



International migrants in Wales

Key points

- An **international migrant** is defined as someone who has, or intends to, change his or her country of usual residence for a period of at least a year
- The Welsh Government has responsibility towards international migrants living in Wales under its **housing, health, education, social service** functions and through its **community cohesion agenda**
- Public authorities and those carrying out a public function need **good quality, up-to-date local level data** on how many migrants are living in the area, their nationality and characteristics in order to meet their duties under the **Equality Act 2010**
- Although there has been international migration to Wales for centuries, **there has only been a net inflow of international migrants** to Wales since 1994
- On average there has been a **net inflow of international migrants of around 2,400 per year** since 1994 but this figure significantly increased from May 2004 when eight central and eastern European (A8) countries joined the EU and their citizens acquired the right to work in the UK
- Around **22,300 A8 migrants** joined the Welsh labour market between May 2004 and March 2008. Over half of all migrant workers from central and eastern Europe in Wales are living in **Carmarthenshire (Llanelli), Cardiff, Newport and Wrexham**
- According to the 2011 census, there were **167,871 people living in Wales who were born outside the UK**, 5.5% of the population.
- The largest cohort of people born outside the UK living in Wales are from **Poland**, but there are also significant numbers who were born in **India, Germany, Ireland** and the **Philippines**
- The economic downturn since 2008 has been associated with significant changes in patterns of international migration to Wales, with **more international migrants leaving Wales than arriving**
- Research and economic analysis shows that, overall, A8 migrants coming the UK after 2004 made a **net fiscal contribution** to the UK with **no negative impact on the UK welfare system**. Overall there have been **no negative effects on the Welsh labour market**
- There is considerable political and policy debate about the number of migrants expected from the A2 countries – Romania and Bulgaria – from 31st December 2013. **The scale and impact of migration from Bulgaria and Romania is difficult to accurately predict.**
- **International students** have become increasingly important to the Welsh economy. 8% of undergraduate students and 39% of postgraduate students at Welsh Universities are from outside the EU. **International students in Wales add £237m to the nation's gross domestic product and more than 9,000 jobs**

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The policy context

Although powers relating to asylum and migration are not devolved, the Welsh Government has responsibility to migrants living in Wales under its housing, health, education and social service functions and through its community cohesion agenda. As a result **the Welsh Government is a key player in relation to the inclusion of migrants in Welsh society.**

Policies towards migrants in Wales are developed in the context of the Welsh Government's strategic agenda, specifically the Programme for Government (2011), and within the framework of UK, European and international legislation.

The Programme for Government sets out specific actions the Welsh Government is taking to 'create a fair society free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation with cohesive and inclusive communities' (Welsh Government 2011). The Government aims to do this by reducing inequality in education and skills, health, housing and employment outcomes for people with protected characteristics (including race), increasing public services satisfaction rates and reducing the incidence of hate crime.

The **public sector equality duty** (Equality Act 2010), also referred to as the 'general duty', came into force in April 2011 and aims to ensure that public authorities and those carrying out a public function consider how they can positively contribute to a fairer society in their day to day activities through paying due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.

In order for public bodies to better perform their public sector equality duty (PSED), the Welsh Government was the first government to bring in specific equality duties as set out in Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011. The regulations were approved by the National Assembly for Wales and came into force on 6 April 2011.

The specific duties are more far reaching in Wales than in England and place duties on the public sector covering engagement, equality impact assessments, pay differences, procurement, reporting arrangements, review and equality and employment information.

Public authorities in Wales published their equality objectives and their Strategic Equality Plans in April 2012 which clearly laid out the actions the public sector is taking to fulfil the PSED.

The Welsh Government has produced a welcome pack for migrants, **Understanding Wales** (Welsh Assembly Government 2006) to ensure that people who come to Wales to live and work are

made aware of their rights and responsibilities and are also provided with information on where they can obtain help and advice if they encounter problems, helping them to settle into their new communities (Welsh Assembly Government 2010).

Who is an 'international migrant'?

An **international migrant** is defined as someone who has or intends to change his or her country of usual residence for a period of at least a year (Welsh Government 2013). International migrants come to the UK through a variety of different routes including to employment via the points based system, to study and to join family members. Tourists and other visitors who come to Wales for less than one year are not recorded as international migrants.

According to the 2011 census, there were **167,871 people living in Wales who were born outside the UK.** This represents 5.5% of the total population.

Although international migrants come from a wide range of countries, the largest groups to arrive in the UK and Wales over recent years have come from the countries of Eastern Europe - particularly Poland and Slovakia. This group of migrants are often referred to as **A8 migrants** because they are members of the eight central and eastern European (A8) countries - **Poland, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia** – that joined the European Union in 2004 and whose citizens acquired the right to work in the UK.

*An **international migrant** is someone who has or intends to change his or her country of residence for a period of at least a year*

***A8 migration** refers to citizens of Poland, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia who come to Wales to live and work*

***A2 migration** refers to citizens of Bulgaria and Romania who will acquire the right to work in the UK on 31st December 2013*

Bulgaria and **Romania** also joined the EU in January 2007 but citizens of these countries are currently subject to restrictions and cannot work for an employer without a work permit (although they can be self-employed). From 31st December 2013 they will also acquire the right to work in the UK.

Migrants from these countries are often referred to as **A2 migrants**.

It is important to note these terms refer to a **diverse population, from a variety of different countries and backgrounds, who come for a range of different reasons and are afforded different entitlements and rights under UK immigration law.**

It should be noted that this briefing paper does not include asylum seekers and refugees living in Wales because they are the subject of a separate briefing paper.

Data and numbers

The growing scale and importance of international migration has highlighted inadequacies in existing data. Although there is a great deal of anecdote, there is relatively little hard evidence and instead information needs to be pieced together from a number of different sources (Wales TUC 2008).

*There has been a **net inflow** of international migrants – in other words, more international migrants arriving than departing - since 1994*

On average net there has been a net inflow of around 2,400 per year but this number increased with the arrival of A8 migrants from May 2004

*In 2011 there was a **net outflow** of international migrants from Wales for the first time since 1993*

Based on existing data sources we can identify three broad trends in international migration to Wales.

- 1. Although there has been international migration to Wales for centuries, there was a net outflow prior to 1994.** There has only been a net inflow of *international* migrants – in other words, more international migrants arriving than departing - since 1994
- 2. Since 1994 the net inflow of international migrants has been around 2,400 per year** but this figure significantly increased from May 2004 when eight central and eastern European (A8) countries - Poland, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia - joined the European Union – and their citizens acquired the right to work in the UK. **The largest cohort of people born outside the UK living in Wales are from Poland, but there are also significant numbers from India, Germany, Ireland and the Philippines** (ONS 2012).

- 3. The economic downturn since 2008** has been associated with significant changes in patterns of international migration to Wales. **From 2008 onwards the number of international migrants leaving Wales increased.** In 2011 there was a net *outflow* of international migrants for the first time since 1993, with those leaving Wales exceeding those moving to Wales by around 1,500 persons (Welsh Government 2013).

There is general recognition that statistics on migration are inadequate and need to be improved, particularly at local level. This is because the scale and composition of international migration varies considerably for different areas of Wales and because the impact of migration varies, depending upon the region's demography, labour market and economy, the stretch already being experienced on services and previous experience in dealing with diverse communities (Institute of Community Cohesion 2007).

Fig 1: International migration by local authority mid 2005-6 to mid 2009-10 (Welsh Government 2010)

	In	Out	Net	Volume per 1,000 people
Isle of Anglesey	630	730	-100	4
Gwynydd	3,360	2,830	530	10
Conwy	1,820	2,330	-510	7
Denbighshire	1,270	1,360	-100	5
Flintshire	990	1,400	-410	3
Wrexham	2,650	1,760	880	7
Powys	1,460	1,680	-220	5
Ceredigion	4,310	2,700	1,620	18
Pembrokeshire	2,150	2,240	-90	8
Carmarthenshire	1,670	1,560	110	4
Swansea	9,280	5,730	3,540	13
Neath Port Talbot	480	860	-380	2
Vale of Glamorgan	1,820	1,500	321	5
Cardiff	30,410	15,990	14,430	28
Monmouthshire	940	1,320	-380	5
Newport	3,450	2,730	730	9
Bridgend	1,020	1,250	-230	3
Rhondda Cynon Taff	2,510	2,540	-30	4
Merthyr Tydfil	540	400	140	3
Caerphilly	500	880	-380	2
Blaenau Gwent	380	400	-10	2
Torfaen	300	530	-230	2

Public authorities and those carrying out a public function need **good quality, up-to-date local level data** on how many migrants are living in the area, their nationality and characteristics in order to meet their duties under the **Equality Act 2010**.

Although the greatest concentration of international migrants can be found in Cardiff, Swansea, Wrexham, Newport and Llanelli, all areas of Wales have experienced the arrival of international migrants for the purpose of work and study. It is important that public bodies across Wales are aware of the needs of those living in their area and respond accordingly.

Migrants can and do bring huge benefits to the local economy but they can also potentially put additional pressures on local services. For example, areas which have had a declining and ageing population and which have not been traditional areas of migration, may regard inward migration as a solution but need to have information on the new population living in their area in order to meet their needs and deal with any tensions or issues that arise.

The **Wales Migration Portal** at <http://wmp.infobasecymru.net/IAS/> has been developed by the WMP brings together publicly available migration and ethnicity data for the first time in one place via an online data tool which is simple and intuitive to use, and which will assist public services in Wales in understanding their communities.

Migrants from the A8 countries

Since 2004 over one million workers have come to the UK from the eight central and eastern European (A8) countries that joined the EU at that time. **Polish nationals are now the single largest foreign national group living in the UK** – up from 13th largest in early 2004.

Research suggests that around 22,300 A8 migrants joined the Welsh labour market between May 2004 and May 2008 but it is not known how many migrant workers have left since that time or arrived without registering (Shiplely 2008)

Over half of all migrant workers from central and eastern Europe who are living in Wales are in Carmarthenshire (Llanelli), Cardiff, Newport and Wrexham

The number of A8 migrants who are living in Wales is unclear and the picture is constantly changing. It seems likely that the numbers of migrant workers in many areas of Wales has been significantly underestimated. Much of the

published research is based on data from the Workers Registration Scheme (WRS), which no longer exists. According to this data, **around 22,300 A8 migrants joined the Welsh labour market between May 2004 and March 2008** (Shiplely 2008). However it is not known how many of these migrants have since left Wales or how many came without registering (either because they did not need to e.g. because they were self-employed, were not aware of the need to register, chose not to do so or were unable to do so due to language and other barriers).

It is important to acknowledge that much of this migration has been geographically concentrated in certain areas of Wales. **Over half of all migrant workers from central and eastern Europe who are living in Wales are in Carmarthenshire (Llanelli), Cardiff, Newport and Wrexham.**

Two thirds of A8 migrant workers in Wales come from Poland, with a further sixth from Slovakia.

The number of workers from A8 countries registering since 2006 has fallen considerably but still significant in some areas (especially Wrexham and Llanelli).

Carmarthenshire has the greatest number of A8 migrant workers. The largest group are Polish. A number of issues have arisen for public services, particularly Roman Catholic schools who have expressed concerns about the additional funding and support needed to educate the children of migrants and the number of teachers with specialist language skills (Welsh Assembly Government 2009).

The impact of migrant workers on the labour market is discussed in detail in our briefing on **Migration and Employment**. Research and economic analysis shows that, overall, **A8 migrants who came to the UK after 2004 have made a net fiscal contribution to the UK with no negative impact on the UK welfare system.** A8 migrants have been primarily young with high levels of education and skills, relative to the native population. As a result they have a higher labour force participation rate, pay proportionately more in indirect taxes and make much less use of benefits and public services (Dustmann et al. 2010).

Research specifically on the impact of A8 migration in Wales confirms that **there are few (if any) signs of negative impacts of A8 migration on the Welsh labour market** (Lemos 2010). However most researchers acknowledge that *some workers in some sectors of the economy may be disadvantaged* (Dustman et al. 2010).

Migrants from Bulgaria and Romania ('A2' countries)

On 1 January 2007 Bulgaria and Romania (the so called A2' countries) joined the European Union and nationals from these countries have benefited from the rights of free movement. Unlike nationals from the A8

countries however, transitional restrictions have been in place since 2007, limiting access to the UK labour market. Bulgarian and Romanian nationals have been restricted to skilled employment or working under two quota-based programmes for the agricultural and food processing sectors (Migration Observatory 2023). They have also been able to reside in the UK as self-employed workers, students or if they are self-sufficient (AAPG 2013). In 2011, data indicated that 141,000 Bulgarians and Romanians were living in the UK (Migration Observatory, 2012).

On 31 December 2013 these transitional restrictions will be lifted, granting Bulgarian and Romanian nationals the same rights to work in the UK as other European Union nationals. The Government will also close two work schemes within the agricultural and food processing sectors.

Politicians and media commentators have expressed concerns over the potential impacts of lifting the transitional restrictions. There are concerns about both the potential scale of migration from January 2014 and the characteristics of migrants from these countries who come to the UK.

It is likely that there will be some increase in immigration from the Bulgaria and Romania to the UK but **the scale of migration from Bulgaria and Romania is difficult to accurately predict** (IPPR 2006; AAPG 2013). Any predictions must necessarily take into account of a number of different factors including the economic situation in Bulgaria and Romania *and* the UK and the fact that Bulgarians and Romanians already living in the UK are small in comparison to some A8 communities prior to accession.

Perhaps most importantly **there are a greater number of countries to which Bulgarian and Romanian nationals can migrate**. Currently, ten EU member states, including the UK, France and Germany, maintain transitional restrictions for A2 nationals. However, all will be required to lift these restrictions on 31st December 2013. This means that the UK is not the only possible destination country for Bulgarians and Romanians after this date.

It is likely that some **migration will follow established patterns**, relating to language as well as cultural and familial networks. Spain and Italy, for example, have thus far received the highest proportion of Romanian migrants in the EU and it is likely that both will see substantial inward migration of Romanians in 2014 (Migration Observatory 2013). In addition both **Bulgaria and Romania have ageing and shrinking populations and the lowest fertility rates in Europe**. The cohort of young people who are most likely to migrate is shrinking.

As a result of these factors, migration to the UK from Bulgaria and Romania may be more

manageable than some media reports have suggested (AAPG 2013; Duvell 2012). This means

that **any numbers provided will be, at best, informed guesses and therefore not reliable enough to develop policy responses**. The intensifying speculation about the overall number Bulgarians and Romanians who may come to Britain also brushes over the fact that while impacts are likely to be regionally and neighbourhood specific, there is no way of knowing where migrants will choose to live.

The desire to predict future inflows and net migration of Romanian and Bulgarians is not surprising because national and local governments need to plan for impacts on key services such as housing, health and education as well as on the labour market.

The Westminster Government has focused its attention thus far on addressing public concerns about the potential impacts of migration on the UK welfare system, but there is little evidence about how far Bulgarian and Romanian nationals will access benefits or services in the UK and restrictions are already in place for this group as they are for nationals from other parts of east and central Europe.

It is important to note that **the debate on migration from Bulgaria and Romania is very strongly influenced by the fact that some of those who migrate are expected to be from Roma backgrounds** and have struggled to find employment in their countries of origin due to a lack of educational opportunities and discrimination in the labour market. A higher proportion of Roma (around 2.5 million) live in Bulgaria and Romania than in the A8 countries. However it remains unclear how many Roma intend to leave and even less clear how many intend to come to the UK, including Wales.

The internationalisation of higher and further education

Data from the Wales Migration Portal indicates that in 2011 **8% of undergraduate students at Welsh Universities were from outside the European Union. This figure rises to 39% for postgraduate students at Welsh Universities.**

8% of undergraduate students at Welsh Universities are from outside the EU

39% of postgraduate students at Welsh Universities are from outside the EU

It has been estimated that international students in Wales add £237m to the nation's gross domestic product and more than 9,000 jobs (Oxford Economics 2011)

Research by Oxford Economics (2011) for the Welsh government and higher education funding bodies, quantifies for the first time the economic contribution of international and EU students at Welsh universities.

In 2009-10, there were 19,050 foreign students from more than 70 countries studying in Wales, during which they paid £110m in tuition fees, spent £130m on living costs and triggered a £23m injection from family and friends. In total Oxford Economics (2011) estimates that **international students in Wales add £237m to the nation's gross domestic product and more than 9,000 jobs in Wales.**

The total is equivalent to 0.5% of the Welsh economy, which is a larger share than agriculture and on a par with Cardiff's hotel and restaurant sector. The rest of the UK also benefits from the Wales's international and EU students, with UK-based supply chains generating a further £57 million contribution to UK GDP, and supporting an additional 1,910 jobs.

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About the briefing paper series

This briefing paper is one of a series produced by Professor Heaven Crawley, Director of the Centre for Migration Policy Research (CMPR) at Swansea University to improve knowledge and understanding of migration issues in Wales. The papers set out the evidence on migration to Wales in relation to key issues and themes that are of public and policy concern and provide up-to-date information about the composition and experiences of migrant, asylum seeking and refugee populations living in Wales.

The briefing papers can be downloaded at www.wmp.org.uk

Additional data and resources can be downloaded from the Wales Migration Portal <http://wmp.infobasecymru.net/IAS>

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