Statistics&release

2.1 Deregistrations from the family doctor system – health cards

- The Central Services Agency (CSA) maintains a list of people registered with a family doctor in Northern Ireland. The system can also provide information on people who have been removed from the health card register and who are believed to have left Northern Ireland;
- the number of deregistrations of people who moved to outside the United Kingdom rose from 4,100 deregistrations in 2003 to 5,500 in 2005 and a slight increase to 5,600 in 2006; and
- most deregistrations to outside the UK were from people living in Belfast, Derry, and Newtownabbey Local Government Districts.
- Deregistrations with a family doctor statistics are available by clicking [here](#).

2.2 New National Insurance Numbers registered to foreign nationals which are no longer in use

- NISRA have liaised with colleagues in the Department for Social Development to investigate the number of National Insurance Numbers issued to foreign nationals which fall out of use. For new National Insurance Numbers registered to foreign nationals in the 2004/5 financial year around 40% are now no longer in use; and
- research has also been undertaken in the Republic of Ireland on the use of Personal Public Service Numbers (PPSNs) by foreign migrants. It was found that of the 50,000 PPSNs issued to A8 nationals in the period May-December 2004, just under 60% were no longer in use by the end of December 2004. Both of these findings point to a significant element of short-term migration within the A8 migrant community in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

2.3 New questions on household surveys in Northern Ireland

- To improve measures of out-migration NISRA have tested a suite of household survey questions in six household surveys in October 2005, January 2006 and January, April and May 2007;
- in the 2007 surveys around 5% of households had at least one household member leave in the previous year;
- the vast majority of this migration was believed to be long-term, i.e. more than one year. In terms of destination, as would be expected, the vast majority (around 70%) of people moved to another address within Northern Ireland;
- of those who left Northern Ireland, just over 55% went to GB, 15% to the Republic of Ireland and almost 30% went to another country;

- the results from the 2007 surveys have been scaled up to the Northern Ireland level to give an overall estimate of 21,000 people who left Northern Ireland. Of this around 9,000 people are estimated to have left to countries outside the UK. This is similar to the figures estimated from the previous surveys in 2005 and 2006;
- this figure from the household surveys is broadly in line with the out-migration estimates derived from health card deregistrations, see section 3 for further details; and
- Household survey statistics are available by clicking [here](#).

3. Estimates of international migration used in 2006 population estimates

In-migration

3.1. Family doctor registration data is the most complete source that can be used to estimate international inflows to Northern Ireland. This source gives information on an intention to stay for a period of time (long-term migration) and covers all age-groups.

3.2. However, family doctor registration is imperfect. It is recognised that there is a deficiency in recording young males. Therefore the age distribution of young males is adjusted to be similar to the young female distribution in the final migration estimates. In addition for the 2006 mid-year population estimate it is the health card registrations recorded during the 2006 calendar year that is used as it can take time for new migrants to register for a health card. The source estimates an international inflow of 18,100 people in 2005-6.

Out-migration

3.3. The health card system records deregistrations with GPs in Northern Ireland, while the CSO Ireland Quarterly Household Survey provides the number of people moving from Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland. In combination, these sources have been used to estimate outflows from Northern Ireland to all countries outside the UK.

3.4. Previous research has also shown that not all out-migration is measured fully by the health card system⁴. This research has shown that the number of deregistrations with a doctor should be scaled up by 50%, after the figure on the number of out migrants to the Republic of Ireland as estimated by CSO Ireland is accounted for. It is also recognised that the health card source is deficient in recording young males; therefore, as with in-migration, the age distribution of males is adjusted to be similar to the female age distribution. Using this scale up and adjustment method with the 2006 deregistration figures gives an estimate of 9,100 out-migrants from Northern Ireland to outside the UK in 2005-6.

⁴ NISRA's previous research paper on migration describes this in detail – see http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/migration/dev_est_mig.pdf

Estimate of Net International Migration (2005/6)

3.5. Using both health card estimates for international in- and out-flows after scaling gives a net figure of almost 9,000 international migrants to Northern Ireland between 2005 and 2006.

Overall estimate of migration

3.6. In net terms a further 900 people are estimated to have migrated to Northern Ireland from Great Britain. Therefore in overall terms NISRA have made a net migration estimate of +9,900 migration to Northern Ireland between mid-2005 and mid-2006. The regional breakdown within Northern Ireland shows that Dungannon LGD had the largest population growth during 2005-6 and most of this growth was due to international migration.

3.7. Migration statistics for the population estimates are available by clicking [here](#).

4. Other Research and Conclusions

4.1. The United Kingdom National Statistician set up a cross-governmental task force in May 2006 to identify improvements that could be made to estimates of international migration and migrant populations in the United Kingdom. The task force reported in December 2006 and the main recommendations were that significant improvements are required to capture the complexity of migration and deliver timelier, integrated migration statistics and in the future, to cover both long and short term migration. The recommendations of the task force are summarised in Annex B.

4.2. NISRA are continuing to work with their colleagues in the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to investigate locally a number of areas that will feed into this research. A summary of some of the development work undertaken during 2006/7 is detailed below.

4.3. NISRA have continued to trial out-migration questions on household surveys (see Section 2.3). These questions are similar to those used by colleagues in the Republic of Ireland Quarterly National Household Survey. NISRA now plan to include these questions across a number of household surveys in Northern Ireland (Omnibus, Continuous Household, Travel, Labour Force, Family Resources and Expenditure and Food). This will give an increased sample size and allow a more robust survey-based estimate of out-migration to be made.

4.4. In early 2007 the Office for National Statistics published an initial assessment of the feasibility of producing short-term migration estimates for England and Wales. This work was based on using the International Passenger Survey which is limited to Great Britain air and sea-ports. ONS plan to publish experimental short-term migration estimates later in the year. NISRA is tracking this work and will assess how, and if, such work could be done in Northern Ireland.

4.5. NISRA launched the Northern Ireland Longitudinal Study (NILS) in late 2006. This study tracks a sample of people from the 2001 Census and will include information on population migration (from health card registration). With the support of the Economic and Social Research Council and the Health Service Research and Development Office academic research projects are planned on this source which may help to inform future migration estimates.

4.6. The Department of Education has agreed to include further out- and in- migration questions in the next School Census planned for October 2007. These questions will help to provide more information on the level of in- and out-migration of school-children.

4.7. During 2007/8 the Department for Employment and Learning are planning to undertake a survey of the experiences of migrant workers. The survey will help to inform Government on the future intentions of and the difficulties faced by the migrant worker community in Northern Ireland.

4.8. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has included a question on migrant labour on the 2007 Farm Structure Survey. Once available, information from this survey will provide further data on the impact of migrant labour on the Agriculture sector.

4.9. During 2006/7 NISRA have had detailed discussions with colleagues from the Irish Central Statistics Office (CSO) on how estimates of in- and out-migration could be further co-ordinated across Ireland and Northern Ireland. This work will continue during 2007/8 and NISRA plan to continue to work in partnership with CSO to develop methods and sources to estimate migration.

4.10. The levels of international in-migration to Northern Ireland continue to rise. This is shown in figures gathered from the administrative data sources reported above. Estimates of direct international in-migration have risen in absolute terms from around 7,000 people per annum in 2000/1 to 18,000 people in 2005/6. In addition, there is also likely to be some secondary foreign national migration through Great Britain.

4.11. On out-migration, estimates are that around 9,000 people left Northern Ireland for outside the UK in 2005/6. This is a similar figure to that seen in 2004/5 – evidence on out-migration is less robust and NISRA have put in place steps to improve the measurement of international out-migration from Northern Ireland.

NISRA

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Annex A – United Nations definitions relating to international migration

The migration definition used in population estimates comes from the United Nations statistical definition of a long-term international migrant:

“A person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year (12 months), so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence. From the perspective of the country of departure the person will be a long-term emigrant and from that of the country of arrival the person will be a long-term immigrant.”⁵

The United Nations also defines a short-term international migrant as

“A person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least 3 months but less than a year (12 months), except in cases where the movement to that country is for purposes of recreation, holiday, visits to friends and relatives, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimage. For purposes of international migration statistics, the country of usual residence of short-term migrants is considered to be the country of destination during the period they spend in it.”⁶

Another term that is often used in the local context is “Migrant Worker”, the United Nations defines this to be

“A person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national”.⁷

⁵ Taken from “Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration. UN 1998” available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sconcerns/migration/migrmethods.htm#B>

⁶ Taken from “Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration. United Nations 1998” available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sconcerns/migration/migrmethods.htm#C>

⁷ Taken from “International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. United Nations 1990” available at <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu6/2/fs24.htm>

Annex B – Recommendations to National Statistician by task force on International Migration

In the short-term the task force noted a number of actions. By 2008 the Office of National Statistics (ONS) will:

- I. improve passenger survey estimates of migration by boosting the sample of emigrants in the International Passenger Survey (IPS) from January 2007 and revising the assumptions in the mid-2006 population estimates on numbers of international migrants whose actual length of stay differs from their stated intentions (to be published in summer 2007).
- II. improve estimates of the geographic distribution of international migrants at regional level, by combining Labour Force Survey (LFS) and IPS data, for inclusion in the mid-2006 population estimates (to be published in summer 2007).
- III. produce a paper on the feasibility of constructing stock and flow estimates of short-term migration. It will include illustrative figures on flows from the IPS and will focus on what might be achieved in 2007, mainly at national level.
- IV. feed definitions used in producing population statistics into the planning of relevant surveys in 2008 and the 2011 Census.

It is also recognised that further longer term work is needed and the following recommendations are planned for 2008-2012:

- I. Obtain more information about migrants as they enter or leave the country. For example through port surveys, the e-Borders project which will include passport scanning or information from landing cards.

- II. Obtain more comprehensive and timely information about migrants living in this country. For example by developing a communal establishment component of the Integrated Household Survey, surveying local authorities, employers or agencies providing work for migrants, using the 2011 Census to identify short and long term migrants and accessing administrative information that potentially identifies migrants.
- III. Use data linkage to obtain better information relating migrants' intentions at entry to the UK to subsequent events, such as employment, having a child and when they leave the country. For example by looking at the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study, health registers, School Census, information on student migrants from the Higher Education Statistics Agency and looking at the feasibility of linking data sets together to provide additional information on migrants.
- IV. Provision of more timely, robust key indicators of migrant numbers. By improving statistical and demographic models to enhance migration and population estimates.
- V. Bring together all the statistics collected across Government on migration and migrants in a single UK-wide report, as there is currently no single official source. Key information on migration collected across government should be brought together in one place to achieve coherent reporting. This should be summarised in an Annual Report on Migration Statistics, by the National Statistics Centre for Demography.

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