

Migrant Workers and the Labour Market

Review of LSC research
on labour market
participation, skills
and skills provision
for migrant workers

January 2007

Of interest to everyone wanting information
about migrant workers and the labour market

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Introduction and Background

1. The Policy Research Institute at Leeds Metropolitan University was asked by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide a 'rapid review' of four studies produced on behalf of the LSC into the links between migration and skills:
 - LSC (2006a) *Migration Briefing: Analysis of UK migrant stock and inflows*, Unpublished report (MTG 25/2006) (31 May 2006).
 - LSC (2006b) *Migration and Skills (Summary)*, Unpublished report, MTG 24/2006 (31 May 2006).
 - LSC (2006c) *ESOL Briefing*, Unpublished report, MTG 26/2006 (31 May 2006).
 - Directions Research and Marketing (2006) *Employer Perceptions of Migrant Workers Research Report*, Coventry: LSC.
2. The review draws together the findings from these four studies under some common headings. It was necessary to consult more documents than those four provided by the LSC. In the event, several of the documents and research reports that underpinned the LSC documents were consulted in order to ensure an accurate reflection of the findings they contain.

Stocks and Flows of Migrants

Definitions of migrants

3. There is no single or common definition of migrants and there is often confusion between migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and the foreign-born domestic population. Because many of the studies reviewed in this report used different definitions, no standard approach has been taken here. However, the report does try to highlight differences in trends and data between migrants from different source countries and between migrants and more recent inflows, especially from the east European states that recently acceded to the European Union (EU). The implications of the lack of definitional clarity are important, however. As is highlighted throughout this review, the variations between different migrant groups are exceptionally important when considering their skills, skills needs or the ways in which they might access education and training, as well as their motivations and barriers to learning. As such, greater definitional clarity and additional research are required to understand the varying needs of different groups before addressing some of the issues and implications raised by the following discussion.
5. While there are significant numbers from Lithuania and Slovakia, the vast majority of applicants to the WRS scheme are from Poland. The majority are also of working age, being in the 18–24 or 25–34 age group. There is a slightly higher number of males than females. Only a small number of applicants declare that they have dependants living with them in the UK.
6. While charting the number of applicants rather than applications helps to reduce double counting, it does not necessarily produce an accurate assessment of long-term population changes as a result of migration since most of the applicants come to the UK for only a short period of time.
7. The broader trends in admissions to the UK on work permits have also risen over recent years. For instance, the number of migrants admitted to the UK with a work permit has increased from just over 92,000 in 2000 to more than 124,000 in 2004. Even excluding the increases in migrants from A8 countries, this figure continued to rise between 2003 and 2004 from 111,280 to 121,235 (Dudley et al., 2005: 18).

Recent trends

4. The most significant recent trend in migration to the UK was the accession of 10 east European states to the European Economic Area (EEA) in May 2004. (These 10 were Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.) Workers from eight of these countries (that is, excluding Cyprus and Malta, whose nationals have free movement of labour) – called henceforth the accession 8 (A8) – are eligible to apply for permission to work in the UK through the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS). Data on the flow of migrants from the A8 countries suggests that flows to the UK continue to be large. For instance, approved applicants (rather than applications) numbered 126,000 in 2004 and rose to 205,000 in 2005. For the first three-quarters of 2006, the figure was 156,000 (DWP, 2006).
8. Over recent years, there has also been a slight shift towards more short-term rather than long-term (over 12 months) work-permit migrants. With EU nationals not having to register for a work permit, most applications are from outside Europe. Around 40 per cent of all work-permit holders were from Asia, with India being the main country of origin. A total of 24 per cent were from the Americas, with nationals of the USA accounting for the majority of these (Home Office, 2005: 39).
9. The number of non-EEA students entering the UK has fallen overall in recent years. However, the majority of the reduction is of European nationals outside the EEA; and when students from the A8 countries are removed from the data, the trend is much less noticeable and even reversed between 2003 and 2004 (Dudley et al., 2005: 18).

Longer-term stocks and flows

10. Labour Force Survey (LFS) data suggests that there are around 5.3 million foreign-born residents in England, including 3 million foreign nationals. Around 40 per cent of the migrant stock are from countries in Europe, 25 per cent are of South Asian origin and 17 per cent are of African origin (LSC, 2006a). Overall, net migration to the UK over recent years has increasingly contributed to population growth, offsetting natural factors such as population decline driven by a falling birth rate and population ageing, since most in-migration is of younger workers, many of whom go on to have children (Horsfield, 2005: 117).

Geographical distribution

11. The majority of migrants to the UK are based in London and the South East, with the distribution of migrants among other regions being broadly proportional to their share of national population (LSC, 2006a). However, recent research suggests that A8 migrants have begun to locate more widely since accession (Portes and French, 2005). Other research suggests that the transitory nature of much of the (especially short-term) migrant population means that local-level mapping is often difficult to conduct (LSC, 2006b: 5).

Drivers of Migration Trends

12. There are many reasons underpinning individual migration decisions. Where official data exists, it tends to suggest that the most important reasons for migration to the UK are for work, study or to join a partner or immediate family (Horsfield, 2005: 126). However, a more sophisticated understanding can be gained by differentiating between factors that 'push' migrants away from one country and 'pull' them towards another.

Push factors

13. Factors that act to push migrants away from their country of origin can include 'a lack of life chances, lower living standards, political and social instability or repression, lack of available opportunities to fruitfully utilise skills in the home country, natural disasters and ecological deterioration' (Nunn, 2005: 31).

Pull factors

14. By contrast, relatively advantageous conditions in host countries pull migrants towards them, such as 'higher wages, job opportunities, good working conditions and access to research funding, freedom from political instability or oppression' (Nunn, 2005: 32).
15. The UK demonstrates many of these pull factors with a powerful combination of demographic, economic and policy factors. For instance, the ageing population creates many opportunities in the labour market for younger migrants. The combination of industrial change and an increasing skills intensity in the labour market (as a result of the need to pursue global competitiveness) means there are significant skills gaps in the labour market. In addition, the UK labour market has been operating at close to full employment for several years, with those sections of the population that are outside the labour market facing structural barriers to entry. This means that migrants are increasingly seen as an attractive source of labour by many employers, especially in London, as a recent CBI survey demonstrates (CBI, 2006). Indeed,

documents accompanying the most recent pre-Budget report suggest that the continued high levels of migration to the UK are projected to continue into the future, boosting the working-age population and economic growth rates in the future (HM Treasury, 2006).

16. During past periods of lower employer demand for labour, during which there have also been higher levels of domestic unemployment, the scale of migration has slowed, suggesting that a key determinant of migration flows is the level of employer demand. The operation of the work-permit system also clearly enhances the leverage of employer demand in this regard by making it harder to justify work-permit applications in cases where there is little or no evidence of skills shortages (IPPR, 2005: 19–20).

Policy Context in the UK

17. The UK operates a managed migration system that shapes immigration regulations partly in relation to the skills needs of the labour market. Reform of the system to enhance the focus on matching migration rules to skills needs has been under discussion for some time and is based on allocating points according to the skills needs of the economy and the skills of individuals applying to live and work in the UK (Home Office, 2006a). The Government has more recently proposed the basis on which the new system will work and is consulting on the operation of a migration advisory committee. This committee will advise the Government on how to allocate points against five main categories of economic migrants in order to ensure that migration policy meets the skills needs of the economy (Home Office, 2006b: 49). The five categories that will be used for judging the status of applications to live and work in the UK will be:

- tier 1: highly skilled individuals
- tier 2: skilled workers with a specific job offer to fill gaps in the UK labour force
- tier 3: limited numbers of lower skilled workers needed to fill specific temporary labour shortages
- tier 4: students
- tier 5: people allowed to work in the UK for a limited period of time to satisfy primarily non-economic objectives (for example, young people on temporary work experience or gap year studies, professional musicians on tour and other performers).

18. Points will be allocated on the basis of an assessment of the ability of potential migrants to contribute to the labour market successfully and to comply with conditions placed on their leave to stay in the UK.

Labour Market Participation

Economic contribution of migrants

19. Despite high-profile media debate on the issue, it is generally accepted within evidence-informed debate that migrant labour does not generally disadvantage existing workers by displacing them or depressing wages. In the main, it is argued that this is because migrant labour tends to fill skills gaps or shortages and thus assists in the expansion of growth sectors rather than simply displacing existing workers, especially in relation to skilled employment (Glover et al., 2001; Gott and Johnston, 2002; Gilpin et al., 2006). However, the impact of migration in this regard is highly dependent on a number of factors such as the speed and scale of migration and the extent to which migrants are in competition with existing workers. It may thus be that while the general effect is not significant, there may be some negative impacts on existing workers in very specific circumstances and locations.
20. Research on the fiscal contribution of migrants indicates that this contribution is substantial and disproportionately higher than that of the non-migrant population (Glover et al., 2001: 43). For instance, research published by the Institute for Public Policy Research (Sriskandarajah et al., 2005) suggests that the higher wages of some migrants means that they pay higher rates of taxation than the rest of the population. As such, immigrants made up 9.6 per cent of the population but accounted for 10 per cent of government revenue in 2003–04. Total revenue from migrants has also grown over recent years from £33.8 billion in 1999–2000 to £41.2 billion in 2003–04, a much faster rate of growth than for the wider population.
21. This research also suggests that migrants make a net contribution to the exchequer when tax receipts are compared with expenditure, and that this net contribution is higher for migrants than for other groups. Finally, the gap between the net contribution of migrants and that of the wider population has in fact grown over recent years. As such, this research suggests not only that the oft-cited argument that migrants are a drain on resources is untrue, but also that migrants make a net contribution. This is because of the age structure of the migrant population and because many migrants are in highly skilled and highly paid work. However, even those not in high-paid work often work long hours and pay significant amounts of tax. The contribution of migrants has led some to conclude that:
- if there were no foreign-born people in the UK, taxes (or borrowing) would have to rise, or expenditure would have to be cut, by £2.6 billion (the equivalent of about 1 pence on the basic rate of income tax).*
- Glover et al., 2001: 44
22. Contemporary concerns about the impact of recent migrants from the A8 countries have also been the subject of research. These concerns have been expressed in the context of recent small rises in the unemployment claimant count and fears that Jobcentre Plus is being bypassed by employers who favour migrant workers over UK-born job-seekers, thus hindering the achievement of Welfare to Work objectives.
23. Some research and analysis have been undertaken to investigate these issues. While not fully conclusive, the analysis suggests that the impact of A8 migration has neither affected rates of Jobcentre Plus notified vacancies nor been correlated in any significant way with increasing unemployment (Portes and French, 2005; Gilpin et al., 2006).

Labour market participation of migrants

24. Analysis of LFS data suggests that members of the foreign-born population are less likely to be employed and more likely to be unemployed and inactive than the UK-born population. For instance, the employment rate of the foreign-born population stood at 63 per cent in the period March–May 2005. There are several reasons for this. Part of the reason is the effect of barriers to labour market participation faced by some migrants (see para. 30). However, other factors also affect the data, such as the higher proportion of full-time

students among the foreign born, the impacts of family migration and also the impacts of asylum seekers who may be unable to work due to government regulations (IPPR, 2005: 8).

25. For these reasons, it is confusing to treat migrants as a homogeneous group when considering their labour market performance. For instance, very low employment rates are recorded for immigrants from some countries such as Somalia, Angola, Iran, Albania and Ethiopia (LSC, 2006a: 5). Research has also in the past identified differences between white and non-white immigrants, with the former demonstrating participation rates similar to those of the UK-born white population while the latter have historically had much lower participation rates and been much more vulnerable to changes in the economic cycle. This research also suggests that there are cases where the second generation of immigrant families have higher rates of participation in the labour market than newly arrived migrants (Dustmann et al., 2003: 28–9). Other research suggests that the employment rate of white immigrants may be higher because they are from English-speaking and industrialised countries with relatively high rates of employment for immigrants from Australia and North America but lower employment rates from non-EU countries in Western Europe. Inactivity is relatively pronounced among women from non-EU west European countries and the Indian sub-continent (Haque, 2002: 17).
26. Contemporary analysis of more recent migrants to the UK from the A8 countries shows rapidly increasing employment rates during the period since accession. For instance, in summer 2003, the employment rate for A8 migrants was 57.3 per cent, below that of non-migrants and the migrant average. By summer 2005, this had risen to 80.6 per cent. It is argued that this reflects both a decrease in illegal working and the motivations of A8 migrants as being work related (Gilpin et al., 2006: 21; Portes and French, 2005: 15).
27. Migrants are more likely to be employed in the service sector than are the UK born, regardless of country of origin (Haque, 2002: 18). Using relatively recent LFS data, the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) suggests that migrants are disproportionately represented in banking, finance and insurance and distribution, and hotels and catering when compared with the UK-born population (IPPR, 2005: 5–6). However, again, migrants are not a homogeneous group. For instance, there are variations in industrial sector of employment according to country of origin. Thus, those from the Indian sub-continent and the rest of Asia are concentrated in distribution, hotels and catering, while those from Australasia are concentrated in financial and business services (Haque, 2002: 19). Migrants from African states tend to cluster in transport and communications industries (Salt, 2005: 43).
28. Research on the industrial distribution of A8 migrants shows that they are most commonly found in distribution, hotels and catering, manufacturing and agriculture. However, this varies between regions, reflecting the regional prominence of different sectors. For instance, in London, the majority of A8 migrants are registered to work in distribution, and hotels and catering, while in more rural areas such as Kent, the Marches, Norfolk, Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire, the majority are registered to work in primary and agricultural industries (Gilpin et al., 2006: 20–1; Salt, 2005: 45). Generally, the impact of A8 migration is increasing the proportion of migrant workers in lower skilled employment (Gilpin et al., 2006: 20–1).
29. Data on the levels of pay of migrant workers suggests that they are relatively over-represented when compared with UK-born workers in the highest pay brackets and also in some of the lower pay brackets (IPPR, 2005: 5–6), possibly reflecting the skills profile documented below (see paras 34–8). Generally, migrants have been thought to earn more than their UK-born counterparts, a finding that held when compared at different skills levels. That is, a UK-born degree holder was thought to earn less than a migrant worker with comparable qualifications (Haque, 2002: 21–2). However, the data can be confusing in aggregate form. For instance, other research compares the ethnicity of migrants and suggests that while white immigrants tend to have relatively high earnings when compared with both non-white immigrants and UK-born workers, the earnings of some non-white (particularly Bangladeshi and Pakistani) immigrants are much lower (Dustmann et al., 2003: 47–8). In addition, analysis of earnings data for A8 migrants on the WRS scheme suggests that their average earnings are somewhere between 47 and 63 per cent of UK average earnings (Gilpin et al., 2006: 20–1). Should current A8 migration trends continue, the average pay of migrants may reduce significantly. This is despite the relatively high level of skills held by many of these migrants (see para. 34).

Barriers to labour market participation faced by migrants

30. Some of the factors explaining lower levels of labour market participation by migrant workers have already been summarised above as being related to the impact of family migration, the proportion of students in the group and regulations applied to some migrants that prevent them from working legally. Other factors might include skills deficiencies for some migrant groups, difficulties in gaining recognition for qualifications, cultural barriers (especially for women from some migrant countries) and labour market discrimination. Several research studies suggest that language proficiency is one of the major determinants of labour market success both in terms of participation rates and also wage gaps (Dustmann et al., 2003: 56–7; Institute for Employment Studies, 2004). The Institute for Employment Research suggests that the barriers faced by migrants include a lack of understanding of the labour market and the job-search process and a lack of appropriate work experience (Green et al., 2006: 17).
33. These employers did not think that there were skills or training needs associated with employing migrants, other than in relation to English language skills, and skills and knowledge associated with settling in a new country, for example in relation to culture, the tax, benefits and public service systems, health and safety, and basic office and computer skills.

Employers' views and practices towards migrants

31. Research for the LSC considered the views and practices of employers towards migrants (Directions Research and Marketing, 2006). It found three main types of employer attitude in relation to employing migrants. These were negative 'reluctants', dispassionate 'pragmatists', who focused simply on the potential contribution from migrants and issues of cost, and finally 'advocates', who were extremely positive.
32. This research was focused on employers who were employing migrants performing relatively low-skilled roles. It found that while employers recruited migrants because they could not source UK-born staff, this was not necessarily because of skills deficiencies but because of crucial differences in work orientation and attitude. Migrants were reported to be:

eager to please, more determined to succeed, reliable and punctual, courteous and polite, obedient and respectful of authority and able to work flexible and longer hours as they often have fewer social or familial commitments.

Directions Research and Marketing, 2006: 16

Skills and Skills Gaps in the Migrant Workforce

General skills and qualifications

34. Data from the LFS can offer a snapshot of the skills of foreign nationals based in the UK, using the usual proxy of highest qualification attained. At the broadest level, research, using LFS data from 2000, shows that, overall, immigrants tend to be more polarised in terms of their educational attainment than the wider population. For instance, the proportion of immigrants to the UK with a degree-level qualification as against those with no qualification at all is higher than for the rest of the population.
35. However, migrants are not a homogeneous group and qualification levels differ widely between the migrants from different countries of origin. For instance, the proportion of immigrants with degree-level qualifications is substantially higher for Africans (33 per cent), Chinese (31 per cent) and people from English-speaking developed countries (26 per cent) such as the US, Australia and New Zealand and those categorised only as 'other white' (32 per cent) (Dustmann et al., 2003). Qualification rates are also likely to differ widely by a number of other causal variables such as method of entry to the UK, level of education, English language proficiency and years since migration (Green et al., 2006).
36. More recent research using data from the LFS for 2005 confirms the polarisation of migrants' qualification profile in relation to that of the wider population. However, the apparent polarisation might at least be partly explained by the number of migrant LFS responders that cite 'other' qualifications as a result of difficulties in mapping their qualifications to the UK system (IPPR, 2005). While this might be relatively straightforward at degree level, it is much more difficult for other qualifications.
37. This work did not explore issues related to the different qualification profile of migrants from different countries but, interestingly, did consider differences in the skills profile of migrants in different host countries. This comparison suggests, first, that migrants in the UK are more likely to have higher-level qualifications than in many other countries (the UK was behind Canada and Australia on this measure but ahead of the US, Sweden, France and Germany). However, it also supports the notion that migrants in the UK are polarised in terms of qualifications, with Sweden in particular having a more equal distribution. France, Germany and the Netherlands have a less-skilled migrant population than the UK, according to this research.
38. Research undertaken on behalf of the LSC by the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA, now the Learning and Skills Network) suggests that new migrants from the A8 countries tend to be highly qualified but lacking English language skills (Sachdev and Harries, 2006). However, these findings were based on small-scale qualitative research and there is insufficient evidence available at the present time from other sources to enable the wider relevance of these findings to be interpreted. What is agreed on by several sources is that, regardless of their technical capacity and qualifications, these migrants tend not to be occupying high-skilled roles (Salt, 2005), suggesting a need for further research into the extent to which A8 migrants are working on a temporary basis in order to improve their English language skills before moving into occupational roles in a global labour market (which might mean further periods of work in the UK) more suited to their skills and qualifications. The findings of such research would be instructive in shaping decisions about the type of learning provision to be offered to A8 migrants and the responsibility for funding it.

English language skills

39. Much of the research on the labour market performance of migrants, both new and long term, suggests or implies that a large number of migrants lack English language skills. For instance, Green et al. (2005) draws on local case study data to suggest that there is currently an unmet demand for English language skills provision. However, while there is no reason to question the conclusion, it does need to be contextualised. For instance, the case study research was undertaken during a period of high migration. Together with the changing pattern of migration, with increasing short-term flows from A8 countries as a proportion of the whole, this may mean that there is a need to differentiate between the skills needs of existing settled communities, new migrants joining these communities and refugees on the one hand, and short-term flows from A8 countries on the other.

40. On this issue, several reports suggest that A8 migrants also require access to English language skills provision, though the data that underpins these conclusions is less clear, and sources do acknowledge the need for better quality data about the specific types of demand from different groups (LSC, 2006b: 7; NIACE, 2006). For instance, the ways in which A8 migrants might access provision in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) might be different from those of other communities. Additional research appears to be necessary to find out more about the nature of the needs of different migrant groups and to understand the specific nature of that demand, including barriers and attitudes to learning.

Assistance and Skills Provision to Migrant Workers

General skills provision

41. There are many issues for skills provision arising from the research reviewed above. The first of these is that different types of migrant may require different types of skills provision in terms of the subject area, the level of provision, the method of accessing it, and also, potentially, the provider of education and training.
42. There are also differences according to whether or not migrants are already in employment and, if so, the nature of their employer. For instance, some migrants, such as those entering the UK through the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme, may be relatively well qualified already and using these skills in high-level work, thus requiring little public intervention to provide training.
43. On the other hand, other groups clearly require significant public intervention to enable them to overcome structural barriers to labour market participation, most notably cultural acclimatisation and awareness and English language skills. Indeed, overcoming these barriers is an important first step in accessing training and education provision (Green et al., 2005: 17). Those in work will require flexible means of access. The transitory nature of some migrants suggests the need for modularised provision, transferable credits and flexible awards. Research on refugee needs suggests that the nature of the provider is a factor, with the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and refugee and diaspora networks being important in facilitating access (Green et al., 2005: 18).
44. There may also be a need for some education and training of employers in relation to the comparability of overseas qualifications to ensure that migrant workers are not disbarred from the labour market on the grounds of misunderstanding.

Information, advice and guidance

45. The research summarised above also suggests that information, advice and guidance (IAG) is important in facilitating access to both training and education and also to the labour market itself, with many migrants not understanding how the labour market works or what labour market and vacancy information is available and from where (LSC, 2006b: 4).
46. In other, more specific cases, such as in relation to migrants from A8 countries, some migrants are clearly working in roles that do not utilise all their skills. This suggests that IAG on life and labour market skills such as job-search and the operation of the labour market might help to raise aggregate productivity by making better use of these skills. However, consideration would need to be given to understanding the impacts that this might have in relation to wages, competition and displacement in other parts of the labour market. More research would be needed into the specific skills, qualifications and aspirations of A8 migrants, the barriers to their undertaking work more suited to their level of qualifications and how this meets the needs of the UK labour market.

ESOL provision

47. The LSC has commissioned research from KPMG on ESOL provision (LSC, 2006c). Helpfully, this research recognises that there are distinct groups of migrants with differing needs in terms of access to ESOL provision, such as asylum seekers needing help with integration, foreign-born citizens seeking citizenship and migrant workers seeking English language competency for work-permit purposes. The KPMG study reveals that there were nearly 500,000 ESOL learners in 2004–05 enrolled at FE colleges. Taking into account the large proportion of part-time learners in this group, this equated to just over 215,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) learners. Of the FTE ESOL learners, 15 per cent were asylum seekers.

48. The study shows that provision is greatest in London, which is in line with the needs of the migrant population. However, across the board there are challenges associated with the proportion of enrolments that are on National Qualification Framework (NQF) courses and that count towards the Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets, and therefore are a priority for public funding, and those that are not. This is again highest in London but even there is only 13 per cent and 7 per cent respectively. In many other regions, including the regions where new migrant flows are also concentrated (such as the South East, East of England and Yorkshire and the Humber), the proportion of ESOL enrolments that are on NQF courses and that count towards PSA targets is minimal (LSC, 2006c: 4).
49. The Committee of Inquiry on ESOL, established by the National Institute of Continuing Adult Education (NIACE), was critical of the links between employability and ESOL provision. It also criticised the quality of ESOL provision and suggested that additional emphasis needs to be given to ensuring that ESOL teachers can act as a point of referral to IAG (NIACE, 2006). Most ESOL learners are from UK-born minority ethnic groups, with British Asian learners being the biggest group among them (LSC, 2006c: 4). A large proportion of the total is unhelpfully recorded as 'white (other)', though the NIACE Inquiry suggested that an increasing (now 6 per cent) proportion (over 13-fold since 2003) of these is from the A8. Polish enrolments have increased 18-fold over that period (LSC, 2006a).
50. The increase in demand from A8 migrants for ESOL provision is part of a general picture of excess demand with inadequate supply, meaning that some providers are increasing or introducing entry criteria. This may help to meet the national PSA targets, but will also clearly limit access by some potential learners with the greatest need.
51. The research undertaken for the LSC strongly suggests that increased provision is needed to meet the demand from A8 migrants in particular. While there is no evidence to question this assertion, it will be important to heed the suggestion in the same report that additional research is needed on the nature, scale and character of the demand for learning from A8 migrants.
- ### Future needs
52. There is likely to be continuing high demand for ESOL and a need to address the large number of detailed recommendations regarding ESOL provision made by the NIACE Committee of Inquiry. In particular, there will be a need to ensure increased provision, better quality of provision, more links with other vocational and employability courses (a point also made by Leitch, 2006) and enhanced transferability between providers of accrued learner credits. In addition, a variety of different types of provision, including distance and flexible provision, will also be necessary to meet the needs of excluded groups, including migrants working in inaccessible locations.
53. Research for the LSC also suggests that A8 migrants may wish to progress to further education (FE) and higher education (HE) study as they become competent in English and that planning needs to be put in place to address this. Additionally, several recent government reviews have emphasised the need to strengthen skills provision to enable progression in the labour market and this will be as important to migrants as it is to the rest of the population, but may again require increased links between ESOL provision, IAG and investment and planning for progression.

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