

Baseline Strategic Assessment into the Impact of Migration on Policing in the South East

This research was conducted to provide partners in the South East with a baseline assessment of the impact of migration on policing and the criminal justice system.

It draws on the experiences not only of enforcement agencies but of a range of public and voluntary sector bodies who responded to the call for information.

As a baseline assessment this report provides a potential foundation for more detailed and specific research. This report is written at a time of economic downturn when typically anti immigrant feelings increase.

It sets out to objectively scope the facts relating to the impact of migration on policing in the region; in so doing has identified a number of information gaps that suggest more detailed and specific research in these may be helpful in both deepening understanding and informing effective approaches.

This report found the following central issues:

- **Understanding the Context of Migration:** Policing needs to be informed by the wider migration issues and can be more effective and efficient when put into context. For example policing issues and interventions around destitute asylum seekers are likely to be significantly different to dealing with organised crime gangs from Eastern Europe. In the SE the main reasons for migration are work and study and there is relatively little impact on policing.
- **The Need for Cultural Awareness:** There appears to be a significant positive impact in effective policing where there has been a deepening of awareness of migrant communities. In some areas such as Arun the introduction of a PSCO with language skills and awareness has assisted in building trust and respect.
- **Interpretation and Translation:** Where information is gathered this often related to a need such as interpreter costs. Whilst these cannot always be attributed to migrants there is a reasonable correlation. There is a potential to reduce costs for example exploring interpreter sharing and use of technology.
- **Destitution and Street Living:** There are pockets across the South East where rough sleeping in some migrant communities are major contributors to community tension examples of successful multi-agency interventions exist in areas including West Sussex, Gravesham and Slough.

- **Local Expertise:** Specialist knowledge has developed in some areas such as Kent and Hampshire in relation to Gurkha communities and a history of accommodating newly arrived asylum seekers including Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASCs) and care leavers.
- **The Role of First Response:** The police often are among the first bodies to pick up on information of relevance to other partners for example connections with employment agencies provides intelligence around the possible local levels of migrants intending to come the UK for work (particularly relevant in objectively assessing the likely impact of the ending of transitional arrangements for the A2 countries).
- **Migrants as Victims and Perpetrators of Crime:** Approaches to issues such as human trafficking have resulted in greater awareness around the potential criminalisation of victims and the need to ensure they are treated appropriately and the potential for intelligence gathering is not lost.
- **Data Gaps:** Information can be often anecdotal as migration status is not always required or recorded where a policing intervention takes place. This presents challenges in providing accurate data and presents with a propensity for confusing ethnicity with migration status.