

European Union (EU) expansion in 2004 has been the catalyst for an increase in international migration to the UK. There is particular interest in migration for employment given the opening of the UK labour market to migrants from these new EU member states. Interest is in all such moves, regardless of how long the stay lasts for.

In the UK, the United Nations (UN) recommendation for defining an international long-term migrant is used. That is, a person who changes his or her country of usual residence for a period of at least a year, so that the country of destination effectively becomes the country of usual residence. In January 2007 the Office for National Statistics (ONS) published a feasibility study on making short-term migration estimates, moves made for less than 12 months. The starting point for this research was the UN definition of short-term migration:

*"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"*

In order to gauge how well the UN definition met user requirements, feedback was requested to the feasibility report. Specifically, users were asked whether it was appropriate to consider a wider definition by including shorter lengths of stay or other reasons for visit. This paper summarises research undertaken in response to this feedback. It is concluded that different users have different requirements for short-term migration estimation. For example users of macro economic statistics have an interest in the number of temporary foreign workers (at the national level) whereas local service providers require a broader definition, not just those employed. Furthermore, it is concluded that, for the UK economy in particular, it is important to provide separate estimates of migrants in employment and migrants entering to study. This is due to increasing numbers of temporary foreign workers and the large number of foreign students coming to the UK for less than a year.

The paper also presents estimates of short-term migration into and out of England & Wales using the definitions developed. These estimates are based on a port survey, the International Passenger Survey (IPS). IPS data used in this paper are based on 'completed flow' i.e. individuals are sampled as they return to the UK or country of origin. Data are also available based on migrants' intentions when they initially enter/leave the UK. These estimates, referred to as 'intended flow', are more timely though may contain inaccuracies due to intentions changing after arrival.

Estimates are presented in the paper for 2004 and 2005 so cover the key period of EU expansion. Among the key findings are shown the increase in temporary foreign workers over the period and the small relative size of flows for employment/study compared to those made for other reasons, for example visiting friends and family and for holiday reasons. It is also shown that there is a clear skew towards very short stays, lasting less than three months. Inclusion of stays lasting less than a month is inappropriate, the size of such flows would dominate any estimates.

Finally the paper presents a new method for estimating short-term migration stocks (population present) along with resulting estimates. Seasonal variability is a particular issue for short-term migration stock measurement given that many migrants only stay a few months, hence the point in time the estimate refers to is very important. A port survey such as the IPS is not designed to produce point estimates hence the approach developed is based on calculating the number of 'person days' spent as a short-term migrants. It is the sum of these person days, over a set period, which when expressed in years is referred to as the Long-Term Migration Equivalent (LTME). It is recognised that similar LTME estimates can be produced by a large number of very short moves or a slightly lower number of longer moves. Hence the LTME is supplemented by an average length of stay. Stock estimates presented inevitably are considerably smaller than the flow estimates provided.

The conclusions of the paper include:

- Short-term migration estimates based on the UN definition are required,
- Alternative definitions should be able to be constructed by other data provided, for example on wider length of stay and reason for visit criteria,
- Separate estimates for employment and study should also be provided given the large number of foreign students to the UK and the increasing number of temporary foreign workers,
- Estimates provided in the paper show the increase in temporary foreign workers between 2004 and 2005,
- The UN definition is very specific. Broadening the definition means far more moves are classified as short-term migrants,
- There is a very clear skew towards very short stays (1 to 3 months)