

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**



Date: 13 November 2013

Subject: **International Migration Update**

Report of: Roy Millard, Manager, South East Strategic Partnership for Migration

**Recommendation**

SEEC Executive members are asked to note the findings of the update and consider the potential local impact in their areas.

**1. Background**

1.1 SESPM – the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration – is funded by the Home Office and hosted by SEEC. Cllr Paul Watkins, Leader of Dover DC is SESPM Chairman.

**2. Data Changes**

2.1 New international migration data have recently been released by ONS, which now include adjustments from the 2011 census. The figures have also been retrospectively revised to include an extra 250,000 international migrants UK-wide since 2004-5. Our initial analysis for the South East suggests the changes have resulted in downward revisions to net migration and the number of international migrant arrivals over the past 3 years. Key points from the new data are below.

2.2 **Net Migration:** Between 2010-11 and 2011-12 net international migration into the South East fell by 18% to 14,100. This is 10% of the national total, the lowest South East figure in the past 10 years, and a reduction of 64% from the peak in 2004-5. In 2011-12 the figures show 63,000 international migrants arriving in the South East and 49,000 leaving to give the net figure of circa 14,000. The previous year 71,000 people arrived and 54,000 left, giving a net figure of 17,000.

2.3 It is worth noting that net migration is an estimate and that a smaller net figure does not necessarily mean a smaller local impact as turnover of numbers can have a significant effect on local services. The recent 18% rate of reduction in the South East is considerably lower than in other areas – for example London saw a 32% fall. In the last quarter net migration has risen nationally.

2.4 **Migrant National Insurance Number (NINo) Registrations:** In the South East there were 20% fewer registrations in 2012 than the previous year, with 59,000 registered. This compares to a 24% drop for the UK. Consistent with previous years, the South East is second only to London in NINo registrations and represents 12% of the national total. The top 5 South East areas for registrations were Kent CC, Oxfordshire CC, Surrey CC, West Sussex CC and Brighton & Hove.

2.5 **Asylum:** Nationally, there was a rise of 18% over the last year, but this was 70% lower than the 2002 peak. The South East accommodates only around 1.5% of the national total, currently around 400 asylum seekers in receipt of central government support in three locations: Hastings, Portsmouth & Southampton. The top countries of origin are Pakistan, Iran, Sri Lanka and Syria (it is anticipated that intake from Syria will rise). Albania is the main source of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and the Home Office is working on a strategy to address this.

**3. Bulgaria and Romania**

- 3.1 The overall impact of the ending of transitional arrangements, which will allow Bulgarian and Romanian nationals full access to the UK labour market, has been the subject of much debate, speculation and forecasting, although it is proving difficult to accurately predict the numbers of likely migrants.
- 3.2 SESPM is working with the University of Reading to assess the potential implications for the South East. Headline findings suggest that the South East will remain an attractive destination for Bulgarian and Romanian migrants. Pull factors include the presence of existing communities and employment opportunities; push factors include the cost of accommodation.
- 3.3 While there are benefits, such as providing a supply of skilled and low skilled labour, there is also potential for a negative impact on social cohesion including particular issues relating to Roma communities, increased demand on public services and displacement of some existing low paid workers. Kent CC has recently published estimates of the projected impact of increased migration from Bulgaria & Romania. They point out that national income tax gains will not help councils fund extra services, estimated to cost up to £3m a year in Kent.

#### **4. Economic impact of migration**

- 4.1 Research published on 5 November by University College London reports that immigrants to the UK have made a substantial contribution to public finances. It says migrants arriving after 1999 were 45% less likely to receive state benefits or tax credits than UK natives in 2000-2011. In the 10 years to 2011, migrants from the EU, Norway, Iceland & Liechtenstein contributed 34% more in taxes than they received in benefits; other migrants contributed 2% more in taxes than they received; British people paid 11% less in tax than they received.
- 4.2 As outlined in para 3.3, however, most tax gains benefit central government and do not directly help councils who need to provide local services for migrants.

#### **5. New Immigration Bill**

- 5.1 The Bill is planned for introduction in the 2013/14 session of Parliament. It covers:
- Reforming the removals and appeals system to make removals quicker and easier for those with no right to be in the UK.
  - Preventing illegal migrants accessing and abusing public services or the labour market. This includes requirements for landlords to undertake immigration status checks to prevent illegal migrants accessing the private rented sector.
  - A new requirement for temporary migrants to make a contribution to the NHS.
  - New powers to better regulate the immigration advice sector.

#### **6. SESPM Projects**

- 6.1 SESPM has led a successful bid to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to develop a pilot project on a more effective model for the return of former unaccompanied asylum seeker children who have had asylum claims refused but where removal has been delayed. The project will run for a year from November.
- 6.2. SESPM is co-ordinating a potential South East Anti Trafficking/Slavery Partnership with a comprehensive range of partners to address prevention, protection and support effective prosecutions.

#### **7. Afghan Relocation**

- 7.1 The Government scheme to offer relocation to a small number of qualifying Afghans who served with the British forces was presented at September's SEEC Executive. The Home Office has now made available a draft funding agreement for consideration. Four authorities in the South East have expressed an interest in the scheme and we continue to provide a conduit to negotiate with the Home Office.