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# Longitudinal Study of Migrant Workers in the East of England 2008 – 2010

## Final Report

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PPCG

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**Dr Claudia Schneider and Dr Deborah Holman**

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# Executive summary

## Introduction

This is the third and final report of the Longitudinal Study of Migrant Workers in the Eastern Region commissioned by the East of England Development Agency (2008 – 2010). Partly funded by the European Social Fund, the study explored the perspectives of migrant workers (and stakeholders) in relation to: factors that influence decisions on coming to the UK and length of stay; barriers to full participation in the regional economy; and, barriers to social inclusion in local communities.

Year 3 of the study conducted (i) 30 semi-structured interviews with European citizens from A2/A8 countries who have arrived in the UK since 2004, (ii) an analysis of eleven Polish blogs and (iii) 11 semi-structured interviews with stakeholders in the region (evaluating the findings from the second interim report. The final report presents the data from year 3 and analyses them in the context of the previous years to identify trends regarding decision making on length of stay and barriers to full participation in the regional economy and barriers to social inclusion in local communities. It includes an extensive review of the literature relating to length of stay, summarises the findings of the survey with migrant workers which was carried out in year 1 and 2 (comparing the overall samples of year 1 and year 2 and where relevant the sub-sample of those 50 participants who responded to the year 1 and year 2 survey) and includes 8 case studies to illustrate the experiences and decision-making processes of European citizens from the A8/A2 countries. The final chapter provides an overview of the public policy context (at European, national, and regional levels) and discusses how public policy has impacted on A8 and A2 migrants' living and working in the East of England. The conclusion highlights the main findings from the mixed and multi-method design and provides a list of policy recommendations which relate to the length of stay of migrant workers in the region).

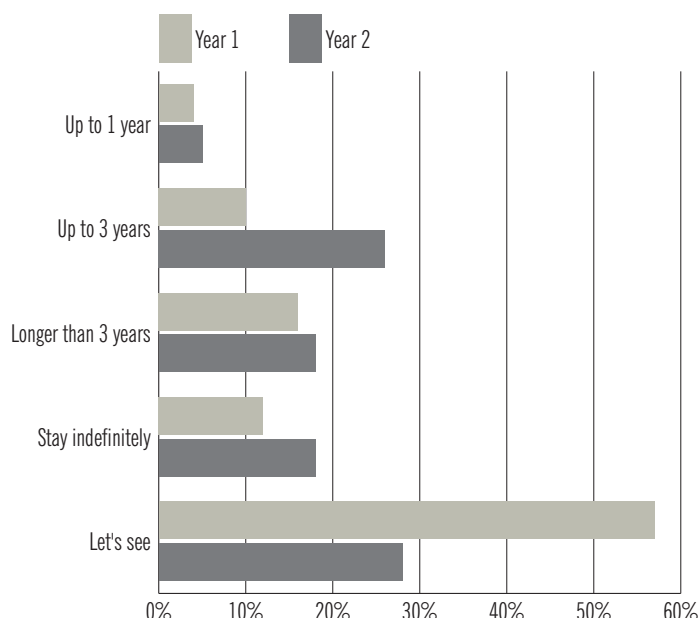
## Quantitative findings

The following provides an overview of key quantitative data from year 1 and year 2 looking at length of stay and factors relating to length of stay (e.g. subjective and objective factors, perceptions of the social, economic and political situations in COO and the UK, barriers and aspirations).

## Intended LOS

Amongst those who had responded to both years one can see that during the span of one year views on length of stay had become more concrete. While 57% selected in year 1 'I have no specific plans, let's see', in year 2 only 28% had this attitude. Instead, people were more likely to state that they would stay up to three years and slightly more participants also said that they intended to stay indefinitely (see figure E1).

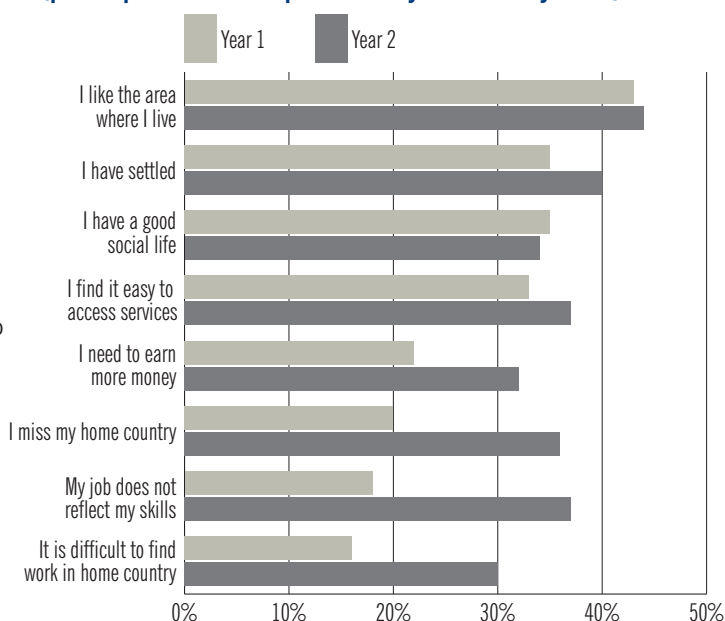
Figure E1:  
**Intended LOS (participants who responded to year 1 and year 2)**



## Subjective factors relating to LOS

Participants who responded to both years continued to self-identify the following four factors as being especially important for their decision making (although the ranking changed slightly between year 1 and year 2): 'I like the area where I live'; 'I have settled in the UK'; 'I have a good social life in the UK' and 'I find it easy to access services'. However, in year 2 participants placed more emphasis on the following factors: 'My job does not reflect my skills'; 'I miss my home country'; 'I need to earn more money'; and 'It is difficult to find work in home country' (see figure E2).

Figure E2:  
**Subjective factors influencing decisions on LOS (participants who responded to year 1 and year 2)**



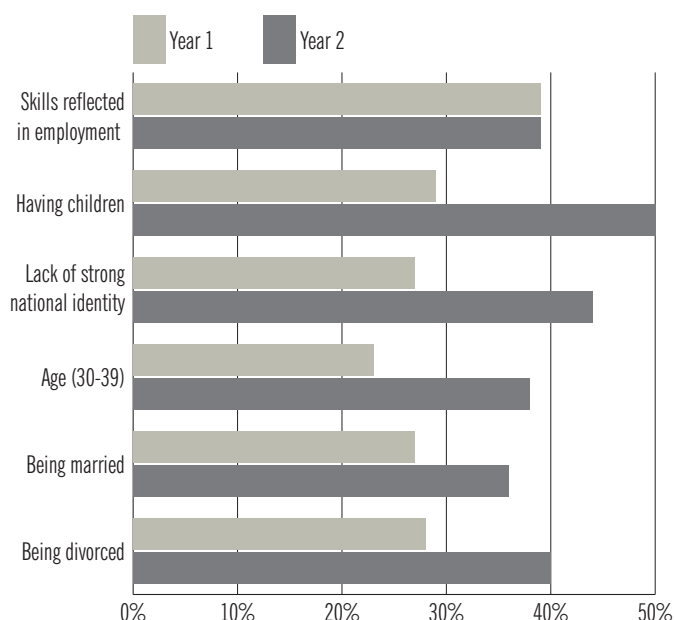
## Objective factors relating to LOS

Objective factors showed a link (which was not significant) between certain variables and length of stay. The following objective factors related to a longer stay in the UK (i.e. longer than 3 years or indefinitely; see figure E3).

- Participants who indicated that their skills were reflected in employment were more likely to stay longer than those who did not see their skills reflected.
- Year 2 highlighted that migrants who were older (30–39) were more likely to stay longer (or indefinitely) than those who were younger (20–29); although this finding was not confirmed in year 1.
- Having children made a clear difference and participants with children wanted to stay longer than those without children.
- Those who did not identify strongly with their country-of-origin were also more likely to stay longer compared to those who showed a stronger national identity.
- Respondents who were married or divorced were more likely to stay longer than those who were single or co-habiting.

Figure E3:

### Objective factors relating to a long stay (longer than 3 years or indefinite) (year 1, year 2)

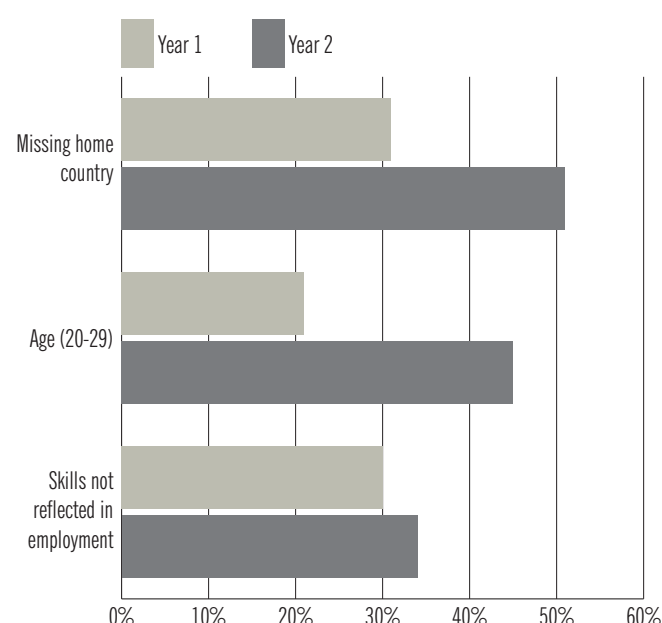


The following objective factors were related to a shorter stay in the UK (i.e. less than 3 years) see figure E4:

- In both years 'missing home' was a strong indicator for a shorter stay.
- The link between a younger age (20–29) and a shorter stay was especially seen in the year 2 sample.
- A non-reflection of skills also led to a shorter stay.

Figure E4:

### Objective factors relating to a short stay (shorter than 3 years) (year 1, year 2)



## Objective factors influencing a longer and shorter stay than initially planned

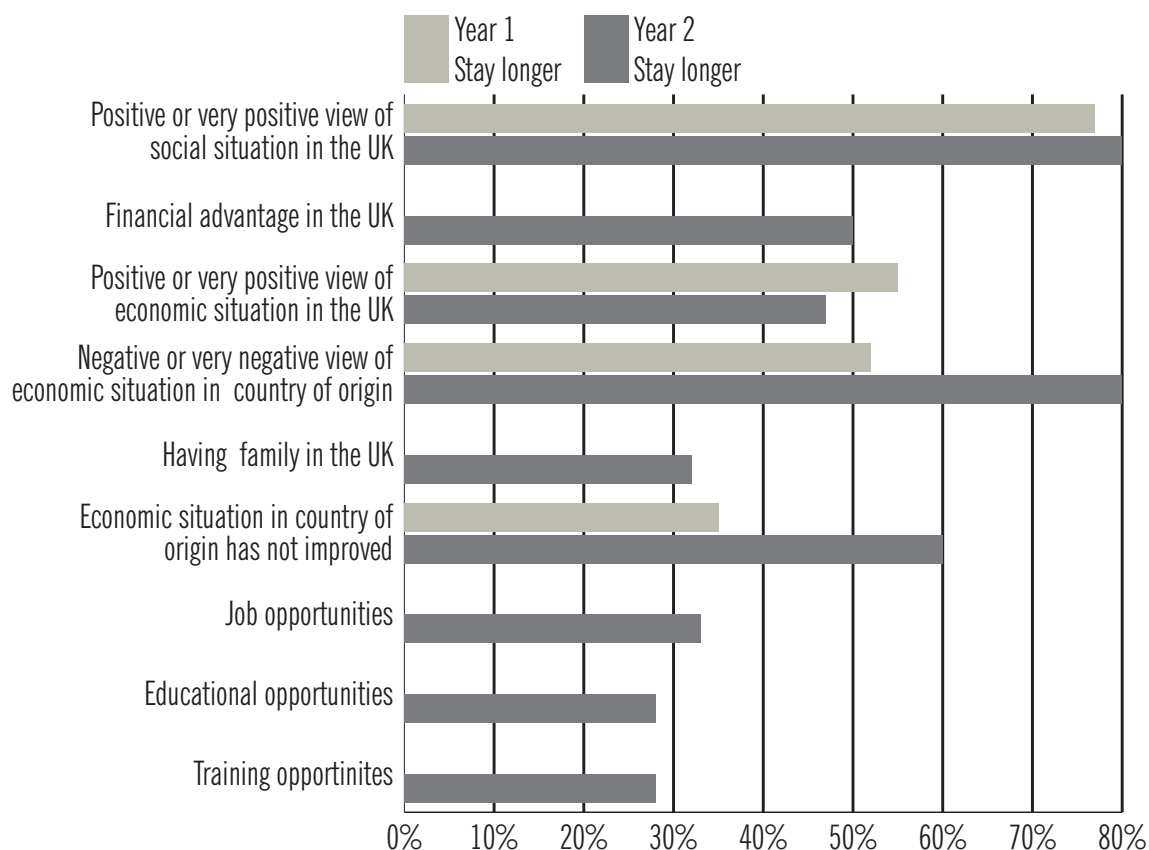
The following factors relate to a longer stay than initially planned (see figure E5).

- The samples from both years showed that the participants who wanted to stay longer had a positive or very positive view of the wider social situation in the UK which was also confirmed by interviews.
- The economic situation in the UK was viewed in a positive or very positive light by about half of the participants who decided to stay longer than initially planned.
- A factor which related to a longer stay (especially in the year 2 sample) was a negative or very negative perception of the economic situation in their home country and the concern that the economic situation in their home country had not improved.

- The year 2 sample showed that 'having a family in the UK' and 'perceiving a financial advantage in the UK' also related to a longer stay.
- A third of those who wanted to stay longer in year 2 said that the perception of the home country had a very strong influence on their length of stay.

Figure E5:

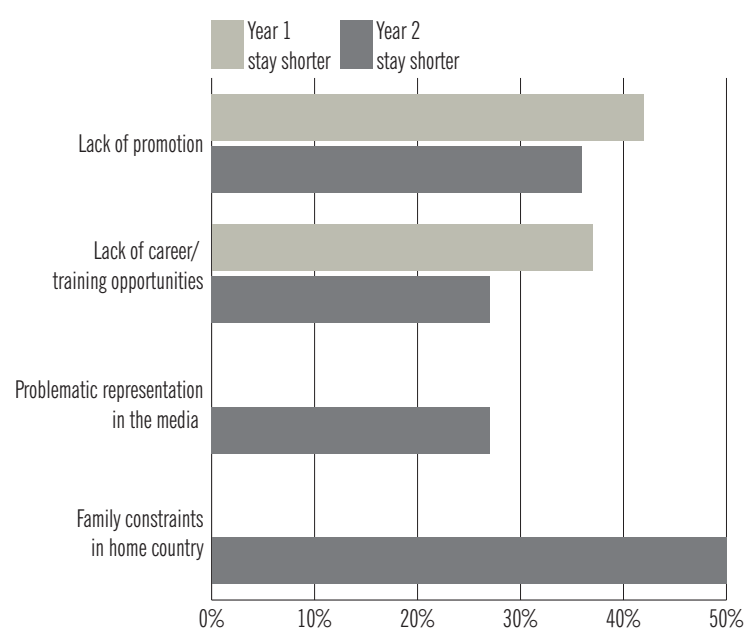
**Factors relating to a longer stay than initially planned  
(year 1, year 2)<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> Some additional questions were added to the year 2 survey following the analysis of year 1 findings and, therefore, not all indicators are comparable with year 1 findings (see also figure E6).

The overall samples from year 1 and year 2 showed that ‘lack of promotion’ and ‘lack of training opportunities’ led to a shorter stay. Year 2 findings highlighted that especially family constraints in the home country and the problematic media representation of A8/A2 migrants in the UK influenced a shorter stay in the UK (than initially planned; see figure E6).

Figure E6:  
**Factors relating to a shorter stay than initially planned (year 1, year 2)<sup>2</sup>**



2 The data relate to the overall sample of participants who had changed their mind regarding LOS and not to the sub-sample of those who stayed for a shorter or longer time; therefore, the data differ to those which were presented in the Executive of the 2<sup>nd</sup> interim report.

## Perceptions of the economic, political and social situations in country of origin

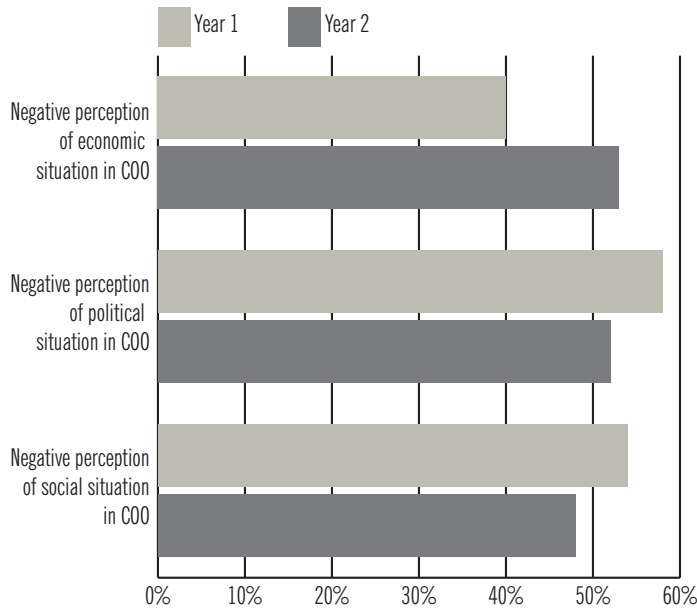
In both years participants of the overall samples expressed negative views regarding the economic situation in their respective home countries with a fairly large number ranking it as being ‘negative’ or ‘very negative’. The overall samples show that perceptions had become more negative by year 2. However, those who responded to both years (with the majority being Polish) had a slightly less negative view of their home country’s economic situation by year 2.

Migrants’ perceptions of the political situation in their home countries were ranked by 58% in year 1 and 52% in year 2 as being negative or very negative (around 30% in both years thought it was neither good nor bad and 10% didn’t know). Similar to the findings relating to the economic situation, the perception of participants who responded to both years was less negative by year 2.

Participants were also concerned about the social situation in their home countries with 54% in year 1 and 48% in year 2 perceiving it as ‘negative’ or ‘very negative’; (again around 30% viewed it as neither good nor bad). Respondents who participated in both years had a similar view of their home country’s social situation in both years.

In year 2 the majority of participants indicated that their perception of their home country had a strong or very strong influence upon their decision making on length of stay. Figure E7 presents findings for the overall samples in year 1 (161) and year 2 (61).

Figure E7:  
**Negative view of economic, political and social situation in COO (year1, year 2)**



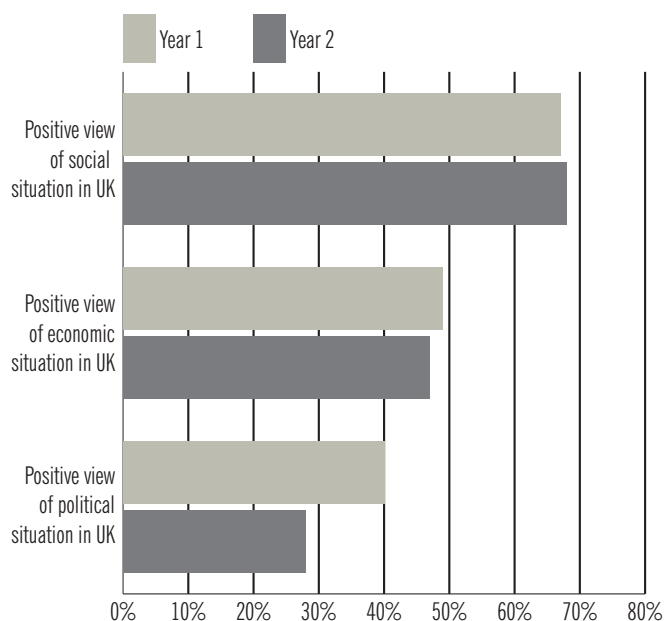


## Perceptions of the economic, political and social situations in the UK

The social situation in the UK was viewed by the majority of the overall sample as being 'positive' or 'very positive' in both years, followed by a 'positive' or 'very positive' perception of the economic situation in the UK. Surprisingly, the perception of the economic situation had not changed between year 1 and year 2 while the political situation in the UK was perceived in a less positive light in year 2; between 30% and 40% selected neither good nor bad for the perception of the social, economic and political situations in the UK (see figure E8).

Figure E8:

**Positive view of social, economic and political situation in the UK (year 1, year 2)**



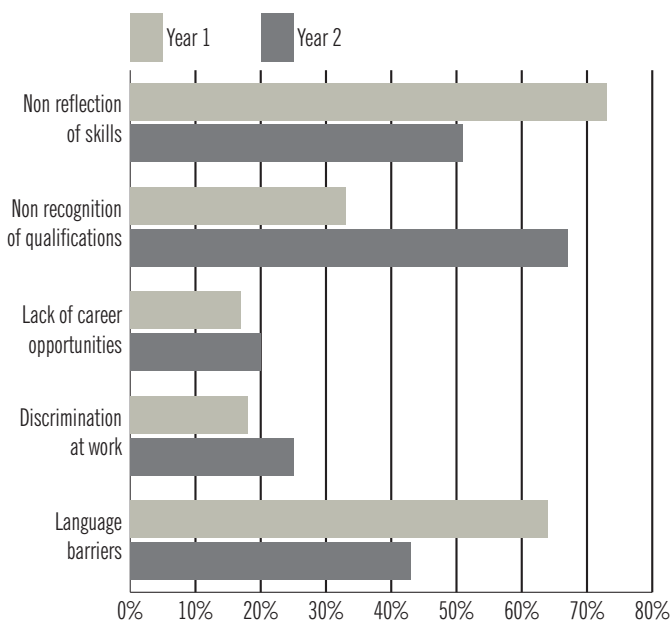
## Employment related constraints and barriers

Year 1 showed a significant link between skills reflected in employment and length of stay. This significance was not shown in the second year sample, although those participants who felt that their skills were not adequately reflected were less likely to indicate an indefinite stay.

In both years participants highlighted a number of other employment constraints: non-recognition of qualifications, lack of promotion, a lack of career opportunities, discrimination at work and language barriers (see figure E9).

Figure E9:

**Employment constraints and barriers (year 1, year 2)**

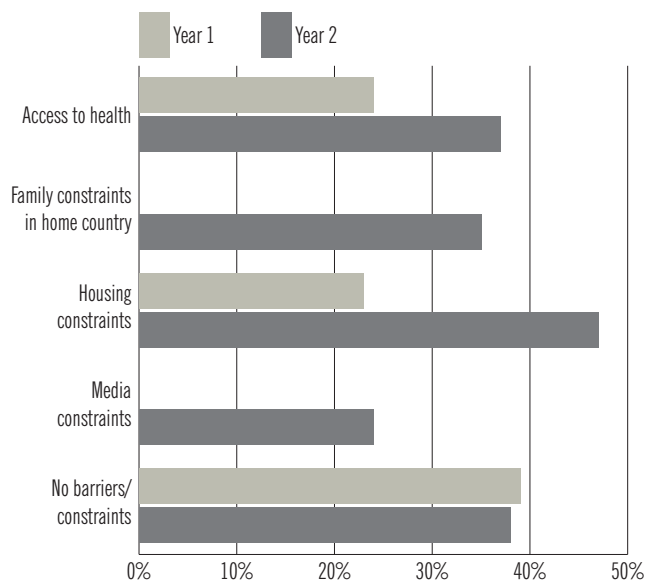


# Non-employment related constraints and barriers

Both years highlighted a number of constraints and barriers which did not relate directly to employment. These were family constraints, barriers regarding health and housing and constraints relating to the representation of European citizens from the A8/A2 countries in the British media (see figure E10).

The findings above have indicated that in particular personal constraints relating to family in the country of origin and negative representation of A8/A2 migrants in the British media are linked to a shorter stay. It should be also noted that a large number of participants in both years indicated that they did not experience any constraints or barriers.

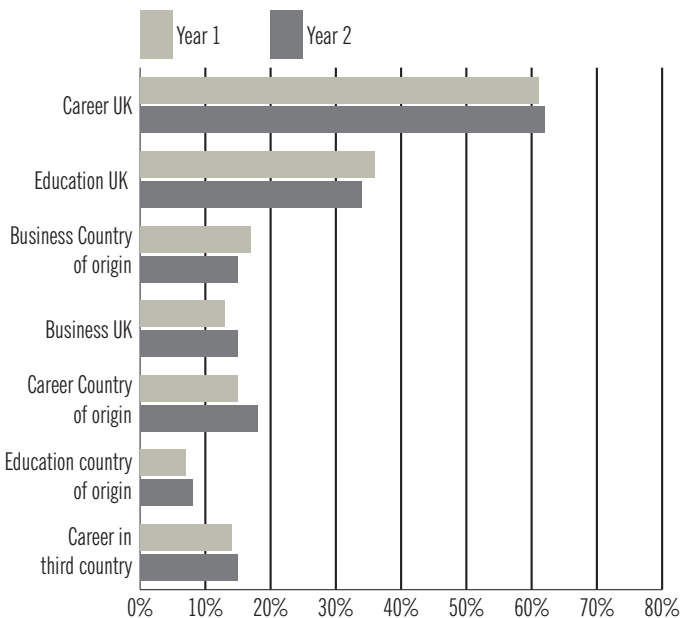
Figure E10:  
Non-employment related constraints and barriers (year 1, year 2)



# Aspirations<sup>3</sup>

The overall samples of year 1 and year 2 showed similarly high levels of aspirations amongst participants which impacts on length of stay. The majority saw their careers in the UK followed by education in the UK and opening their own business in the UK. A similar number of respondents wanted to set up a business in their home country and in the UK. A small number saw their career in their home country or in a third country. Less than 10% intended to further their study in their home country (see figure E11).

Figure E11:  
Aspirations in the UK and COO (year 1, year 2)



3 More than one option could be selected regarding the question on aspirations.

## Overview of main themes at year 3: quantitative and qualitative longitudinal data

### Economic recession and length of stay

Year three findings confirmed the findings of both interim reports that the recession had a relatively small impact on decisions on length of stay. Although participants reflected on issues such as decreasing wage differentials between the UK and COO and on changes regarding the job market they did not consider a return to their COO or a move to a third country because of the recession. The fact that the economic situations in COO were considerably worse than in the UK meant that in relative terms the UK economic situation was perceived in a fairly positive light. Despite the continuing recession and government plans to cut public spending, participants felt that there were still (in comparison to COO) many opportunities and advantages in the UK including job opportunities, financial advantages and educational opportunities (although the latter will be significantly affected by increase in tuition fees as discussed below).

The findings of the third year showed that interviewees were negative or very negative with regard to economic developments in COO which they identified as an important factor in their decision making process on length of stay. Transnationalism, therefore, reflected in participants' ongoing comparative evaluations of the economic situation and experiences in COO and the UK, is crucial for the understanding of decision making processes on length of stay. A perspective which merely focuses on the objective economic situation in the UK would ignore the complex bundle of factors which impacts on migrants' perceptions and actions.

### Personal, social and political factors affecting length of stay

The third year has continued to show the significance of personal, social and political factors for migrants' decisions on length of stay. At a personal level, relationships with partners, factors relating to family members in the COO and the UK (especially parents and children), the intention to have children, homesickness, satisfaction with life, feelings of identity and belonging, and aspirations, were influential in decisions on length of stay. In general the UK was perceived as offering (actual or potential opportunities) to fulfil and satisfy migrants' ideas and ambitions associated with a 'good quality of life'. In contrast, COO were perceived by many participants as places where 'life plans' were more difficult to realise. Although the majority of participants associated 'home' with specific positive connotations (e.g. with regard to food, 'knowing the social norms', traditions, nature, climate etc.) these did not impact on a return to COO in the large majority of cases.

Social factors (including the existence of social networks, the social context of the local area, participants' 'social lives' and the wider perception of the social situation in the UK) were very relevant for participants' decisions on length of stay. While participants accepted they had to make certain compromises

with regard to their employment positions, they were less flexible regarding social factors. Interviews and survey data throughout the study showed that those who intended to stay longer term or indefinitely were content or very content with their closer social situation and the wider situation in the UK.

Political factors were also relevant for decisions on length of stay in the context of COO. The majority of participants noted the interdependency between political, economic and social situations in COO and often argued that the political situation needed to change to improve the wider economic and social situation. While some participants showed frustration or disinterest in politics in COO, others were hopeful that elections might be an opportunity to foster change; although participants from Hungary, Poland and Slovakia were disappointed with the election results in their COO and, especially the (increased) levels of intolerance and discrimination towards minorities.

### Shifting goals and longer stay

Throughout the years participants indicated very high levels of 'goal orientation' which corresponded with their high levels of ambitions and aspirations. There is clear progress noticeable from year one to year three with regard to goal formulation and goal achievement. While interviewees who had arrived recently were (understandably) concerned about immediate issues such as finding employment and accommodation and learning English, in the second year they were already formulating goals which emphasised 'quality of life' (with regard to employment, housing, education, personal and social life). By the third year many interviewees had achieved their goals reflected in the high number of qualification gained by year 3, a fairly large number of marriages and/or child births by year 3, a smaller number of employment progressions and a small number of property acquisitions. Aiming for and achieving these goals in the UK were often associated with a longer or indefinite stay in the UK. Throughout the study the findings on goal formulation and achievement (from the mixed and multi methods approaches) confirmed that migrants had strong ambitions and aspirations regarding personal development and advancement; 'making money quickly' was not their chief concern.

### Non-recognition of skills

Throughout the three years of the study the non-recognition of skills in employment remained the main barrier for participants and impacted negatively on a longer or indefinite length of stay in the UK. The majority of participants who considered leaving the UK and moving to a third country (rather than returning to COO) indicated that their employment in the UK did not reflect their levels of skills (although they might have taken up further training, education and/or had good levels of spoken and written English) (see also the section on recommendations below). Since EU enlargement in 2004 research has highlighted the downgrading of EU citizens arriving from A8 countries and there does not seem to be a significant change in this situation. A8 migrants who are employed in positions which reflect their skills have often invested a large amount of 'active agency' to achieve these positions as reflected in our study.

One aim of this study was to research barriers to full participation in the regional economy. The above findings indicate that, despite some progress made in the context of recognition of qualifications, high levels of structural barriers remain which relate to the matching of employment positions to skills levels of A8 and A2 citizens in the UK. At the agency/individual level the study's findings highlight that migrants overcome many barriers at the individual level by being actively engaged in further education, training, English language improvement and generally by showing high levels of motivation, ambitions and aspirations. However, the study emphasises that at the policy level more action needs to be taken to overcome structural barriers such as the more or less automatic matching of migrants to 'low skilled' employment positions by employment agencies (often without being interested in their skills levels; as highlighted by interviewees throughout the study).

### Media representation

Throughout the three years of the study participants have shown concern regarding negative media coverage of A8/A2 migration. For example, in the year 2 survey around a quarter selected 'a problematic representation of migrants in the media' as a reason to stay for a shorter period in the UK. By year 3 interviewees reflected on concepts such as insider/outsider, citizen/stranger, belonging/not belonging, home/not home and where media representation had a strong influence on feelings of belonging. In year 3 participants criticised and countered assertions by a large section of the British media about A8/A2 migrants. The exploration of 'barriers to social inclusion in local communities' was another research aim of the study and in this respect the British press was a key barrier with regard to social inclusion.

Fortunately, at the local level, participants had much more positive experiences and perceptions of the social situation in the UK which to some extent countered the barriers created by the media. As noted above, tolerance of diversity and the condemnation of discrimination (relating to gender, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity etc.) in the UK was mentioned by participants and impacted positively on a longer or indefinite stay in the UK. Participants had generally good social networks in their local area although they highlighted that long working hours and shift work often meant that their social life was limited. Some interviewees also mentioned the costs of leisure activities as a barrier. A small number of participants had experienced direct or indirect discrimination in employment, housing, health and in the local neighbourhood which might have been, to a certain extent, caused by the extremely negative, derogative and explicitly xenophobic reports of A8/A2 migration in some parts of the British press.

### Language skills and other barriers

Language continued to be a barrier for some participants, although most had improved their language skills since year 1 of the study. It needs to be noted that participants felt that good levels of English did not necessarily counter downgrading in employment.

Barriers to accessing housing, personal health issues and constraints of local health services were mentioned by participants; however, there was a visible decline of these barriers by year 3 and it appeared that participants had overcome housing issues, in particular. An important barrier which was indicated by a larger number of participants related to family constraints in COO which could be an actual or potential reason for a shorter stay in the UK. Another barrier which is very likely to have an impact on future decisions on length of stay relates to the considerable increase of tuition fees in the UK. Participants had high aspirations with regard to educational achievements and the introduction of higher fees will be a significant barrier for fulfilling aspirations. It can be anticipated that especially those participants with high educational ambitions will move to third countries where fees are lower or non-existent and some degrees are taught in English (e.g. Germany, the Netherlands or Sweden).

### The ambitious and determined migrant

Throughout the three years, findings have confirmed the determination and high aspirations of participants. The vast majority of participants showed high ambitions regarding career, education and/or opening up their own businesses. With regard to career ambitions, the final year continued to demonstrate participants' high levels of active agency in order to fulfil their employment aspirations (by attending evening classes, studying part-time etc.); however, whilst some participants in the three years have managed to improve their employment positions significantly, others have been more static or downgraded in employment to accommodate other life scenarios such as having a family. By the third year the majority of interviewees have made significant advances educationally and engaged in undergraduate and postgraduate study, and other training opportunities. Despite some remaining barriers at the macro, meso and micro level participants indicated well developed coping strategies and a strong determination to fulfil their ambitions.

## Public policy context

Over the three year period of the study, public policy at European, national (in sending and receiving countries) and regional levels has inevitably impacted on A8 and A2 migrants' living and working in the East of England. Currents of policy activity within, across and between multiple policy locales has opened up opportunities but also introduced constraints, acting as a destabilising factor as well as a stabilising factor in people's lives.

### European citizenship

Accession to the European Union and acquisition of the freedoms of European citizenship is an obvious key determinant in the opportunities created for A8 and A2 citizens. At the same time, interviewees were also aware that their EU citizenship was not of the same order as that of citizens from other member states.

In the UK, a relatively light-touch Workers' Registration Scheme was introduced in 2004; in 2007, the UK imposed rather more stringent conditions for citizens from Romania and Bulgaria. Our three interviewees from Romania and Bulgaria were conscious of and commented on the additional limitation to their status as EU citizens. Nevertheless, across all three cohorts of interviewees, EU citizenship was viewed very positively and the opportunities EU membership had created were the dominant 'policy' feature in interviews.

### National level policy

At a national level, whether indirect or direct policy initiatives, our study demonstrated a high level of ignorance about policy activity and related outcomes for A8/A2 migrants, improving only slightly with the passage of time and changes in circumstances, such as pregnancy.

There were mixed reasons for this:

1. The majority of interviewees were initially completely unaware that they could legitimately access services and benefits
2. The majority of interviewees did not have pre-arrival knowledge of opportunities to study with access to university education as EU citizens on a par with British citizens.
3. Knowledge had increased by year 3 of the study in relation to benefits and services operating at a general and national level with some positive impacts on people's lives in evidence: working tax credits and child benefits were chiefly referred to by interviewees; workplace rights relating to maternity leave, nursery provision and education of children and opportunities for further study and training at HE level were also mentioned.
4. The majority of participants were low users of state services or benefits. Nevertheless, the general framework of security created by the existence of welfare, education, law and order, government administration and healthcare services was noted again and again in interviews: 'I feel safe here'.

### Intra-EU migration policy (regional level)

Specific interest in intra-European migration policy was very patchy. However, the Eastern region has engaged with serious and sustained policy activity in relation to new migrant communities with a number of 'migration champions' working within a complex of networked agencies at regional and local levels. Since 2004 the Eastern region's multi-agency network of 'migration stakeholders' have helped establish a number of initiatives supporting new communities, funded through various means, including Migration Impact Funding, and covering community development, community engagement and policing, education, training and skills, homelessness and housing, information advice and guidance.<sup>4</sup>

Our participants have been largely unaware of the activity behind such initiatives, although three interviewees have found employment in support work for other migrant workers linked to or funded by Strategic Migration Partnership activity in the

region. Other interviewees have also been aware of specific services regardless of whether they were a service user or not and, one or two interviewees had used the services of organisations which were set up specifically for migrant workers. Interviewees were mixed in their views as to how important such services were to them. Interview data suggests that those with weaker language skills and with more recent arrival dates were most likely to draw on informal and some specialised formal support (for example, language classes and multi-lingual advisory groups). Interviews also suggested that, to some extent, later arrivals simply were not aware of the limited support available to the earlier arrivals and experience the support currently available as the 'norm' in the UK.

Despite the variation in levels of awareness and use of formal service provision, interview data from across the three years of the study suggest that the existence of services and initiatives for migrant workers contributed to the sense of security and safety interviewees discussed in relation to the advantages of life in the UK.

### Recent changes in the policy environment

A change in government in 2010 meant the realisation of the promised dismantling of regional networks – and threatens the dispersal of expertise developed through the network in the Eastern region. The Migration Impact Fund will be cancelled and funding for the range of organisations that help alleviate pressures on local communities and provide support to new communities is becoming increasingly difficult to access. With rising numbers of ill-equipped migrants escaping the Baltic States' stricken economies to rural locations in the Eastern region, it is only a matter of time before funding shortfalls become apparent as support services are pared back or cancelled altogether.

In May 2011, the seven year period of transitional arrangements for the 2004 Accession States comes to a close and thereafter A8 citizens will hold the same rights as established EU/ EEA citizens. There is also a possibility that in December 2011 arrangements in place for A2 citizens may also cease (or be extended). For interviewees, this represents a welcome shift, completing the 'normalisation' of their migration experiences.

## Recommendations

Based on our findings over a three year period of study and in line with the East of England LGA Strategic Migration Partnership Business Plan, 2010 – 2011; specifically, strategic objective 4 (to work with local delivery partners to design and deliver services for migrants that meet local needs in the region), and strategic objective 6 (to promote community safety and cohesion through a multi-agency approach), we make the following recommendations:

- **Develop strategies to match skills levels with corresponding employment positions;** throughout the 3 year study, participants highlighted non-recognition of skill levels as a primary factor leading to a shorter stay in the UK. Matching skills levels with employment positions would not only satisfy the generally high to very high aspirations

<sup>4</sup> (Government Office East and EELGA (SMP), 2010).



of European citizens from A8/A2 countries but also benefit the regional economy by filling and expanding higher skilled employment positions, enhancing the knowledge economy and increasing international competition.

- **Establish and foster economic networks with COO;** several participants were considering opening up businesses in COO in the medium to long term and/or pursuing careers in COO. Anticipating an improvement of economic, political and social situations in COO in the medium term, the region could lead on developing a strategy which would enhance opportunities for business links between COO, the UK (and possibly third countries where A8/A2 migrants might relocate to).
- **Develop concrete strategies to counter an outflow of highly ambitious A8/A2 citizens from the UK caused by the significant increase of university fees;** the significant increase of university fees in the UK is very likely to lead to an increased outflow from the UK of A8/A2 migrants with high educational aspirations. Rather than returning to COO with sometimes problematic education situations (regarding fees and time of study) it is expected that the majority of migrants with high educational and career ambitions will move into third countries; for example, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden offer certain degrees in English and charge lower fees (than the UK) or have no fees.
- **Foster closer cultural ties with COO;** this could be in the form of town-twinning initiatives or other transnational ventures promoting cooperation and understanding between different EU regions. The shared history of membership of the Hanse League, for example, could support the improvement of intercultural competency of communities and migrants, from the Baltic States in particular, helping to cushion the rupture experienced by migrants between home and here. Using such measures to value and validate the transnational indexicality of EU migrants has obvious cultural, social and economic benefits for both 'sending' and 'receiving' regions.
- **Find ways to more effectively tackle hostile press coverage of EU migrants;** this often serves to undermine the confidence of new EU citizens (particularly apparent in the study's Polish participants) inculcating a sense that British people are 'against them' even in the friendliest of encounters. Reportedly, some individuals revised their decisions about their length of stay on the basis of negative media reports. At the same time, Polish participants and blogs also reported hostile media coverage in the home country. Continuing to encourage a more balanced press response to intra-EU migration in the difficult period ahead should be attempted with the use of counter-'claims-makers' and the promotion of positive news items.
- **Improve futures thinking (forward-thinking policy research) to map out potential scenarios of the implications of increased, decreased or shifts in migrant flows to the region;** identifying likely 'push' factors in COO, identifying 'pull' factors, identifying potential sub-regions of settlement, identifying prospective skills and needs profile of newcomers, preparing communities for change and so on. Furthermore, regional policy needs to be more fully cognisant of the future implications of (unfettered) EU citizenship and freedom of movement and the widely-held view of intra-European migrants of the EU as an open jobs market.
- **Consider the impact of public spending cuts on the retention of a quality workforce;** the full implications of public spending cuts are difficult to foresee at this early stage, however, job losses seem inevitable. The buffer theory has been disproved and it is unlikely to be the case that intra-European migrants will return to COO leaving vacancies for British workers (and, besides, there is no guarantee that British people will be motivated to take on the types of occupations eschewed prior to the recession). However, there is a danger of 'brain waste', a complete stalling of the movement from low-skilled occupations primarily gained through employment agency contracts to better remunerated, more stable and fulfilling occupations that our study participants have been motivated to pursue and gain. Given that the transitional arrangements granted to 'old' EU member states will end by May 2011, the alternative for some may be to relocate to third countries within the EU to seek more rewarding employment and to maintain their living conditions.
- **Be aware that anticipated length of stay is not the same as actual length of stay;** as our study demonstrates, participants re-evaluated their projected length of stay quite frequently and earlier 'let's see' or 'just a brief spell in the UK' attitudes quickly translated into a longer stay or consideration of a permanent relocation and settlement with families. Policy and service development for intra-European migrants should not be developed on the misconception that migrants are driven solely by economic considerations and come in only one shape: hamsters!<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, understanding that the searcher category is the most cited self-identification and that length of stay is contingent upon a number of factors provides a less than stable basis for service planning. However, our study demonstrates that individual COO economic and political push factors provide the key for anticipating a longer or permanent stay and, where push factors are weaker, quality of life and satisfaction of life goals play an important retaining role.

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<sup>5</sup> Storks, Hamsters, Searchers and Stayers were used to identify, respectively, circular migrants, 'one-off' migrants, those with open options and those with long-term plans in Eade, Drinkwater and Garapich's 2006 study. We added in an additional category of strategist to define migrants who place themselves strategically between the searcher and stayer categories.

We appreciate that some of the recommendations cannot be enacted at a regional level and require policy action at a national level, and that future sub-regional economic development agendas may complicate the pursuit of the regional recommendations proposed above. However, strategic migration partnership activity could, to a large extent, ensure a coherent response to and dissemination of, the issues raised in this report.





# Introduction

This is the third and final report of the Longitudinal Study of Migrant Workers in the Eastern Region commissioned by the East of England Development Agency (2008 – 2010). Partly funded by the European Social Fund, the study explored the perspectives of migrant workers (and stakeholders) in relation to: factors that influence decisions on coming to the UK and length of stay; barriers to full participation in the regional economy; and, barriers to social inclusion in local communities.

Year 3 of the study conducted (i) 30 semi-structured interviews with European citizens from A2/A8 countries who have arrived in the UK since 2004, (ii) an analysis of eleven Polish blogs and (iii) 11 semi-structured interviews with stakeholders in the region (evaluating the findings from the second interim report). The final report presents the data from year 3 and analyses them in the context of the previous years to identify trends regarding decision making on length of stay and barriers to full participation in the regional economy, and barriers to social inclusion in local communities. It includes an extensive review of the literature relating to length of stay, summarises the findings of the survey with migrant workers which was carried out in year 1 and 2 (comparing the overall samples of year 1 and year 2 and where relevant the sub-sample of those 50 participants who responded to the year 1 and year 2 survey) and includes 8 case studies to illustrate the experiences and decision-making processes of European citizens from the A8/A2 countries. The final chapter provides an overview of the public policy context (at European, national, and regional levels) and discusses how public policy has impacted on A8 and A2 migrants' living and working in the East of England. The conclusion highlights the main findings from the mixed and multi-method design and provides a list of policy recommendations which relate to the length of stay of migrant workers in the region.



# 1 Methodology

Our longitudinal study (applying a panel study approach) used a mixed methods approach combining quantitative with qualitative methods of data collection. The data analysis of 30–40 semi-structured interviews (year 1 to year 3), a range of Polish blogs (year 1 to year 3) and a survey (year 1 and year 2) were complemented by an extensive literature review on current themes of migration and interviews with stakeholders. Ethics approval for the study has been given by Anglia Ruskin University.

## 1.1 Semi structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with migrant workers (chiefly A8 nationals) living and working in the six counties of the Eastern region. Initially a core group of 40 European citizens from A8 and A2 countries (including a 'buffer' of 10) had been selected for semi-structured interviews in year 1 and the same participants were contacted in year 2 and year 3. As expected, the sample declined throughout the study and by year 3 30 participants were interviewed.

Interviewees were recruited via organisations working with and for migrants, ESOL classes and a 'poster campaign' in localities with a high percentage of migrants. The participants of the 'core group' reflect diverse backgrounds with regard to countries and areas (rural/urban) of origin (COO), date of arrival, area of settlement in the UK (rural/urban and different regions within the East of England), skills, educational and employment background, language proficiency, age, gender and marital status.

The interviews in all three years were between one and a half and two hours long focusing on the following areas: personal profile, arrival and reasons for migration, life before migration, perceptions of the UK, perceptions of Europe, expectations, goals, migration decisions, and LOS; in particular, probing plans regarding LOS, factors which influence decision making processes, perceptions of economic, political and social situations in COO and the UK and barriers regarding employment and social inclusion.

Interviews were conducted in English, although the level of interviewees' standard of English varied, with a small number of interviews carried out with a translator present.

## 1.2 Survey

A survey was conducted to complement the qualitative data collection methods with a larger sample. The questionnaire covered similar areas as the semi-structured interviews with participants using closed-ended questions. Questionnaires were distributed via some of the same channels used for the recruitment of interviewees. The team is aware that the sample for the quantitative research (161 participants in year 1 and 61 participants in year 2) is relatively low; however, survey findings have substantiated trends which were identified in the qualitative research and in the literature review. As outlined above, 61 out of the original 161 respondents replied to the second year of the longitudinal survey. Although the response rate of 38% is low it reflects a typical problem of longitudinal research which

applies a panel study approach, intensified by the particular characteristics of migrants' mobility. The survey cannot claim statistical representation due to the small size of the sample and the non representative sampling method. However, the objective of the survey was to provide a further evidence base for the qualitative findings rather than statistical representation. Due to the small sample size the findings focus on descriptive (rather than inferential) statistics highlighting percentages and percentage differences between year 1 and year 2. The final report compares the overall samples of year 1 and year 2 and, where relevant, looks at the sub-samples of participants who responded in both years of the study.

## 1.3 Blogs

Several Polish internet blog websites were analysed between year 1 and year 3 (the majority of the websites were accessed via the [www.blog.onet.pl](http://www.blog.onet.pl) portal). After an initial 'pilot project' in year 1, a more extensive analysis of internet blog sites was carried out in year 2 and 3. In year 1, fifteen Polish language blog sites were scoped and five blogs identified for further analysis. Year 2 initially looked at twenty-one Polish language blog sites and nine blogs were selected for further analysis. The third year of the study scoped eighteen Polish language internet blog websites and eleven were selected for translation and analysis.

The focus of the blog site analysis was on: migrants' reflections regarding their perceptions of the UK and their home country and the various push and pull factors (at the micro, meso and macro level) that have an impact on decisions on LOS.

## 1.4 Case studies

Following the semi-structured interviews in year 1 eight case studies were developed in year 2 and continued in year 3. Eade *et al* (2006) categories of hamsters, storks, searchers and stayers provided a framework for the case studies and helped to identify 'typical' scenarios regarding LOS.

## 1.5 Diaries and discussion forums

Engagement with the diaries was fairly limited and by the end of year 1 only eleven contributions had been received. Other researchers such as Spencer *et al* (2007) have encountered similar problems regarding the use of diaries as data collection tools. An initial analysis of the diary contributions was included in the first interim report; however, participants found them very time consuming and confidence of written English was also an issue. A discussion forum was also set up so that participants could exchange ideas and communicate with the other participants in the core group. In general participants did not take up this form of communication possibly due to, again, confidence with written English, time constraints, use of other chat rooms/ forums and/or a feeling that they did not need to identify themselves with the other participants in the research. After consultation with the core group of participants, the research team decided to discontinue the discussion forum in year 2.

## 1.6 Stakeholder interviews

Key stakeholders were consulted in year 2 and year 3 to review and respond to the first and second interim reports in relation to their own knowledge and experience of the issues. 9 structured interviews were conducted over the telephone in year 2 and 11 interviews in year 3. The following key areas were discussed: LOS and settlement issues, which included reflections on the impact of the economic recession; European citizenship; push and pull factors; barriers; 'the good, the bad and the ugly'; goals and ambitions; resilience; and, recommendations. In both years interviewees felt the interim report findings were consistent with their own knowledge base and experience.

## 1.7 Conclusion

Overall the use of a longitudinal approach in combination with mixed methods offered an in-depth insight into the different and changing perspectives of A8/A2 migrants and stakeholders on length of stay and barriers to inclusion. The longitudinal approach applied the principles of a panel study although in year 2 and 3 a small number (eight) of additional participants were recruited to replace those who had left the study; these additional interviewees were asked to provide information retrospectively about the year of the study which they had 'missed'.

We were very fortunate that participants were willing to spend a considerable amount of time taking part in the interviews and surveys (although vouchers were distributed they did not account in any way for the actual time participants spent providing us with detailed information and reflections). A relatively small number of interviewees (around 25%) did not continue through the 3 years; more participants were lost from the first survey with 38% of the original 161 respondents only completing the second year of the longitudinal survey. This reflects a typical problem of longitudinal research which applies a panel study approach and intensified by the particular characteristics of migrants' mobility. A variety of methods were used to increase the retention rate for the survey (e.g. sending an electronic questionnaire to participants' e-mail addresses), however these did not significantly increase recruitment. Unfortunately, diaries and discussion forums were less successful methods of data collection largely due to time and language issues. To avoid any language barriers, future research might consider writing diaries in participants' first language (although this adds considerably to the costs of a project and, as we attempted this in year 3, does not necessarily guarantee a better response). Discussion forums could also be structured along first language usage although time issues will always present problems.

Overall the findings of the different mixed and multi-methods were convergent and/or complemented each other which added validity to our key findings.





# 2 Literature review

The following sections provide a review of the academic and policy literature published since our 2<sup>nd</sup> interim report, and also revisit some of the key publications discussed in this report.<sup>1</sup> We begin with an overview of current evidence on inflows, outflows and LOS regarding A8/A2 migration (section 2.1), setting this within a discussion of the current policy context and recent debates on the economic impact of migration at the European, national and regional level (section 2.2). Our focus then shifts from the macro- to the micro-level with an analysis of the various influences on individual migrant workers' decision-making processes. A deliberate contrast is drawn here between economic and employment-related factors (section 2.3) and other *non-economic* considerations which have an equally powerful impact on migration decisions and thoughts on LOS (section 2.5). In section 2.4 we look in more depth at the labour market performance/position of migrant workers during the recent recession, and consider whether they have experienced particular employment disadvantage. Section 2.6 looks at experiences of migration stress and the various coping strategies adopted. The remaining sections then consider specific non-economic factors/issues such as identity construction and the theme of building a 'normal' life (section 2.7), the importance of social networks and family (section 2.8), and finally the growing phenomenon of transnational living (section 2.9). The review then concludes with a summary of the main themes identified in the emerging literature.

## 2.1 Patterns of migration: inflows, outflows and LOS

Patterns of immigration have changed since 2008 and evidence is emerging which indicates a significant deceleration of NMS (New Member States) inflows into the UK (Dobson *et al.* 2009). By 2008 the number of registrations on the WRS (Worker Registration Scheme) from central and eastern European (CEE) nationals had 'collapsed', and by the first quarter of 2010 had reached their lowest level since A8 accession (Papademetriou *et al.* 2010). Approved WRS applications fell from 46,645 in the first quarter of 2008 to 21,275 in the first quarter of 2009 (although there was still an inflow of roughly 7,000 per month). Papademetriou *et al.* (2010) also report that between 2007 and 2009 National Insurance (NiNo) applications halved (compared with relatively *small* declines in other countries). Labour force statistics (referenced in a profile of Polish emigration, Migration Policy Institute) showed that in 2007/08 the overall number of Poles registered as living/working abroad decreased by over 60,000 with the biggest drops in migration to the UK (40,000) and Ireland (20,000). Rates of migration to other European countries either remained stable or increased slightly – for example, new arrivals to the Netherlands rose by 10,000 (Iglicka and Ziolk Skrzypczak 2010, online).

With regard to outmigration there is 'no evidence of a significant upturn in outflows' (Dobson *et al.* 2009: pp.13); although there is a lack of reliable statistics on outmigration from the UK. Despite the recession migrant workers in the UK have been relatively successful in maintaining employment levels compared with other immigrant groups (Sumption 2010), and are not necessarily seen by employers as an easily expendable workforce. Data collected at the local level has shown that the majority of migrant workers do not consider that the recession had a significantly negative impact on their employment; for example, 45% of respondents in a survey of migrant workers in Suffolk reported that they had not been affected (Suffolk County Council 2010). This resonates with the findings reported in our 2<sup>nd</sup> interim report that the majority of participants had emerged relatively 'unscathed' (Schneider and Holman 2010, pp. 29). However, 19% of migrant workers in the Suffolk research *did* report increased anxiety over job security, while 14% also reported that they were worried about debt, indicating an element of concern about their economic position. It has been suggested that migrant workers may suffer disproportionately under the planned programme of public spending cuts; for instance, A8 migrants are overrepresented among recipients of working tax credits (as they are often employed in low wage jobs) and may be particularly affected by a reduction in these benefits (Sumption 2010).

With regard to LOS the notion of 'intentional unpredictability' (Eade *et al.* 2006) and complexity in decision-making on LOS has remained a prominent theme. For example, in the research carried out by Suffolk County Council (2010), 34% of participants stated that they were planning to stay between 2 and 5 years, while 13% intended to stay for longer than 5 years and 12% planned to stay permanently. A further 20% stated that they were undecided about how long they would stay in the UK. Similarly, research on migrant working in the South West found that only 6% of participants indicated that they would return home within 6 months (Dorr and Stennett 2010), 44% had 'no idea' when they would return home (if at all) and 28% were planning to stay – numbers which, according to the authors, had continued to rise even during the recession. Blanchflower and Shadforth (2009) offer a slightly different angle on LOS; just 9% of the migrant workers they surveyed said that they expected to remain in the UK for 2 years or more. They argue that the majority of migrant workers are short-term stayers only, and that their pattern of circular/return movement between COO and the UK means they should not be categorised as migrants but as commuters or temporary workers. This argument does not match up with the evidence from other studies of migrant working – or with our own findings. For example, in the first year of our research 59% of questionnaire respondents were undecided regarding LOS and reported a 'let's see' attitude, while only 7% were planning a short term stay of less than one year (Schneider and Holman 2009). Over half had changed their decision on LOS, with 79% wanting to stay longer than originally planned. Plans were firmer by the publication of the 2<sup>nd</sup> interim report, with only 28% reporting that they had no fixed thoughts on LOS and a slight increase (from 11 to 18%) in respondents who planned to stay indefinitely (Schneider and Holman 2010).

1 For a fuller discussion of these themes in literature published before 2009/2010 readers are directed to the literature review sections in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> interim reports

However, it should also be noted that there is often a gap between stated plans and LOS and that measures can often fail to capture this ambiguity (Cook *et al.* 2010). Hence while they provide a useful framework within which to consider migration decisions and thoughts on LOS, we should recognise the potential limitations of the categories such as ‘storks’ (circular migrants), ‘hamsters’ (one-off migrants), ‘searchers’ (open options) and ‘stayers’ (long-term/permanent migrants) formulated by Eade *et al.* (2006) in capturing this complexity and fluidity.

Factors behind migration and remigration decisions remain inherently complex, multilayered and sometimes contradictory<sup>2</sup>. Despite the current financial climate, economic considerations are only one factor influencing initial decisions to migrate and also shaping subsequent thoughts on LOS. Other *non*-economic factors, such as personal factors, experiences and perceptions relating to social factors and transnational living, have an equally strong impact. Migrant workers’ expectations and intentions can also shift and change with time, and they may adopt different identities, affiliations and commitments at different stages of the migration ‘project’. Nor are migrant workers simply passive policy objects or a readily available (and easily exploitable) source of labour for employers. As highlighted in our interim reports for this project, they are able to exercise their agency in a range of ways, negotiating the numerous constraints which they encounter on a daily basis, and develop a range of coping strategies in response to these difficulties.

In summary, the evidence to support widespread claims that migration to the UK from CEE countries has been affected by the recent recession is mixed. Many of the economic incentives to migrate to the UK remain (see section 2.4) – for example, while it has undoubtedly shrunk, there is still a wage differential which makes moving to the UK an attractive financial prospect (Galgóczi *et al.* 2009, Janta *et al.* 2010). Commentators have suggested that numbers of new arrivals will rise again in the longer term, and that the recent slowing of migration to the UK is likely to be just a short-term ‘dip’ or immigration ‘pause’ (Papademetriou *et al.* 2010). However, there is also an increasing trend towards circular migration and the adoption of transnational lifestyles. It is also important to remember that individual migration strategies are constantly reshaped in a continual process of searching and experimentation (White 2009), and that decisions regarding LOS are dynamic rather than static. A8/A2 migrants are a ‘diverse, not entirely predictable, population, all existing within the same economic framework but formulating different strategies of migration and return’ (Burrell 2010, pp. 299).

## 2.2 Political and public debates on the economic impacts of migration

One of the main concerns consistently raised in public and political debates is the risk that an influx of migrant labour will displace the local labour force and depress local wages, with potentially negative consequences for levels of community cohesion – concerns which have gained new impetus and exerted new political pressures during the recent recession (Huber *et al.* 2010). As in previous years, there is little solid empirical data to support such claims, and many commentators have instead challenged what Rowthorn (2008, pp. 566) has termed the ‘prevailing academic orthodoxy about labour displacement’ (pp. 566). An increase in labour migration can ‘increase pressure on persons already disadvantaged on the labour market, exacerbating trends to greater inequality, undermine working conditions and wages, and increase unemployment if displaced workers are not reabsorbed’ (Galgóczi *et al.* 2009, pp. 18). However, migrant workers often fill key skills shortages and relieve ‘bottlenecks’, and are usually complementary to (rather than substitutes *for*) the native workforce (Turner 2010). There are indications of a slight displacement of younger workers and those in the lower-skilled sectors of the labour market who are more susceptible to competition from migrant workers (Blanchflower and Shadforth 2009). However this shift could be attributed to a whole range of factors and several studies have found ‘no compelling evidence of a causal impact of higher migration on youth unemployment’ (Petronglo and Van Reenen 2010, pp. 7). Any effects of migration on youth unemployment are likely to be both weak and short-term (Barrell *et al.* 2010, pp. 384).

Again, we have found that there is little evidence in support of the ‘lump of labour’ fallacy which suggests that there are only a fixed number of jobs over which migrants and non-migrants have to compete (Jurado 2009). There are clear indications that an influx of migrant workers can in fact *stimulate* regional and local economies – which has a particular resonance in the East of England, where a range of industries depend heavily on migrant labour – by helping to contain wage pressures (Blanchflower and Shadforth 2009, Wadsworth 2010). Hijzen and Wright (2010) found that the effect of migrant working on wage levels has been negligible, with a 1% increase in the supply of unskilled migrant labour generating only a 0.02% reduction in overall wages.

The fiscal contribution of migrant workers is also still being debated. Rowthorn (2008, pp. 577) has argued that there is a fiscal case for temporary migration as ‘even unskilled migrants may be net contributors if they eventually depart and make few claims on the welfare state while in the country’. Recent empirical evidence certainly appears to support this claim. For example, the findings presented by Dustmann *et al.* (2010) indicate that in each fiscal year since 2004<sup>3</sup>, A8 migrant workers made a positive contribution to tax revenues (despite the UK’s budget deficit) due to their high employment rate, the fact that

<sup>2</sup> This argument has been confirmed by the interim findings from this project (Schneider and Holman 2009 and 2010)

<sup>3</sup> Dustmann *et al.* (2010) refer to the fiscal years 2005/06, 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09



they pay proportionately more in indirect taxes and also make fewer demands on the benefits system and public services. Migrant workers have a higher rate of labour market attachment, with a participation rate<sup>4</sup> of 95% for men (compared with 83% of native male workers) and 80% of women (compared with 75% of native female workers) (Dustmann *et al.* 2010). Migrant workers also have higher employment rates, with 90% of men and 74% of women in employment, compared with 78% and 71% of the native population respectively<sup>5</sup>. Despite their increasing entitlements, levels of benefit receipt among migrant workers remain low<sup>6</sup> and they continue to make few demands on public service provision – for example, using Labour Force Survey (LFS) data, Dustmann *et al.* (2010) calculated that A8 migrants arriving after 2004 were 59% less likely to receive state benefits or tax credits and 57% less likely to live in social housing. Despite concerns about the fact that the UK's comparatively generous welfare system can act as a major pull factor in migration decisions, the evidence to support this is both thin and weak<sup>7</sup> (Barrett and McCarthy 2008).

## 2.3 Impact of economic and employment-related factors on migration decisions and LOS

Negative assessments of COO economies and labour market situations at home, compared with the relative attractiveness of the UK labour market, can act as a major push factor. As Galgóczi *et al.* (2009) have noted, individuals' assessments of the employment opportunities available to them at home is 'one of the most important economic factors behind migration decisions' (pp. 15). This was certainly true of respondents in the Suffolk research mentioned earlier for whom work was the biggest driver of migration decisions (for 86% of the sample), with 77% of questionnaire respondents stating that they had moved to the area for a specific job<sup>8</sup>. A high proportion of migrant workers come from countries with low or stagnating levels of GDP (Blanchflower and Shadforth 2009). Unemployment rates also feature highly in migration decisions, particularly youth unemployment – which could explain the overwhelmingly young age profile of new arrivals to the UK

4 The definition of this includes those who are employed, self-employed or looking for a job

5 Interestingly, the reverse is true in Ireland where migrant workers have a higher unemployment rate than native workers of 15.6% compared with 11.4% by mid 2009 (Turner 2010). This study also found that the number of A8 nationals in the labour market had declined by 14% over the previous twelve months.

6 Although as already mentioned, some studies note that a significant proportion of migrant workers do claim employment related benefits such as working and child tax credits

7 By thin, Barrett and McCarthy mean that there are few studies which have reported such findings, and by weak they mean that any findings to this effect have been on the margins of statistical significance – meaning that no firm causal links can be drawn between welfare provision and migration decisions or thoughts on LOS.

8 Whereas 21% had moved to the area because they had family or friends already living there, which supports the argument that non-economic factors such as the presence of social networks are also an important pull factor in migration decisions

(White 2010). Wage differentials between sending and receiving countries are also important (for example, in 2003 the average Latvian wage stood at just one eighth of the EU-15 average), and despite the convergence in wage levels which has taken place since (by 2007 the ratio had fallen to 1: 5.5), wage differentials 'remain very substantial and continue to function as drivers of migration' (Galgóczi *et al.* 2009, pp. 15). These trends form the basis of the 'crowding out' thesis, which holds that migration levels will be higher among inhabitants of 'economically backward regions ... characterized by very limited employment opportunities, a high proportion of the population living in medium-sized or small towns and in villages, and a relatively large semi-subsistence sector' (Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2009, pp. 621).

There are signs that the economic situations in COOs have been improving, although at different rates (Fix *et al.* 2009, Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2009). Unemployment rates have continued to fall in many CEE countries, although this overall positive trend can mask persistent inequalities between different regions or groups of employees. Youth unemployment continues to pose a major problem (Galgóczi *et al.* 2009). There is also evidence of strong economic growth and a rise in levels of GDP<sup>9</sup> – and with it living standards – in some countries (Blanchflower and Shadforth 2009), although again progress has been uneven. If these economic stimuli are removed and the unemployment and wage differentials between sending and receiving countries diminish or disappear then this will have less influence as an incentive to migrate to the UK (Fihel and Kaczmarczyk 2009). It could also encourage remigration – particularly among those classified as 'storks' according to Eade *et al.*'s (2006) classification scheme, who see the economic situation at home as *improving*, and migration therefore as a purely short-term solution to their experiences of labour market and economic inequality.

## 2.4 Labour market performance and position during the recent recession

There has been a continuation of the general trend towards downskilling and underemployment among migrant workers. For example, Huber *et al.* (2010) have noted a considerable degree of 'skills mismatch' in the jobs undertaken by migrant workers, finding a 29.6 percentage point higher probability that migrant workers will be over-qualified compared with native workers (2010, pp. 33). Migrant workers in Suffolk were also in a similar situation, with the majority (73%) in manual employment and 56% of those who held a university degree working in manual employment. Similarly a recent study of migrant employment in Ireland reported a significant degree of occupational downgrading

9 Although Blanchflower and Shadforth (2009) also predicted a rapid slowing of GDP growth in the near future, pointing in particular to the case of Hungary and predicting that the major economic shocks it was experiencing at that point could lead to an increase in emigration – and a change in the 'country mix' of new arrivals to the UK. Latvia and Lithuania have experienced more severe economic shocks in recent months and there is already some evidence of a change in 'country mix' as a result of this, with a rise in the proportion of new arrivals from these countries – despite the overall fall in numbers of migrant workers.

and 'brain waste' (Turner 2010). Migrant workers continue to earn lower wages despite their higher levels of education. Dustmann *et al.* (2010) reported that a high proportion of A8 migrant workers in the UK (32.0% of men and 39.9% of women) had left education at the age of 21 or above<sup>10</sup>. Conversely, the proportion of A8 migrant workers who had left education at age 16 or below was much lower at 11.9% of men and 10.0% of women compared with 58.3% (men) and 53.9% (women) of the UK workforce.

However, despite these higher levels of human capital pay rates remained consistently low between 2004 and 2008, with an average hourly wage of £6.82 per hour for A8 men – compared with a rate of £11.91 for UK natives. The existence of this 'glass ceiling' (Currie 2007, pp. 104) which limits migrant workers' earning potential could prompt some to return home. However, there is already some evidence of improvements in migrant workers' occupational mobility, which suggests that this 'pay penalty ... may disappear over time as migrants adapt to the destination country and find jobs more commensurate to their skill levels or as migrants in temporary arrangements return to their home country' (Barrell *et al.* 2010, pp. 386). As Bachan and Sheehan (2010) note, returns to human capital such as educational attainment are small in migrant workers' first UK job but, increase as they progress through the labour market with each extra year of education adding an extra 3.2% to their average weekly wage. They also found significant evidence of gradual occupational upgrading between first UK jobs and respondents' current job. Roughly 75% of respondents' first UK jobs involved semi- or unskilled work (compared with just 18% of migrant workers in skilled work and 8% in professional roles) but in their current employment this had dropped to just 35%. A8 nationals also display greater levels of occupational mobility than other immigrant groups (McDowell *et al.* 2009). English language proficiency is 'key to occupational mobility' (Cook *et al.* 2010, pp. 12)<sup>11</sup>. Those who speak English well are particularly valued by employers as an 'an interface between the shop floor and management' (pp. 13), meaning that they are more likely to be promoted internally and then be able to exercise a greater degree of control over the type of work they do and their working conditions. Employers continue to 'celebrate' the 'perceived compliance' and stronger work ethic of migrant workers (MacKenzie and Forde 2009, pp. 150) and there does not appear to be a slowing in demand for migrant labour – contrary to the claims of buffer theory. However the reality is often that despite this apparent premium on migrant labour, 'their terms and conditions of employment remained wedded to the bottom of the labour market' (ibid, pp. 142). As Pijpers (2010) has also argued, employer demand for 'flexipoles' can lead to an increase in the exploitation of migrant workers who become like 'puzzle pieces, directly callable, quickly matchable, easily transferrable' (pp. 1094).

Migrant workers often make a clear 'trade off' between the type of low-paid or low-skilled work discussed above and the economic benefits it can bring, such as an increase in spending power in their home country or the opportunity to send remittances, build up savings and invest in property. This occupational downgrading can be offset against other, non-economic benefits such as personal development and the opportunity to practice or improve English language skills (Bachan and Sheehan 2010). As discussed in last year's literature review, there is often an element of migrant workers 'biding their time' and writing off employment disadvantage such as long hours and low wages until their position in the labour market improves. Hence Dustmann *et al.* (2010, pp. 11) have observed much 'steeper wage growth profiles' after an initial period of relative disadvantage – although this is significantly less likely among those at the very bottom of the labour market in the least skilled positions.

Recent studies of migrant workers in the hospitality sector have shown how this type of work is often seen as a 'stepping stone' to better opportunities, and a 'good first job' which provides an easy point of entry into the UK labour market despite the apparent disadvantages such as the long hours and shift patterns (Janta *et al.* 2010, see also McDowell 2009). In fact the flexibility of the work is seen as an advantage because it allows migrant workers to maintain an element of work-life balance, and to swap shifts with colleagues giving them time off for job interviews, returns home and studying (Janta *et al.* 2010). Similarly, Doyle and Timonen's (2010) study of migrant workers' experiences of care work found that the choice of this type of work was largely pragmatic, prompted by a 'perception of their current work as a temporary stepping-stone, as a means rather than as an end, [which] enabled them to maintain an equanimous attitude towards their current employment' (pp. 43). Interviewees were able to provide clear rationales for their choice of employment, even where COO jobs had been of considerably higher status, such as the fact that the flexibility of the job allowed them to combine work with caring responsibilities at home. Despite taking an initial step down, it was clear that for interviewees 'the intended future career trajectory was upward, either within or outside the care sector' (pp. 42). This is a clear exercise of agency on the part of migrant workers, for whom working in the UK can open up new opportunities and 'spaces for people to negotiate structural constraints and reconfigure aspects of their identity' (Cook *et al.* 2010, pp. 1).

10 Indicating that they were educated to postgraduate level

11 Although the issue of how to design and organise the provision of employer-provided language training is a complex one. As some employers in Cook *et al.*'s (2010) study have argued, some migrant workers may be reluctant to spend time away from production line as impacted on their take-home pay

## 2.5 Impact of non-economic factors influencing migration decisions and LOS

The prevalent emphasis in political and public debates, as well as research, on economic and employment factors as the main influences on migration decisions and thoughts on LOS implies that these are largely rational choices<sup>12</sup> and calculated responses to economic conditions (Burrell 2010). However, migrant workers are motivated by much more besides the need to secure their 'sheer survival' (White 2009). More attention is now being paid to the other 'complementary' factors influencing migrant workers' decision-making processes.

For many younger migrants, coming to live and work in the UK is simply seen as an accepted stage in their life course – as White (2010, pp. 578) has observed, there is a new generation who are now being 'socialised into migration'<sup>13</sup>. Rather than being a rational economic response, migration is also a 'response to new opportunities, particularly access to social networks' and the chance to meet new people – and hence exercise agency. However, White (2010) has also argued that this sense of agency remains bounded within an overall structure – for example, their decisions are also shaped by the migration culture and history of the local areas from which they originate; an issue which we discussed in the literature review for the 2<sup>nd</sup> interim report. White also argues that younger migrants are able to exercise a greater degree of agency than older migrants – this is not necessarily the case, and there are several examples from our fieldwork of older migrant workers' responding creatively to their situation and negotiating a range of constraints. As White acknowledges, younger migrant workers equally 'face many structural constraints and do not have a completely free choice about whether or not to migrate. Economic push factors (such as low wages and a lack of employment opportunities) can be just as important for them as for older migrants' (2010, pp. 578).

Migration can generate a range of non-economic benefits, particularly opportunities for personal development and building new, transnational social networks. This was a key finding in Janta *et al.*'s (2010, pp. 16) study; for their participants working in the hospitality sector could, despite the long hours and comparatively low wages, 'provide a positive working experience with opportunities for self development and gaining life experiences that go beyond the workplace'. Opportunities for exposure to different cultures and values<sup>14</sup> is also an important benefit for some; as Cook *et al.* (2010, pp. 16) have noted, for their interviewees the 'experience of living and working in different cultural and social spaces had clearly allowed them to question the customs and practices of their homeland'. The opportunity to develop or acquire new language skills can also be an important factor in the trade-off many migrant workers

make when taking a job that is low-skilled or poorly paid – particularly as a higher level of English language is often the 'key to occupational mobility' (Cook *et al.* 2010, pp. 12)<sup>15</sup>. English language skills can also be a valuable asset for returning migrants, as they are highly marketable and can make COO employers more willing to hire them<sup>16</sup> (Currie 2007). This point highlights the importance and 'potential value of international experience, *regardless of what that actually entails*' (ibid, pp. 115, added emphasis); consequently the exact nature, conditions and pay level of the job undertaken can be less important than the potential qualitative benefits<sup>17</sup>.

## 2.6 Migration stress and coping strategies

In the literature review written for the first interim report, we discussed the research carried out by Weishaar (2008) on stress among migrant workers; this article reported how the long hours and shift work common among migrant workers, together with the poor working conditions they often experience – as well as the pressure of adapting to living in a new place – could generate increased levels of stress and depression, with potentially adverse implications for their long-term health. A further article published more recently (Weishaar 2010) continues this theme, but also extends it to consider the various coping strategies adopted by migrant workers – while also noting the degree of resourcefulness apparent in individuals' responses to their situation. Using the stress theory formulated by Lazarus (1995), Weishaar's (2010) article provides an alternative for considering the nature and extent of stress among interviewees and the ways they have 'coped'. Weishaar identifies three different coping styles, each of which raises themes that resonate with the questions we have been asking interviewees about how they have dealt with difficulties since arriving in the UK and whether their approach has changed with LOS. Firstly, Weishaar (2010) outlines a problem-solving based approach to coping. This involves trying to find a practical solution to difficulties, placing a clear emphasis on action, self-reliance, pro-activity and the importance of taking opportunities which are available<sup>18</sup> – and remaining aware of the formal sources of support which are available. This style of coping behaviour can, Weishaar (2010) argues, be *enhanced* by the migration process. The second style of coping is described as 'emotion-regulating'; interviewees who coped in this way talked about relying on family members and close friends (either in Poland or in the UK) for support, and the importance of personality traits such as modesty of ambitions or goals and sturdiness/resilience in the adjustment period immediately after arrival. Building a network of informal contacts

15 Although the authors also observe an important gender distinction here with male participants more likely to be focused on economic gains and 'getting a job as soon as possible' in contrast to female participants, for whom other opportunities – such as acquiring language skills – were more important.

16 This is also true of other soft skills acquired as part of the migration experience, such as increased inter-personal skills or self-confidence and resourcefulness (Currie 2007)

17 However, decisions about learning languages are 'influenced by wider concerns of self and other identification rather than simply being issues of instrumental need' (Temple 2010, pp. 318). Language, along with cultural practices such as food rituals, is an important factor in many migrant workers' negotiation of identity post-arrival

18 The need to take a flexible approach to finding solutions is also emphasised

12 For a further discussion of theories of decision-making readers are referred to the 1<sup>st</sup> interim report (Schneider and Holman 2009)

13 This fits with the 'searcher' category within Eade *et al.*'s (2006) typology who place more emphasis on life experiences, cosmopolitanism and gap year travel

14 Although equally problematic for some migrant workers – for instance, some of our interviewees have consistently expressed surprise and an element of discomfort at the comparative tolerance and differences in morality within UK society

through a range of social activities either through work or in situations including shared accommodation, language classes, church or hobbies was also seen as particularly important ‘for dealing with emotions, for making respondents feel less alien, more appreciated and understood and for increasing a sense of belonging’ (pp. 823).

The third and final coping style, which was the most important for Weishaar’s interviewees, involves adopting appraisal-oriented strategies. Here, having the capacity to assess a situation realistically – and respond appropriately – was seen as ‘a crucial factor, influencing both mood and the ability to solve problems actively’ (pp. 824). For those who took this approach, believing in your abilities and ‘knowing one’s value’ were crucial and experience gained during time spent in the UK – ‘learning the ropes’ – was seen as a valuable part of personal development. Many of the interviewees gave examples of times when they had been in a difficult or stressful situation, but had *evaluated* this as a temporary set of circumstances and directly compared their situation to difficulties they had faced earlier in their lives or in COOs – or with the struggles of others. Instances where they had ‘coped’ successfully became a source of pride, and were seen as ‘helping to build up self-esteem and appraise situations positively’ (pp. 824).

## 2.7 Building a ‘normal’ life and negotiating identity

Recent studies have focused on the theme of the search for a ‘normal life’ and migration as a means of guaranteeing a decent wage and level of job security – rather than aiming for ‘too much’ – and enabling participation in ‘ordinary practice’ (Galasinska and Koslowska 2009, pp. 80). These studies have constructed the recent wave of migrants as qualitatively different from previous groups of Poles coming to the UK because for them migration, rather than representing a permanent step, is seen as a ‘temporary or an open-ended period in their lives’ (Galasinska 2010a, pp. 944). However, Lopez Rodriguez (2010) has also suggested that as thoughts on LOS change and migration plans become more permanent, migrant workers ‘will make all efforts to create an environment which most corresponds with their imaginings of normality and well-being’ (pp. 339 – 340). For many migrant worker parents, this search for a normal life is centred on their children’s education and their own aspirations for their children’s future<sup>19</sup>. To these participants the UK represented a ‘meritocratic paradise’ (pp. 343) where it was possible to break away from the stigma of the unemployment which was so common in COOs, because of the enhanced educational, professional and economic prospects it offered their children. Becoming involved in their children’s education was also a way for parents of achieving agency and ‘manoeuvring within the structure, so it works for them rather than against

19 This is an important point – while the majority of migrant workers coming to the UK – and to the East of England – have been young, male and with no dependants, there are signs that this picture may be changing, and that there are now an increasing number of ‘family joiners’ and new families (see the literature review in our 2<sup>nd</sup> interim report). As Burrell (2010, pp. 302) notes, this new trend provides an ‘important antidote to the image of the A8 migrant as being young and single’ (Burrell 2010, pp. 302). Several of our participants now have children, and this issue was discussed in several of the interviews for year 3

them’ (pp. 355).

After arrival in the UK, attitudes towards COOs are often highly complex and ambiguous; feelings can oscillate between acceptance (and even celebration) and estrangement from (and outright rejection of) the culture of their home country (Rabikowska 2010)<sup>20</sup>. Observing feast days and holidays, maintaining customs – even something as simple as eating familiar food – can be used as a means of maintaining links with home while also building a new life and identity abroad; food rituals in particular can contribute to ‘the creation of a habitual and habitable space of a new home where ‘normal’ life is to unfold’ (Rabikowska 2010, pp. 395). For many migrant workers, national identity is not something which can be changed by the migration process and the adoption of a transnational lifestyle (see section 1.9); participants in Metykova’s (2010) study of expressed a pragmatic acceptance that ‘the language they spoke, the books they were brought up reading, the food they ate, the sports they watched on TV were all linked to the place they were born and *they could not change this*’ (pp. 337, added emphasis). While many enjoyed the idea of becoming British, the majority maintained a strong national identity – even when their LOS was relatively long-term or where migration plans had changed.

## 2.8 Social networks

As we have noted in previous reviews, the presence of pre-existing social networks in an area can strongly influence initial migration decisions (Barrett and McCarthy 2008). Informal networks often act as a source of practical support in the immediate period post-arrival, providing both informational support (for example, on job opportunities or accommodation availability/location) as well as emotional support (Ryan *et al.* 2008; 2009). Temple (2010) provides a typology of the different networks on which migrant workers can draw; the first group of participants relied on ‘Polish networks’, living and socialising only with co-nationals and having only limited contact with English people (for example at work, in job agencies and with landlords or officials)<sup>21</sup>. The second ‘group’ relied on ‘limited choice’ networks. While they had more contact with English people, this was mainly through work and they expressed a clear preference for socialising with Polish friends, and although this group had good English language levels they did not use this to diversify their social networks<sup>22</sup>. The two other ‘types’ were the ‘divided’ networks of those second and third generation Poles born in the UK who often had difficulty reconciling their Polish and British identities – and finally those who could draw on a wide range of ‘mixed’ networks, including other migrants, co-nationals and UK nationals<sup>23</sup>.

While networks can be an important resource, some

20 It has become clear throughout the length of this research – and with increasing LOS – that this has become an important theme/consideration for many of our participants

21 Temple (2010) relates the type of network to thoughts on LOS, with this group usually wanting to return home – often in recognition of their limited contact outside the network

22 This group also saw English people as friendly but distant, and wanting limited contact with them

23 This final group were more likely to express a preference for the multicultural nature of UK society



commentators have warned of the danger of ‘network closure’ (Ryan *et al.* 2009, pp. 154) and argued that that these sources of support can also have a negative effect. While reliance on co-nationals and other migrants can often be constructed as an ‘important resource’ (Doyle and Timonen 2010) it is also acknowledged as complicated – and often not the most useful source of support. While providing information on employment opportunities, over-reliance on informal networks can close off other opportunities. For example, Battu *et al.* (2010) used Labour Force Survey (LFS) data to examine the job-seeking practices of immigrants in the UK and found considerable differences in outcome across ethnic groups, with those who relied on informal networks often losing out on the better jobs. Extending their original analysis to include CEE migrant workers, they found evidence of a labour market penalty among those with a strong national affiliation<sup>24</sup>. Similarly Lancee (2010) found that this type of informal networks, which display high levels of bonding social capital, are often ‘not effective for making headway on the labor market’ in comparison with cross-cutting networks<sup>25</sup>, which have more *bridging* social capital. In this study, those who had a wider variety of network ties were found to be twice as likely to be employed. Closed networks of co-nationals can offer ‘scanty integration’ and act as a ‘constraint to social cohesion’ (Lopez Rodriguez 2010, pp. 354).

## 2.9 Transnational living<sup>26</sup>

Migrant worker identities are becoming increasingly complex and transnational, with many maintaining strong links with their COO and making frequent return trips – despite planning to remain in the UK for some time. As we have noted in previous reviews, the most important change from previous inflows has been a major increase in temporary and circular migration from CEE countries, with migration no longer representing the permanent step it once did (Somerville and Sumption 2009). Identities and social networks are no longer tied to specific places, but are fluid and negotiable; migrants are able to ‘actively maintain simultaneous, multi-stranded social relations linking their COO and destination’ (Moskal 2011, pp. 2). This has important implications for families and parenting practices; even where children remain in COOs, parents can continue to provide not only emotional but also financial support to secure their children’s future, and geographical distance is no longer necessarily seen as a barrier to parenting (Moskal 2011; Ryan 2010)<sup>27</sup>.

This development has been particularly influenced by the easier availability and improved quality of technologies which enable ‘constant communication’ (ibid). As Galasi ska (2010b) observes, new information and communication technologies have enabled A8/A2 migrant workers to ‘participate actively in an ongoing dialogue with those who stayed in the home country’ (pp. 309) about a wide range of issues – *including* possible returns home. Maintaining a transnational lifestyle means that migration does not automatically involve cutting ties with home or a weakening sense of national identity (Moskal 2011) – as we saw in section 2.7 above, many migrant workers use a variety of ways to maintain this identity alongside their transnationalism.

## 2.10 Conclusion

As this review of the updated literature has shown, migrant workers’ motivations remain more complex and subject to change than is often acknowledged. While economic factors such as the availability and quality of employment opportunities along with the comparative performance of the UK economy have been key considerations in both migration decisions and thoughts on LOS, there are also a range of non-economic factors which come into play. While the available data suggests that a high proportion of migrant workers have left the UK, and that rates of new arrivals have slowed considerably, there are still a number of factors which make the UK an attractive place to live and work. We have also explored the nature of migrant workers’ experiences in the UK and a range of considerations which may factor in their decisions on whether to stay or go, such as migration stress and their ability to cope; the presence of social networks and the issue of whether these facilitate or hinder integration – as well as the increased ability of many migrant workers to keep a foot in both camps by maintaining a transnational lifestyle. All these are themes which have been raised by participants during the past three years, and will form the basis of our analysis of the final round of data collection and the changes experienced by our participants over the course of the research.

24 Although they do note the limitations of the LFS data source – with only 17 quarters’ worth of data available, the authors argue that it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions, and that further data would be needed to provide a more reliable assessment of trends

25 including both migrants, co-nationals and UK natives

26 This topic was the subject of a paper presented by the authors at the recent CRONEM conference on migration (Schneider *et al.* 2010)

27 However, Ryan (2010) has questioned the extent to which ‘transnational families represent a completely new type of migratory experience that can be sustained over time’ (pp. 20), and suggests that the current emphasis on transnationalism has overlooked the importance of physical proximity for certain kinds of family relationships and care-giving practices. It is certainly the case that for several of our respondents, a change in family relationships and circumstances – such as elderly parents falling ill and needing care – would prompt a return home. However, for many of them this is seen as a distant possibility and not a major factor in current decision-making



# 3 Findings from quantitative research

## 3.1 Profile of samples in year 1 and year 2

COO were similar in year 1 and year 2 of the survey whereby the majority of participants were from Poland (Y1: 67%; Y2: 66%), followed by Lithuania (Y1: 15%; Y2: 15%), Slovakia (Y1: 9%; Y2: 15%), Latvia (Y1: 8%; Y2: 2%), Czech Republic (Y1: 1%; Y2: 0%) and Romania (Y1: 1%; Y2: 2%).

- In both years more women replied to the survey than men (Y1: 63% women and 37% men; Y2: 62% women and 38% men)
- The age distribution of the sample changed between year 1 and year 2 of the survey; while the first year clustered around the 20–29 year olds (44%), the second year clustered around the 30–39 year olds (52%).
- In both years a large number of participants had arrived in the medium term (Y1: 48%; Y2: 41%), followed by the short term (Y1: 31%; Y2: 30%) and the long term (Y1: 21%; Y2: 30%).<sup>1</sup>
- There was a clear distinction between year 1 and year 2 regarding family status. In year 2 50% of participants were married compared to only 31% in year 1 (28% of those who replied in year 1 *and* year 2 had married in 2008/9). A large proportion of the sample in year 1 and year 2 were single (Y1: 29%; Y2: 30%); followed by those who were divorced (Y1: 19%; Y2: 7%) and/or cohabiting (Y1: 15%; Y2: 8%).
- Over half of participants had children in both samples (Y1: 58%; Y2: 53%).
- The majority of the participants lived in Cambridgeshire (Y1: 65%; Y2: 64%) followed by the other regions: Norfolk (Y1: 11%; Y2: 7%), Suffolk (Y1: 8; Y2: 7%), Essex (Y1: 8%; Y2: 9%), Hertfordshire (Y1: 4%; Y2: 4%) and Bedfordshire (Y1: 4%; Y2: 9%). A small number of those who responded to the survey in year 1 and year 2 had left Essex and moved into Hertfordshire or Cambridgeshire. A large number of participants described their areas as urban (Y1: 40%; Y2: 63%) or semi-urban/semi-rural (Y1: 54%; Y2: 27%); a smaller number lived in rural areas (Y1: 6%; Y2: 10%).
- A large number of participants in year 1 and year 2 said that they had good or very good English skills (Y1: 41% for written and 48% for oral English; Y2: 55% for written and 65% for oral English). Although the majority of participants had good English skills, the survey in both years also captured the experiences and perceptions of those who were less confident regarding their English (Y1: 59% for written and 52% for oral English; Y2: 45% for written and 35% for oral English).
- A large proportion of the sample had received as highest qualification a university education (Y2: 51%), followed by 26% with professional educational qualifications such as NVQs, apprenticeships etc.; 14% indicated as highest qualification an A-Level, and 9% had an equivalent to British GCSE qualifications. 19% who responded in year 1 *and* year 2 had improved their highest qualifications during 2008/9.

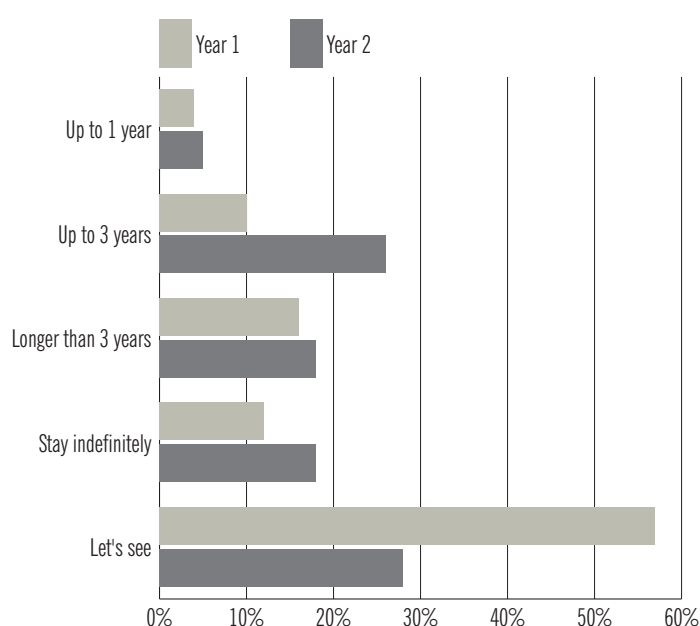
- The majority of participants in both years felt that their skills and qualifications were not reflected in their current employment (Y1: 73%; Y2: 67%). Those who responded in year 1 *and* year 2 indicated no difference regarding the reflection of skills in employment (Y1: 66% and Y2: 67%) although 19% had improved their highest qualification during 2008/9 (see above). None of the participants of year 2 had lost their job during 2008/9 although 34% had changed their employment.

## 3.2 Intended LOS

There was a difference between the overall samples in year 1 and year 2 regarding the concreteness of their LOS. While the majority (59%) of year 1 indicated 'I have no specific plans, let's see', this was significantly less represented in the year 2 sample (28%); more people in year 2 indicated that they wanted to stay longer than three years.

Amongst those who had responded to both years one can see that during the span of 1 year views on LOS had become more concrete.<sup>2</sup> While 57% selected in year 1 'I have no specific plans, let's see', in year 2 only 28% had this attitude. Instead, people were more likely to state that they would stay up to three years (26% compared to 10% in year 1); slightly more participants also said that they intended to stay indefinitely (18% compared to 12% in year 1). 18% wanted to stay longer than three years (16% in year 1) and 5% intended to stay for up to 1 year (4% in year 1; see figure 3a).

Figure 3a:  
**Intended LOS**  
(participants who responded to year 1 and year 2)



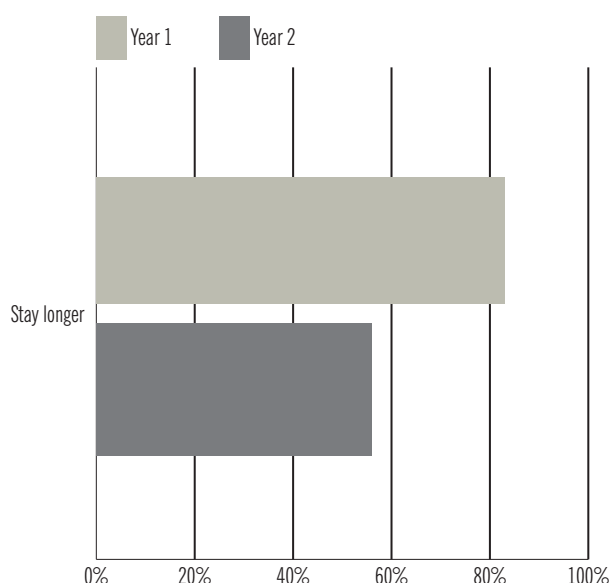
<sup>1</sup> Short term: 2007/8; medium term: 2005/6 and long-term: 2004 or earlier.

<sup>2</sup> As outlined in the Methodology section, 50 participants replied in year 1 *and* year 2.

55% of respondents had changed their decision on LOS between year 1 and year 2. The change of decision meant for the majority (68%) of the year 2 sample that they wanted to stay longer while the other 32% intended to leave earlier (returning to their COO or a third country).

The majority of those who replied to both years wanted to stay longer although they were less likely to do so in year 2 (Y1: 83%; Y2: 56%). 15% (Y2) explained the change of decision as being concerned about the economic recession and 40% (Y2) stated that they were concerned about the devaluation of the pound in relation to their home currency. Although the majority of the sample in year 2 was not considering a return to their home country, 21% thought 'very often' or 'often' about returning home or going into a third country. This was also reflected in the fact that between 15% and 25% of participants informed themselves 'very often' or 'often' about employment, housing and mortgages in their home country.

Figure 3b:  
**Longer stay than initially planned**  
(participants who responded to year 1 and year 2)



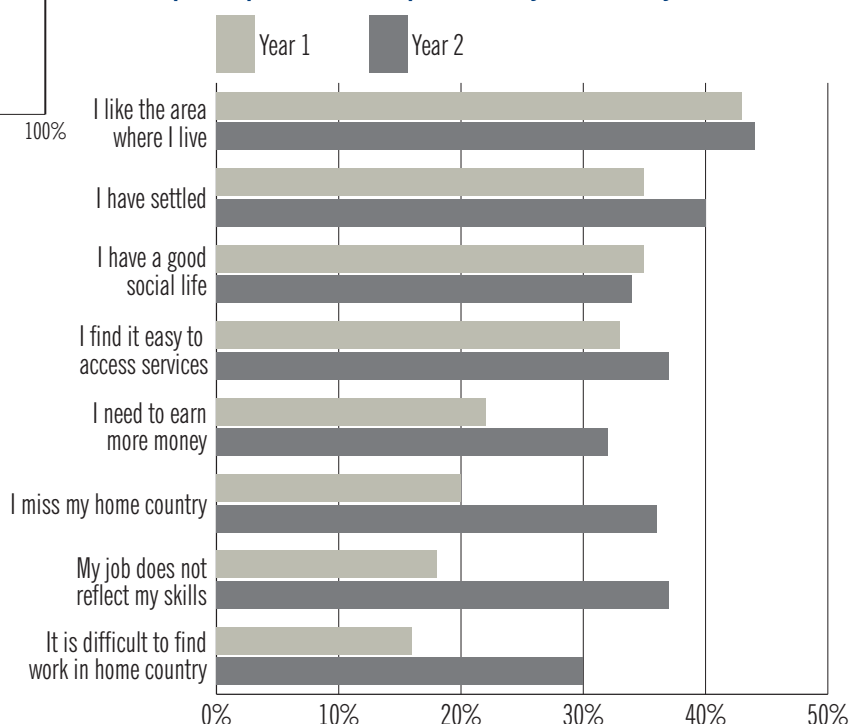
### 3.3 Subjective factors relating to LOS

The following presents findings of subjective factors which participants had self-identified as being influential for their decisions on LOS. The overall samples of year 1 and 2 self-identified similar factors as being important for their decision making on LOS with the most important factors being: 'I have settled' (Y1: 38%; Y2: 39%); 'I like the area where I live' (Y1: 37%; Y2: 46%); 'I need to earn more money' (Y1: 28%; Y2: 34%) and 'I have a good social life' (Y1: 28%; Y2: 39%) and 'I miss my home country' (Y1: 20%; Y2: 31%).

The above findings show that in both years participants were more likely to select factors which supported a stay in the UK; only the factor 'I miss my home country' corresponds potentially with a return or a move to a third country. Further, subjective factors which had been selected by a large number of participants related to the social rather than the economic situation.

Participants who responded to both years continued to perceive the following four factors as being important for their decision making (although the ranking changed slightly between year 1 and year 2): 'I like the area where I live' (Y1: 43%; Y2: 44%); 'I have settled in the UK' (Y1: 35%; Y2: 40%); 'I have a good social life in the UK' (Y1: 35%; Y2: 34%) and 'I find it easy to access services' (Y1: 33%; Y2: 37%). However, in year 2 participants placed more emphasis on the following factors: 'My job does not reflect my skills' (Y1: 18%; Y2: 37%); 'I miss my home country' (Y1: 20%; Y2: 36%); 'I need to earn more money' (Y1: 22%; Y2: 32%); and 'It is difficult to find work in home country' (Y1: 16%; Y2: 30%) (see figure 3c).

Figure 3c:  
**Subjective factors influencing decisions on LOS**  
(participants who responded to year 1 and year 2)



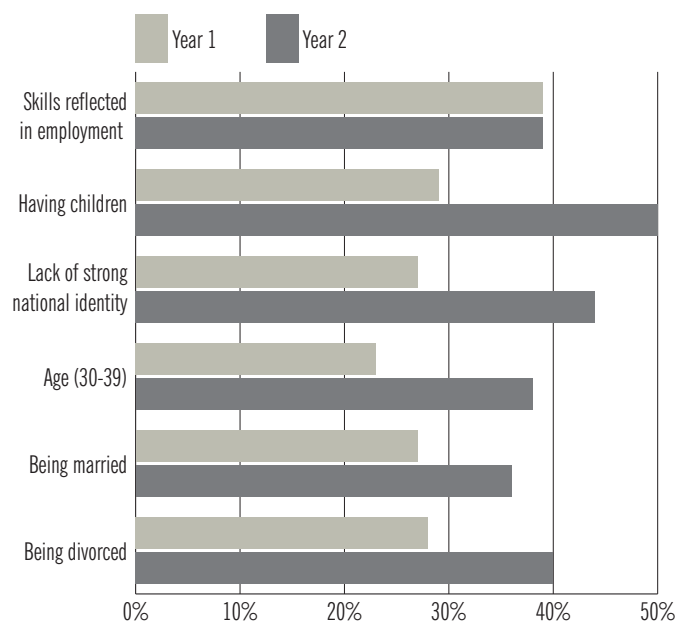


### 3.4 Objective factors relating to intended LOS

The following objective factors related to a longer stay in the UK (i.e. longer than 3 years or indefinitely; see figure 3d):

- Participants who indicated that their skills were reflected in employment were more likely to stay longer (Y1: 39%; Y2: 39%) than those who did not see their skills reflected (Y1: 12%; Y2: 32%).<sup>3</sup>
- Year 2 highlighted that migrants who were older (30–39) were more likely to stay longer (or indefinitely) than those who were younger (20–29); although this finding was not confirmed in year 1.
- Having children made a clear difference and participants with children wanted to stay longer (Y1: 29%; Y2: 50%) than those without children (Y1: 13%; Y2: 21%).
- Those who did not identify strongly with their COO were also more likely to stay longer (Y1: 27%; Y2: 44%) compared to those who showed a stronger national identity (Y1: 16%; Y2: 24%).<sup>4</sup>
- Respondents who were married (Y1: 27%; Y2: 36%) or divorced (Y1: 28%; Y2: 40%) were more likely to stay longer than those who were single or co-habiting.

Figure 3d:  
**Objective factors relating to a long stay (longer than 3 years or indefinite) (year 1, year 2)**



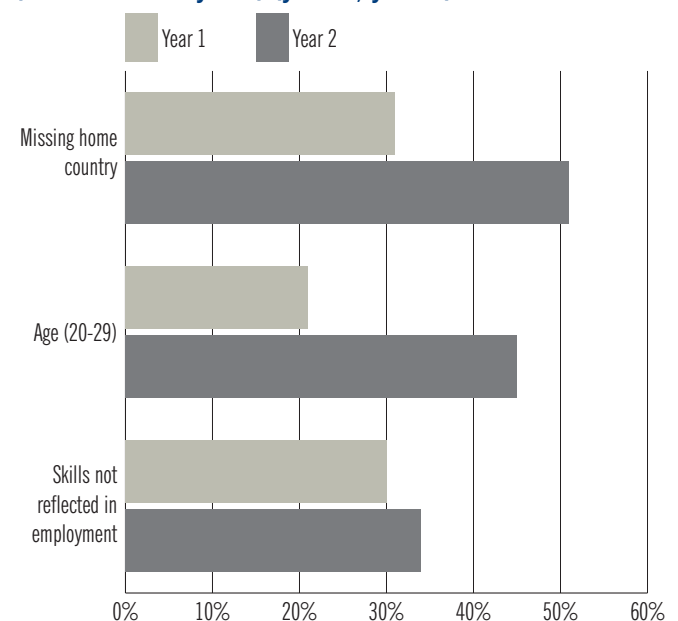
3 The year 2 sample highlighted that several participants 'got used' to the idea that their skills were not reflected in employment as it was less emphasised in the context of LOS as in year 1.

4 Year 1 findings differ from year 2 findings as the majority of participants in year 1 responded with a 'let's see' attitude.

The following objective factors were related to a shorter stay in the UK, i.e. less than 3 years (see figure 3e):

- In both years, 'missing home' was a strong indicator for a shorter stay (Y1: 31%; Y2: 51%).
- The link between a younger age (20–29) and a shorter stay was especially seen in the year 2 sample.
- A non-reflection of skills led also to a shorter stay (Y1: 30%; Y2: 34%).

Figure 3e:  
**Objective factors relating to a short stay (shorter than 3 years) (year 1, year 2)**



### 3.5 Factors influencing a longer and shorter stay than initially planned

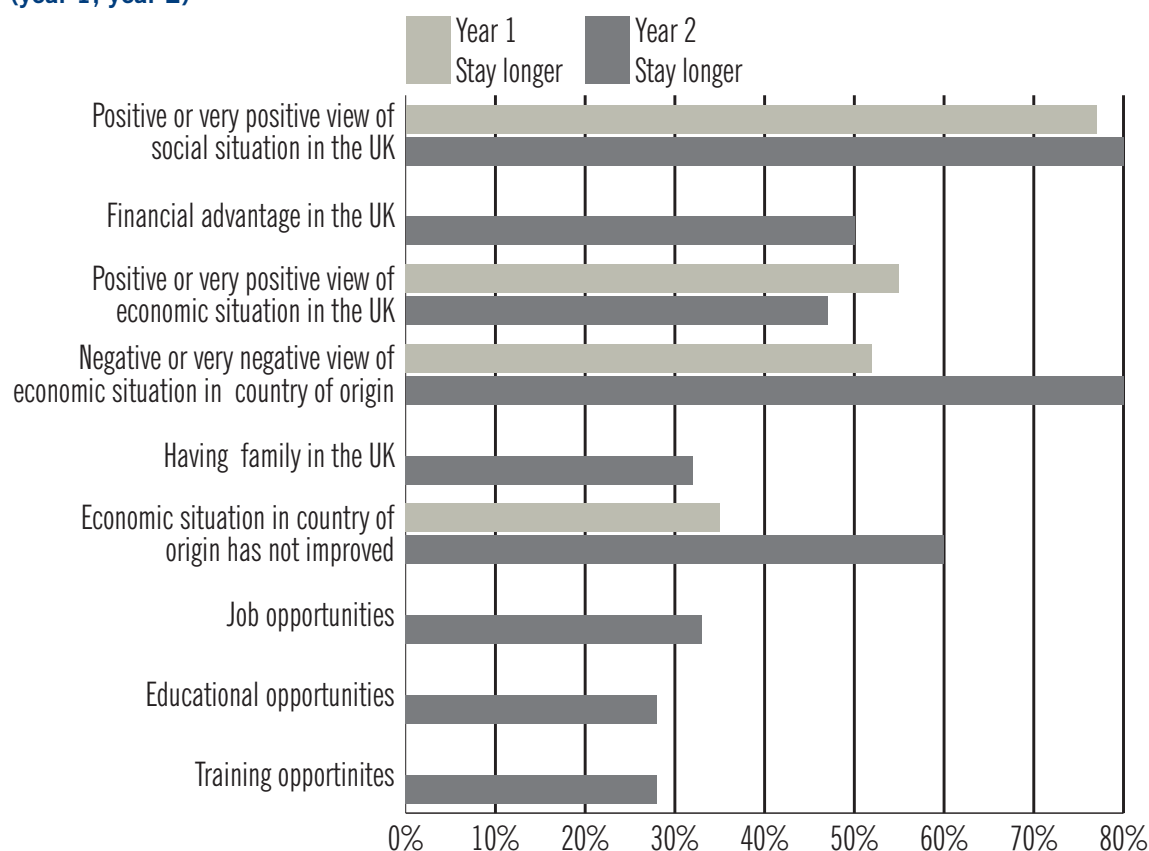
The following discusses factors which related to a *change of decision* regarding LOS. A positive view of the social situation in the UK was reflected strongly by those who extended their LOS from that originally envisaged. Economic, political and personal reasons were also influential in decisions to stay longer than initially planned. The following factors relate to a longer stay than initially planned (see figure 3f).

- The samples of both years show that participants who wanted to stay longer had a positive or very positive view of the wider social situation in the UK which was also confirmed by the interviews (Y1: 77%; Y2: 80%).
- The economic situation in the UK was viewed in a positive or very positive light by about half of the participants who decided to stay longer than initially planned; although the second year sample had a slightly less positive view (Y1: 55%; Y2: 47%).

- A factor which related to a longer stay (especially amongst the year 2 sample) was a negative or very negative perception of the economic situation in their home country (Y1: 52%; Y2: 80%) and the concern that 'the economic situation in COO had not improved' (Y1: 35%; Y2: 60%).
- Following the findings of year 1, questions on advantages and opportunities were added in year 2. More than 25% of participants self-identified the following advantages as influencing a longer stay in the UK: financial advantage in the UK (50%), job opportunities (33%), having family in the UK (32%), educational opportunities (28%) and training opportunities (28%).
- 33% of those who wanted to stay longer in year 2 said that the perception of the home country had a 'very strong' influence on their LOS.

Figure 3f:

#### Factor relating to a longer stay than initially planned (year 1, year 2)<sup>5</sup>

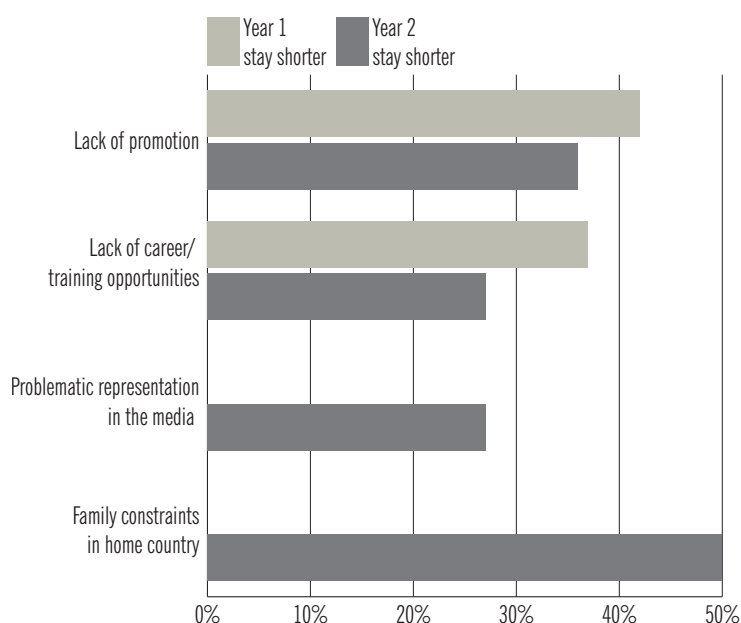


<sup>5</sup> Some additional questions were added to the year 2 survey following the analysis of year 1 findings and, therefore, not all indicators are comparable with year 1 findings.

The overall samples of year 1 and year 2 showed that ‘lack of promotion’ and ‘lack of training opportunities’ led to a shorter stay. Year 2 findings highlighted that especially family constraints in the home country and the problematic media representation of A8/A2 migrants in the UK influenced a shorter stay in the UK (than initially planned; see figure 3g).

Figure 3g:

### Factors relating to a shorter stay than initially planned (year 1, year 2)<sup>6</sup>



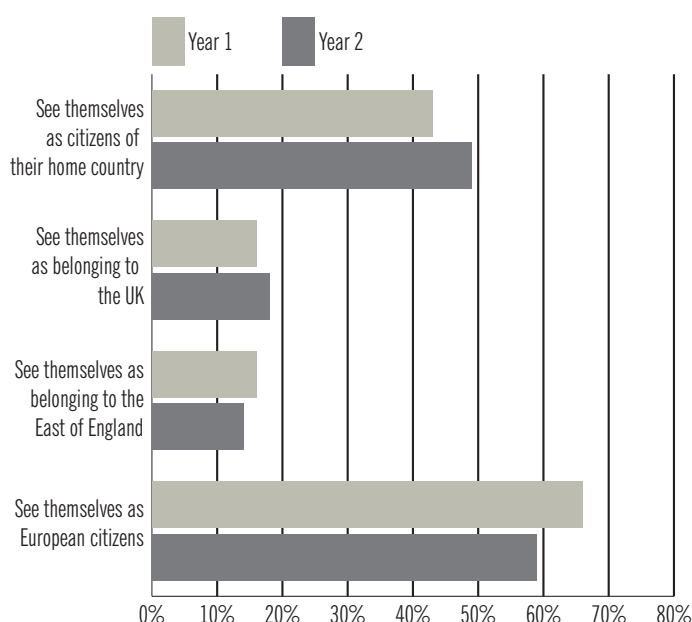
## 3.6 Identity and sense of belonging<sup>7</sup>

The overall samples of year 1 and year 2 do not show a difference regarding identity: 47% in year 1 saw themselves as citizens of their home country, compared to 42% of participants in year 2. Interestingly, more than half of the participants did not perceive themselves as citizens of their home countries, instead, they were more likely to perceive themselves as European citizens (Y1: 58%; Y2: 59%) emphasising the discrepancy between the labelling of participants by the receiving state as ‘migrant workers’ and their own identification as European citizens. Around a fifth in both samples felt a sense of belonging to the UK (Y1: 23%; Y2: 20%) and a smaller number identified with the East of England (Y1: 8%; Y2: 14%) or a region in their home country (Y1: 8%; Y2: 12%). Section 3.4 highlighted the relationship between a weak national identity and a longer stay.

Identity and sense of belonging did change slightly for those who responded to both years of the survey. Although respondents continued to show a strong ‘European’ identity in year 2 there was a slight decrease (of identifying with European citizenship) when compared to year 1 (Y1: 66%; Y2: 59%). Slightly more people described themselves as citizens of their home countries in year 2 (Y1: 43%; Y2: 49%) reflecting a certain fluidity regarding sense of belonging and identity (especially in the first years of migration) (see figure 3h). The complexity regarding sense of belonging and identity is further highlighted in our interview findings.

Figure 3h:

### Identity and belonging (participants who responded to year 1 and year 2)



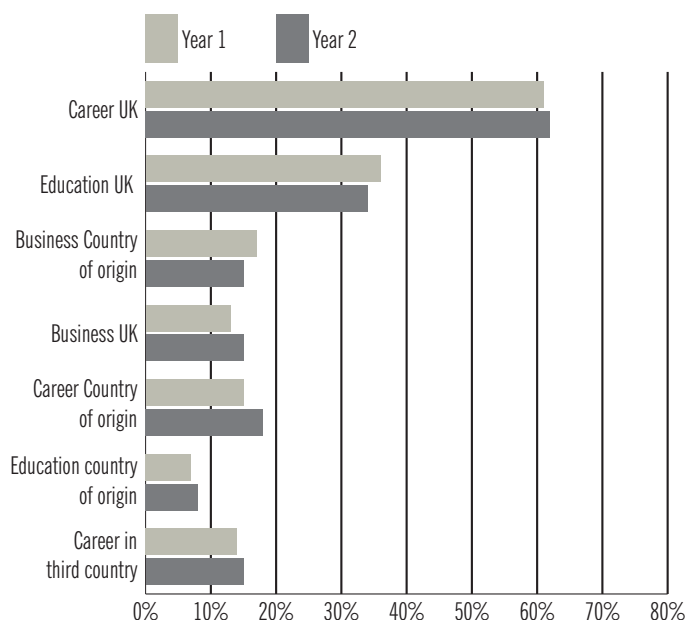
<sup>6</sup> The data relate to the overall sample of participants who had changed their mind regarding LOS and not to the sub-sample of those who stayed for a shorter or longer time; therefore, the data differ to those which were presented in the Executive of the second interim report.

<sup>7</sup> More than one option could be selected regarding the question on belonging and identity reflecting the fact of multiple identities.

### 3.7 Aspirations<sup>8</sup>

The overall samples of year 1 and year 2 showed similarly high levels of aspirations amongst participants. The majority saw their careers in the UK (Y1: 61%; Y2: 62%); followed by education in the UK (Y1: 36%; Y2: 34%) and opening their own business in the UK (Y1: 13%; Y2: 15%). A similar number of respondents wanted to set up a business in their home country (Y1: 17%; Y2: 15%) and in the UK (Y1: 13%; Y2: 15%). A small number saw their career in their home country (Y1: 15%; Y2: 18%) or in a third country (Y1: 14%; Y2: 15%). Less than 10% intended to further their study in their home country (Y1: 7%; Y2: 8%) (see figure 3i).

Figure 3i:  
**Aspirations in the UK and COO (year 1, year 2)**



Comparisons between the sub sample which responded to year 1 and year 2 showed that respondents were less likely in year 2 to start a business in their home country (Y1: 25%; Y2: 14%) or in the UK (Y1: 23%; Y2: 14%). This finding very likely reflects the impact of the economic downturn. The intention of having a career in a third country also slightly declined (Y1: 20%; Y2: 16%) as did educational ambitions in the UK (Y1: 39%; Y2: 36%).

<sup>8</sup> More than one option could be selected regarding the question on aspirations.

### 3.8 Perception of the economic, political and social situations in COO

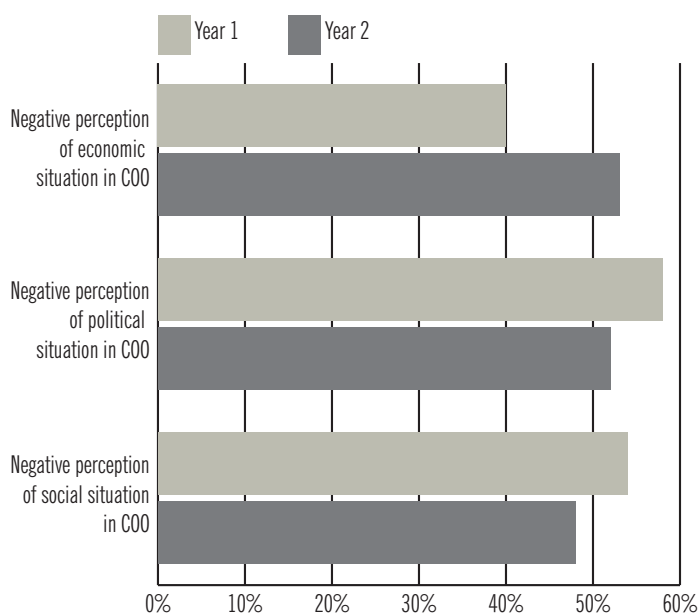
In both years participants of the overall samples expressed negative views regarding the economic situation in their respective home countries with a fairly large number ranking it as being 'negative' or 'very negative' (Y1: 40%; Y2: 53%); around 30% in both years selected neither good nor bad. The overall samples show that perceptions had become more negative by year 2. However, those who responded to both years (with the majority being Polish) had a less negative view of their home country's economic situation by year 2 (Y1: 68%; Y2: 47%).

Migrants' perceptions of the political situation in their home countries were ranked by 58% in year 1 and 52% in year 2 as being negative or very negative (around 30% in both years thought it was neither good nor bad and 10% didn't know). Similar to the findings relating to the economic situation, the perception of participants who responded to both years was less negative by year 2 (Y1: 64%; Y2: 49%).

Participants were also concerned about the social situation in their home countries with 54% in year 1 and 48% in year 2 perceiving it as 'negative' or 'very negative' (around 30% viewed it as neither good nor bad). Respondents who participated in both years had a similar view of their home country's social situation in both years (Y1: 52%; Y2: 51%).

In year 2 the majority of participants indicated that their perception of their home country had a strong (37%) or very strong (17%) influence upon their decision making on LOS.

Figure 3j:  
**Negative view of economic, political and social situation in COO (year1, year 2)**

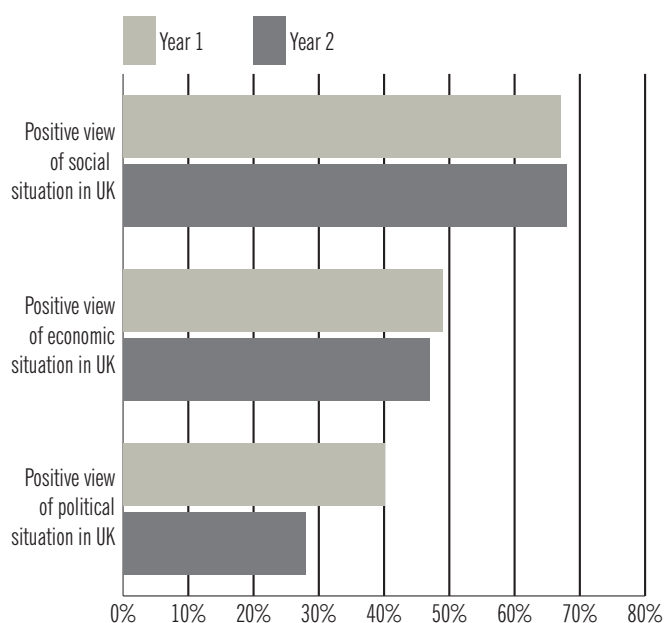


### 3.9 Perception of the economic, political and social situations in the UK

The social situation in the UK was viewed by the majority of the overall sample as being 'positive' or 'very positive' in both years (Y1: 67%; Y2: 68%); followed by a 'positive' or 'very positive' perception of the economic situation in the UK (Y1: 49%; Y2: 47%). Surprisingly, the perception of the economic situation had not changed between year 1 and year 2 while the political situation in the UK was perceived in a less positive light in year 2 with 28% perceiving it as 'positive' or 'very positive' compared to 40% in year 1. Between 30% and 40% selected neither good nor bad for the perception of the social, economic and political situations in the UK.

Figure 3k:

**Positive view of social, economic and political situation in the UK (year 1, year 2)**



Those who responded in both years did not change their view substantially regarding the social (Y1: 66%; Y2: 65%), economic (Y1: 42%; Y2: 45%) and political situations in the UK (34%; Y2: 29%).

46% of participants in year 2 stated that the perception of the economic, social and political situation in the UK had a strong influence upon LOS and 14% indicated that it had a very strong influence.

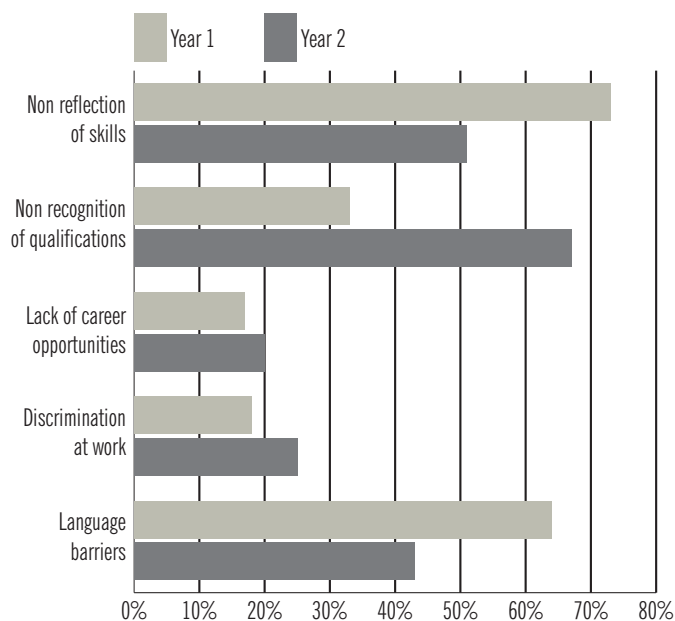
### 3.10 Constraints and barriers

#### 3.10.1 Employment-related constraints and barriers

Year 1 showed a significant link between skills reflected in employment and LOS. This was not shown in the second year sample, although those participants who felt that their skills were not adequately reflected were less likely to indicate an indefinite stay (11%). In both years participants highlighted a number of other employment constraints: non-recognition of qualifications, a lack of career opportunities, discrimination at work and language barriers (see figure 3l). Section 3.5 has shown that employment constraints have a significant impact on LOS.

Figure 3l:

**Employment constraints and barriers (year 1, year 2)**



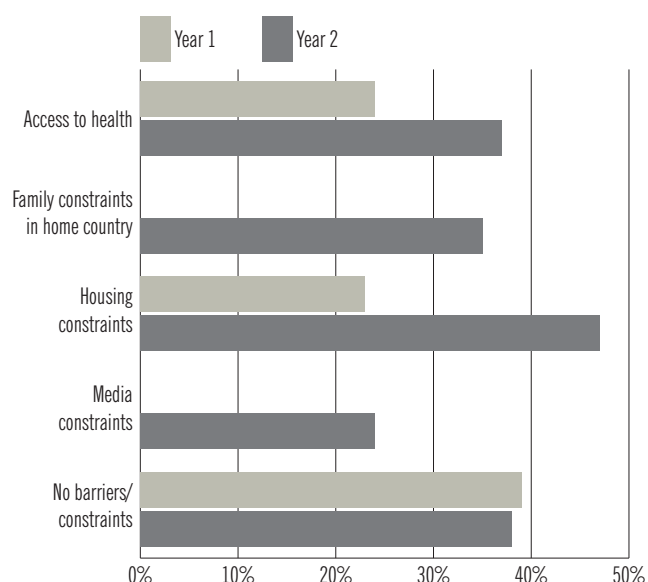
### 3.10.2 Non-employment related constraints and barriers

Both years highlighted a number of constraints and barriers which did not relate directly to employment including family constraints, barriers regarding health and housing, and constraints relating to the representation of European citizens from the A8/A2 countries in the British media (see figure 3m).

Section 3.5 has shown that, in particular, personal constraints relating to family in the COO and negative representation of A8/A2 migrants in the British media are linked to a shorter stay. It should be noted that a large number of participants in both years indicated that they did not experience any constraints or barriers (Y1: 39%; Y2: 38%).

Figure 3m:

#### Non-employment related constraints and barriers (year 1, year 2)

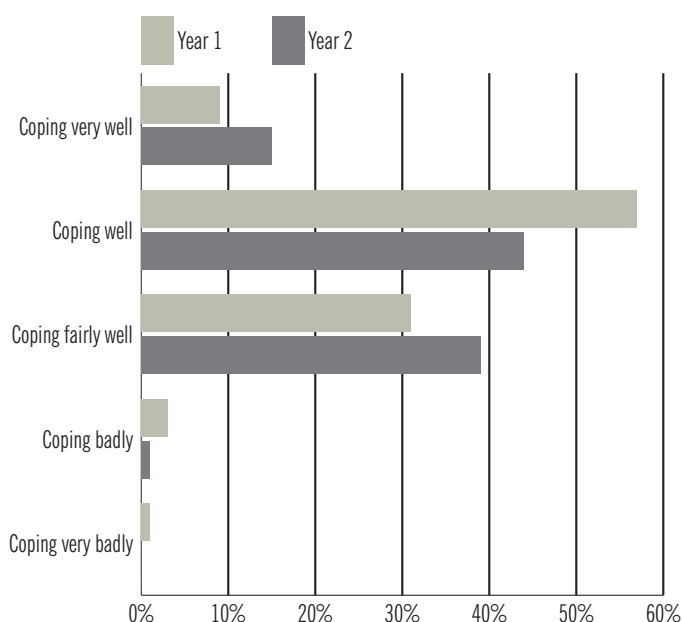


### 3.11 Coping strategies and social networks

Although a number of constraints/ barriers were encountered by participants, the majority thought that they were coping 'well' (Y1: 57%; Y2: 44%) or 'very well' (Y1: 9%; Y2: 15%) reflecting a high level of determination. A fairly high number stated that they were coping 'fairly well' (Y1: 31%; Y2: 39%) and a very small number said that they were coping 'badly' or 'very badly' (Y1: 4%; Y2: 1%).<sup>9</sup> It needs to be acknowledged that the small number who stated that they coped 'badly' or 'very badly' and the relatively high number who stated only 'fairly well' might be at risk of experiencing situations which may affect their mental health, aspirations and LOS.

Figure 3n:

#### Coping (year 1, year 2)



Those who indicated that they were coping 'fairly well' were more likely to select a let's see attitude (regarding LOS) than those who coped well or very well. However, a clear link between coping strategies and LOS was not established.

<sup>9</sup> Although those who were coping badly might have been less likely to take part in the study.

The availability of social networks is closely related to coping strategies and year 2 looked more closely at participants' social networks. The majority had friends in their home country (88%), followed by friends in the East of England (69%), 23% in other regions and 31% in a third country. 61% said that their strongest links were in the East of England followed by 53% in their COO; 10% had strongest links to a third country and only 7% had contacts to another region in the UK. These findings support evidence of detailed but largely bilateral social networks described in interviews between and within the UK and COO. Social networks play an important role regarding LOS. This is reflected in findings outlined in sections 3.4 and 3.5 and the year 2 finding whereby 19% of respondents indicated that social isolation was the reason for a shorter stay in the UK.

## 3.12 Conclusion

The survey findings of both years highlighted the complex bundle of factors which impact on migrants' decision making processes on LOS including perceptions, ambitions, constraints, interactions and identities.

The following trends are reflected in the findings from the overall samples of year 1 and year 2:

- Participants showed a positive perception of the social, economic and political situation in the UK especially when compared to the perception of their COO.
- Both years highlighted that social and personal factors are as important as economic factors for decisions on LOS:
  - Social factors such as 'liking the area', 'feeling settled' and 'having good social contacts' played an important role in participants' decision-making processes.
  - Both surveys highlighted the relevance of personal factors, and here especially those connected with the family, in the context of LOS; being married and having children related to a longer stay in the UK while family constraints in COO was a primary factor influencing a shorter stay in the UK.
  - Employment related factors were relevant in the context of LOS, 'reflection of skills in employment' was especially linked to LOS. The large majority of the samples of year 1 and year 2 were downgrading which could potentially lead (in the longer term) to emigration from the UK due to participants' high career ambitions. In the short or medium term, they might compromise with regard to employment, especially if they are content with their personal and social situation.
  - Both surveys showed that the following objective factors were related to a longer stay: reflection of skills in employment; having children; being married or divorced, and having a less strong identification with COO.

The following trends are reflected in the findings from the participants who responded to year 1 *and* year 2:

- In year 2 participants were more concrete regarding their LOS and less likely to show a let's see attitude.
- Although social factors remained important factors regarding decisions on LOS 'not finding employment in COO', 'non-reflection of skills in employment' and 'missing home country' gained in relevance in year 2.
- Year 2 showed a slight change regarding identity and belonging with more people in year 2 indicating a stronger national identity. This reflects the fluidity of identity and feelings of belonging, especially in the first years of migration. Respondents who did not feel very strongly about their national identity were more likely to stay long term or indefinitely in the UK.
- With regard to aspirations a larger number of participants had by year 2 changed their mind regarding setting up their own business in the UK or in their home country. They were less likely to do so than in year 1 which might be a reflection of the economic downturn in the UK and in their home country.
- Despite the economic downturn the positive perception of the economic situation in the UK (by nearly half of the respondents in year 1) increased slightly in year 2.





# 4.1 Findings from qualitative research – Stakeholder interviews

## 4.1.1 Introduction

Key stakeholders in the region were again consulted and asked to review and respond to the second interim report in relation to their own knowledge and experience of issues relating to A8/A2 migrants. Seventeen stakeholders including from the private sector, the public sector, and the voluntary sector were contacted and eleven agreed to interview. A small number had been interviewed previously and had agreed to be contacted again; others had changed roles or were no longer available. A special effort was made to engage employers in the region as well as health professionals. Despite additional support from a key regional contact employers proved quite difficult to access; however, two employers (one in the voluntary sector and one in the private sector) were able to take part. Interviews were conducted between June and November, 2010. Approximately a week after the second report had been sent to interviewees to consider, structured interviews were conducted over the telephone asking interviewees to reflect on core issues: LOS; impact of the recession; European citizenship; COO factors (push and pull); UK factors (push and pull); barriers, good, bad and ugly experiences, goals; resilience and use of services; and, recommendations. Interviews were conducted in a period of considerable uncertainty for most of our interviewees. A change in government promised a reduction in funding and likely suspension of existing schemes and programmes in relation to migration and communities (a closer examination of the public policy context is presented in section 5). It was, however, pleasing to note that, again, there was wide agreement with the second report's conclusions.

## 4.1.2 Interviewee profile

Stakeholder interviewees were drawn from across the six counties of the region and included a public health specialist, diversity officers, senior officers in community development, an HR manager, chief executives of racial equality and community development organisations, a partnership manager, a regional strategic development officer and a social inclusion officer. Interviewees represent a spread of specialists from those working at senior and strategic levels – region or county-wide (decision-makers in local government and in multi-agency fora, for example) – to those working directly with individuals from A8/A2 communities (as employers or in area-based community support roles, for example). Interviewees, therefore, had diverse experiences and levels of involvement with migrant workers and, two interviewees are themselves A8 citizens. A number of the interviewees are also engaged with multi-agency fora and other networks across the region. The experience of interviewees in their particular roles ranged from eighteen months to fifteen years with the majority in post for three to four years guaranteeing at least a reasonable level of familiarity with the report's themes and a sense of how these resonate with interviewees' own experiences and knowledge base.<sup>1</sup>

## 4.1.3 LOS

The report findings were endorsed and developing trends noted by interviewees. There is a mixed picture across the region and this is reflected in interviewees' comments. Whilst many interviewees state that there has been no general change in trends since last year; i.e. that people are not actually leaving in large numbers (Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Essex and regionally) and those settling tend to be older (30+) (Essex) and have children and where both adults are working (Bedfordshire), an interviewee in Suffolk reports a drop in numbers (another Suffolk-based interviewee is, however, sceptical: 'we still have a vibrant A8 community'). Furthermore, in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Essex 'new people' are coming in who seem to want to settle. Indeed, the Cambridgeshire interviewee, notes a growing number of Latvian and Lithuanians migrants against the backdrop of reported reductions in A8 numbers. With dire economic conditions in Latvia and Lithuania, citizens from the Baltic States (including Estonia) are 'bucking the decreasing trend seen across the rest of the Accession countries' with national insurance registrations rising by 63% in 2009/10 (DWP, 2010) and it is little wonder that even if people are unemployed here they do not want to return to their COO.

Again, interviewees do not witness dramatic recession related changes in terms of LOS. There are subtler changes recorded which can be attributed to economic decline and the uncertainty generated by a weakening economy as well as a more strategic response to shrinking employment opportunities on the part of migrants. For example, in the last eighteen months against a history of rapid turnover of personnel, the Bedfordshire HR manager reports no one has left her company. The company operates an equal pay policy and other migrant workers have joined its ranks as a second job moving from declining industries. The interviewee believes 'pay is still the main driver' and, as the recession is deeper in COO, many will prefer to stay. In Essex, whilst the number of migrant workers is reported as being lower than in 2004, there has been no real decrease in numbers over the last year. However, the recession has cut down overtime opportunities which many male migrants used to support traditional family relationships. As a result more women are now entering the workforce, usually in a part-time capacity. A 'mixed picture' is reported in Cambridgeshire where the recession has meant 'less fluid employment opportunities'; whilst settlement of families is a feature others have left the area – Polish migrants, in particular. Many migrants remain with the prospect of even more unstable employment opportunities or even destitution in preference to returning to COO.<sup>2</sup> A rural/urban split in this county contributes to the mixed picture with fairly resilient food processing and farming industries providing (irregular) work opportunities in the northern rural parts of the county – and an explosion of houses of multiple occupation (HMOs) in these areas. In Norfolk, the worst impact of the recession on migrant workers is still to be witnessed when, according to our interviewee, public sector cuts will severely affect migrant employees. Similarly, a Suffolk interviewee felt that the full

<sup>1</sup> One interviewee only was not able to respond to all the questions posed (a public health specialist who felt her knowledge was too limited in relation to specific A8/A2 experiences).

<sup>2</sup> With no recourse to public funds (the Coalition Government introduced a fund for voluntary returns at the end of 2010, EELGA) local organisations in cities like Peterborough were paying people to return home.

impact of the recession was to come as pressure on jobs would foster discrimination at selection favouring non-migrants. One of the underlying themes of the interviews was the contrast between statistical information on reduced applications for national insurance numbers and the Worker Registration Scheme and their experience on the ground of little if any decrease in migrant numbers or any sense of increasing temporariness in migration patterns over the previous year.

### 4.1.4 European citizens, migrants participation, and belonging?

Similarly to interviews conducted in year 2, interviewees were mixed in their responses. This, in part, reflects their different positioning in relation to A8/A2 citizens, knowledge of EU citizenship rights and whether political or cultural identities were uppermost considerations. In Hertfordshire, whilst a 'high recognition' of living in Europe was noted this was not seen to entail any specific knowledge of the EU or of fundamental rights. Two interviewees reflected specifically on Polish culture: in Bedford, the growth in Polish communities and services maintaining national culture was noted; in Suffolk, the importance of respecting 'cultural sensitivities' and tackling discrimination was emphasised.

Most of the responses to this section of questions, however, were focused on how to better understand the new population groups in the region and foster a sense of belonging and connection. This included encouraging political participation and providing the information and support to enable different groups to confidently engage with the democratic process. In Suffolk, the census process was seen as a way of 'demystifying political processes' and to encourage people to participate irrespective of their intentions of LOS. The responsibilities of councillors to engage with new communities as part of a process to tackle racial discrimination were also raised in Suffolk. In Essex, although the interviewee felt only 'half of Polish people here were interested in politics' given the low turnout in the *Polish* presidential elections, there should be stronger promotion of and more information on voting in local elections. In Cambridgeshire, a range of ongoing projects to link people with the community, provide advice and explain how local councils work for all residents were detailed. In Norfolk, noting the time and effort required, engendering 'a sense of ownership and a sense of place' were seen as important aims. In part, this should be supported by more rights-based information – in whatever language necessary – so that people's entitlement to work here is clear for both new migrants and the established population. In Bedford, more information on political rights was suggested.

There is a slight shift in responses from the previous year in that the promotion of political rights is not an exceptional consideration in interviews and that activities reported appear to be fairly well embedded in local authorities. It is also clear that alongside discrete projects there are a number of ongoing processes as well as a number of issues still to be addressed. Overall, this section of the interview highlights how a sense

of temporariness has given way to an acceptance of new communities as a more permanent feature of the demographic profile of the East of England.

### 4.1.5 Push and pull factors: COO

Push factors are reported as largely the same: weak economies, poor prospects, pay and employment conditions, housing and discrimination. Significantly, the two interviewees holding more strategic roles within the region noted that whilst the push factors were not especially different from those of 2006 'the recession has shifted the context significantly' (Cambridgeshire) with deep recessions in both Latvia and Lithuania exaggerating pre-existing push factors.

Pull factors, as noted by the majority of interviewees, still relate to family relationships – ageing or ill parents, or simply missing home. For those who have fulfilled their goals and saved to purchase property in the home country, 'even if they can't get a job in Poland they can be closer to their families and have a place to live' (Essex interviewee). Furthermore, the Polish government's campaign to encourage people back has provided the impetus for some to return home; however, this has not achieved as large a response as anticipated nor been as successful for individuals who have subsequently re-migrated to the UK 'as there are simply not the jobs'. One interviewee also cited returning migrants acting as 'role models' as a 'pull factor' and another the career advantage to be gained by a return ahead of the majority.

### 4.1.6 Push and pull factors: UK

UK pull factors, despite the recession, remain largely associated with economic, personal (aspirational) and quality of life factors (underlying the findings of the second interim report). A better future, is still seen as more achievable in the UK than in home countries, even when jobs (which reflect migrants' skills) are not available here, reflected in the following quotes by stake holders:

*'you underestimate migrant workers [they] have ambitions for themselves and their children'*

and – reflecting a degree of ambivalence inherent in the migration experience:

*'People feel there aren't enough reasons to justify leaving; life is still better here. There are emotional difficulties with that for some.'*

Opportunities for self-development that includes learning English, volunteering, part-time working and flexible shifts enabling further education are highlighted as CV-boosting attractions to working in the UK. The tolerant, open nature of British society appeals to LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual) individuals and welfare is seen (currently) to support working families. However, the Bedfordshire employment manager also noted that the health service was not viewed as a beneficial element of life in the UK: 'they all go home to go to the hospital. They don't trust the NHS – because it is free, they think it cannot be good ... so they travel backwards and forwards.'

Two interviewees were concerned that discrimination in the workplace and inequalities in pay will drive people away from the UK, and two local government interviewees were particularly concerned with future impacts where government cuts to public funding are likely to worsen the situation for migrant workers from 2011, particularly those working for the public sector. However, it was emphasised that although migrants might leave the UK, they do not necessarily close the door to the UK'.

## 4.1.7 Barriers

Language remains the chief barrier perceived by interviewees, closely followed by non-recognition of qualifications, resulting in the under-employment of professional groups. Interestingly, one interviewee reflects on a report carried out by her organisation which highlighted a series of barriers where 'you get through one and then encounter another' (learning English, but then not having the correct qualification, for example). A number of interviewees note the prevalence of degree-educated individuals working beneath their capacity in manual and low-skilled occupations. The idea of Europe as a knowledge economy is patently undermined by the 'brain waste' evident in this process, and which also acts to disadvantage individuals' prospects on return to home countries (four years in a packing factory does not provide fast-track entry to graduate level careers). However, as one Polish national interviewee states, at the same time, 'people don't have the confidence to apply for demanding jobs. In Eastern Europe usually someone recommends you – people are not used to competition.'

Understandably, for interviewees working in Equality organisations, discrimination was the most prominent issue within their experience. However, other interviewees also noted discriminatory practices in the workplace (unsociable shifts for example) and the pernicious role of the press, complicit in the creation of barriers to the acceptance of new European migrants living and working in the region. Interviewees also noted problems in schools for the children of migrant workers. In fact, prejudice and discriminatory practices are cited as a barrier in communities and in the workplace by five interviewees. Other factors like social isolation and lack of public transport in a largely rural region were also cited as barriers to integration. However – notwithstanding comments that pointed to the choice of some migrants to 'opt out' of social relations to prioritize work and a quick return to home countries, or to limit social contact to national communities – some interviewees also cited an improvement over the previous year:

*'At the individual level the barriers are breaking'*  
(Hertfordshire);

*'A lot of people speak English very well now and have integrated so well that you cannot find them!';*

*'People don't want an all-Polish group – they are integrated!'*  
(Essex);

*'I'm positive here – the situation is definitely improving'*  
(regional).

Despite the optimism suggested by these statements giving a sense that advances have been achieved, structural and psychological barriers clearly persist and the fears expressed for the forthcoming year underline the precariousness of the migration 'project' for individuals.

## 4.1.8 The good, the bad and the ugly

This section of questions throws a little more light onto the day to day experience of barriers as well as providing a localised overview of 'success stories'. Interviewees were asked to relate an example of good, bad or ugly practice, to share any knowledge they had on the impact such incidents have on people's quality of life, employment and LOS, and the wider impact on workplaces or communities. Across the region, there were fewer ugly examples to report and far more examples of good practice than those characterised as bad or ugly.

Good practices include a range of community activities as well as good support organisations and improvements in services and communities in general. The start up and success of community groups like the Hatfield Polish Community and the Culture Club and community events improving cultural awareness like Round the World in 80 Dishes were celebrated in interviews. Practical support in localities through the work of organisations like META at Keystone Development Trust, local community partnerships, GP Practices employing Russian-speaking staff, leisure centres offering showering facilities to homeless migrants, migrant drop-in centres, the provision of ESOL classes through organisations like CA Dacorum, partnership work on myth-busting and racial equality work in schools through history and global awareness days, were also reported. Across the region interviewees noted the positive impact of diversity on communities, better integration in workplaces, improved accommodation, businesses financing English language classes, an increased positive view of local people about migrant workers. This seeming shift in attitudes perhaps best illustrated by the Norfolk and Norwich Racial Equality Council's survey of 12–14 age group's attitudes revealing a much more positive attitude to migrants in general. Migrant workers, themselves were more aware of their rights.

Bad practices noted were largely confined to the employment sector and to housing. However, harassment and discrimination were also noted and often attributed to media 'misconceptions' and 'untruths'. Such as, *'migrants are taking our jobs'* and *'migrants are prioritized for council housing'*. Non-recognition of qualifications featured prominently in this section and related to healthcare workers specifically; supported by more general reflections on highly qualified people working in low-skilled,

low paid and long-hour occupations (if 'migrants are taking our jobs' they are picking some pretty awful ones!). The vulnerability of migrants with weak English language skills was only referred to directly as a bad experience by one interviewee; this was in relation to possible agency exploitation. However, language issues are also a feature of tensions between English and Polish workers as well as the 'HMO trap' (where it is often those without competent English who are least able to escape). Finally, concerns were raised about the mental and physical well-being of migrants

Examples of exploitation and discrimination formed the bulk of practices interviewees categorized as 'ugly'. Weak language skills surfaced again as an opportunity for exploitation: 'people forced to sign contracts, forced to work weekends because they don't have good enough English to understand the limits of their contracts'. Exploitative landlords, bullying in schools, harassment and racial attacks were also noted. For some interviewees, ugly practices were not necessarily encapsulated in overt events; these interviewees talked of 'underlying tensions' and 'many hidden things' to try to get across the deep-seated and insidious nature of the worst examples of ugly practice.

## 4.1.9 Goals/ambitions

This section asked interviewees to reflect on the qualification levels of new European citizens they had been in contact with over the previous year; whether the ambitions we noted in the second interim report accorded with interviewees' own experiences and, similarly, if the short to medium term goals of starting a family and/or buying property in the UK was something they were familiar with.

Interviewees tended to agree with our findings that qualification levels were generally high and people were often over-qualified for the work that they did. In part, this view reflects the spheres interviewees work in where degree level qualifications are the minimum expectation; however, it was also noted that many of the migrant factory-workers in the Bedfordshire company had degrees and that those who did not were keen to gain HE qualifications. At the same time, the number of less well educated migrant workers was highlighted. This does not always indicate poor job outcomes as, according to an Essex-based interviewee, those individuals who nevertheless have good English language skills 'are more confident to apply for jobs'.

Again, in line with our report, the ambitions of migrant workers were noted by the majority of interviewees as was the observation that many people who have chosen to remain in the UK are settling down and having families. Four interviewees observed the rise in business development by new migrants; one interviewee in North West Norfolk had not noted this phenomenon, however, while people were still ambitious '*since last year they have become more realistic*'. The purchase of property was to some extent dependent on regional area: people were less likely to buy property in the more expensive areas closer to London (Hertfordshire and South Essex, for example); elsewhere the picture was more mixed.

## 4.1.10 Resilience

The majority of interviewees agreed with the second interim report's conclusions that new migrants are fairly resilient and self-sufficient. Across the region the comments made supported this view:

*'The majority of migrants have a work ethic that is positive and want to stand on their own feet'* (Herts);

*'They are self-sufficient. The only thing they come to me with is related to health issues. Everything else seems to be sorted'* (Bedfordshire);

*'people know how to get by. If a guy knows no English he always knows someone who can help'* (regional);

*'I think they are, despite the myth that they increase demand on services'* (Norfolk).

However, the Essex-based Diversity Development Officer, noted that there are some who use the benefits system and others who are more self-sufficient and 'want to succeed through their own effort'.

Interviewees emphasised that, increasingly, support and information services are being accessed as awareness and confidence grows. A number of organisations have become well-established in relation to support for A8/A2 migrants and these were most readily related by interviewees: Six interviewees noted the work of the Citizens Advice Bureaux followed by a number of other local organisations: Keystone Development Trust in Thetford, Signpost in Colchester, GITAS in Great Yarmouth, the Rosmini Centre in Wisbech, KLARS in King's Lynn, REVI in Essex (now closed), as well as interviewees' own organisations. Information websites in general were also noted as key resources as were libraries, job centres and the police. A lack of awareness about rights was cited as one possible impediment to accessing services, although for the regional interviewee 'trust is the key thing'. However, it was also highlighted that migrants use each other a lot in the context of information sharing.

## 4.1.11 Recommendations

Whilst it was noted that 'things have significantly improved', two areas were seen as important: (1) requiring more research and, (2) requiring service development with regard to research. Getting to the heart of push and pull factors in COO and the UK, understanding better people's motivations were of interest to interviewees, and greater clarity on the economic contribution of migrant workers. With regard to service development the stakeholders interviewed felt that there were still big gaps in services and more knowledge of specific groups' needs was required in order to develop appropriate services (suggestions were tackling mental health issues, alcohol misuse, bullying in schools, and ensuring that services are culturally 'competent'). The civic participation of new migrants was also seen as an area requiring both further research and better engagement on the part of local councils. Indeed, at the community level, it was felt that more needs to be done to dispel myths and to give people more support via a range of services (rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, according to one interviewee).



Finally, cited by a large number of interviewees, addressing the non-recognition of qualifications and helping migrants achieve their employment potential were key measures suggested in respect of the workplace.

## 4.1.12 Conclusions

Whilst the picture across the region is to some extent mixed, there are identifiable region-wide trends apparent in interviewees' responses which are consistent with the trends noted in our second report and borne out in this report. Interviewees' have not witnessed a decline in numbers of A8 workers over the last year; people choosing to settle are often older (30+) and are having and bringing up children here; numbers of migrants from the Baltic States are increasing; language is still a core barrier, and, the non-recognition of migrants' qualifications and skills is widespread, constituting a 'brain-waste' of the individuals concerned and a wasted opportunity for the region. These observations of, admittedly, a small number of stakeholders are also reflected in interviews with migrant workers, in reports cited in the literature review and in recent migration statistics (Latvia and Lithuania).

Interviewees' reflections suggest that improvements are being achieved in communities and, perhaps to a lesser extent, in the workplace. The work of a number of agencies has been significant in supporting new and established communities to manage the immense changes since 2004. Interviewees and the organisations they reference necessarily focus on the 'needs' of different groups and 'integration' (or 'community cohesion') in specific geographical locations. However, the scope of organisations' activities in the region ineluctably means that the *transnational* character of and resultant pressures on migrants' lives cannot be adequately addressed. Remaining concerns about unaddressed needs relating to mental health issues and health awareness in migrant communities obliquely suggest that there is a recognition of the problem of 'transnational living' (and see Collis, Stott and Ross, 2010). However, appropriately funded, more transnational solutions could be developed in concert with the sending COO in order to alleviate the worst experiences of life 'in-between'.



# 4.2 Semi-structured interviews with migrant workers

## 4.2.1 Profile

At year 3, thirty interviewees had remained with the study: thirteen from Poland; six from Slovakia, five from Lithuania, two from Bulgaria, one from Hungary, one for the Czech Republic, one from Romania and one from Latvia. However, from an original sample of forty interviewees in year 1 (including a buffer group of ten to allow for anticipated retention issues in this highly mobile group), a relatively high number (eleven) did not continue on to year 2 prompting concerns of similar losses in year three and a decision was made to re-recruit and conduct retrospective interviews with an additional eight participants. At year 3, seven of the 'retrospective recruits' remained along with twenty-three of the original sample. Returns and relocations to other parts of the UK accounted for some of the withdrawals; others elected to withdraw as they 'wanted to get on with life' and, accounting for year 2 losses in particular, difficult life events persuaded others to discontinue involvement with the study (a small number simply ceased communications). We, therefore, had a final sample of thirty participants.

The profile of the final thirty interviewees was as follows:

### Gender

**19 female** (9 Polish; 4 Slovakian; 2 Lithuanian; 1 Latvian; 1 Czech; 1 Romanian; 1 Bulgarian)

**11 male** (4 Polish; 3 Lithuanian; 2 Slovakian; 1 Hungarian; 1 Bulgarian).

### Age range

At year 3, the age range was from 20 – 56, with twenty people in their 30s (thirteen female and seven male; the majority in their early 30s); five in their 20s (two male and three female); three people in their 40s (two male and one female); and, two in their 50s (both female). That is, over half of interviewees were in the 18 – 34 age range in year three (with the majority in that age range in year 1).

### Marital status

Nineteen interviewees were single including five co-habiting, four divorced, and two separated (11 female and 7 male). Eleven interviewees were married (8 female and 4 male).

### Children

Twelve interviewees (six men and six women) had children; two were legal guardians and four had have children who were grown up or were living with families or ex-partners in home countries (including one with both an adult son remaining in the home country and two younger children in the UK). Six were living with their children in the UK and there was also a small number of imminent births to new parents in the year 3 sample.

### Location

Interviewees in year three were located in Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, with two interviewees relocating to London and one interviewee relocating to Sheffield. In total, nineteen interviewees were based in cities and eleven in small towns including six living in quite rural areas on the Suffolk/Norfolk border and in North Cambridgeshire.

### Occupation

Occupations, for male and female interviewees, ranged from highly skilled and career development roles to unskilled work. Highly skilled workers included professions such as a clinical psychologist and a computer engineer (recently made unemployed). At the skilled/semi-skilled level, interviewees were craftsmen (including tilers and shop-fitters) senior office workers, 'community liaison' workers and cabin crew members. At the low skilled level participants worked for agencies as factory workers, were call centre operatives or cleaners. Several interviewees also studied at undergraduate and postgraduates levels (often combined with part-time jobs). A small business owner and two full-time mothers were also included in the sample.

### Progression in the workplace

In general work roles and levels of seniority in the UK did not correspond with those experienced in COO's. In the majority of cases interviewees were working below their skill range and intellectual capacity. The now well-documented phenomenon of non-recognition of qualifications was a factor in the constraints experienced by interviewees as is the difficulty putting skills and qualifications to use with sometimes limited English language skills. As a result, many found themselves working in new occupational sectors, in lower skilled occupations and/or in temporary employment positions. A comparison of pre-migration occupations and current occupations is documented in a table in.

There was both evidence of progression in the workplace for interviewees and evidence of non-progression (and also of slipping down the career ladder). However, the particular context for each interviewee needs to be taken into consideration in assessing whether, for them, these were situations to bemoan or not. Certainly, the newly arrived cohort (2007–2009 arrivals) appeared to be doing less well and were largely confined to agency work. Over time, though, as interviewees from the earlier cohorts demonstrated, this situation was unlikely to persist as interviewees had successfully obtained permanent positions, upgraded or changed their occupations (and two have become full-time parents) (see Appendix 1).

Where interviewees felt they had been less successful in achieving their career goals there had been a number of factors involved such as choices made to wait for an opening in a particular niche occupation, loss of a driving licence, a failed business venture, as well as non-recognition of vocational qualifications. It is still the case that for a third of interviewees their employment status was reduced and they were over-qualified in the positions they held in the UK.



Acquisition of strong English language skills was a key factor for conversion of prior skills and qualifications into more desirable occupations; although strong English skills was not a guarantee for a high level job due to barriers regarding the recognition of qualifications. For example, from farm worker on arrival to a bilingual support officer, from a mental health recovery worker to a psychologist, from care worker to IT engineer, and from factory worker to community development officer. At the same time, some interviewees with less advanced competency in English had been able to develop their careers largely within their language communities; for example, a Polish garage owner with a primarily Polish clientele.

It was also the case for many interviewees that 'progression' was not primarily wrapped up with employment positions *per se*, but related just as frequently to a broader sense of achievement whether this be in a work, educational or social context relating to themselves or their children.

### Volunteering

Three interviewees were directly employed in occupations that supported other migrant workers: interpreting and translation work, community development and schools liaison officers. However, quite a number of interviewees were also actively engaged in voluntary work. In some cases, this was in an informal capacity by providing practical support to newcomers in the community and interpreting or negotiating in the workplace for co-nationals. On a formal basis, interviewees might have been active members of church groups, founder members of support organisations, involved in UK political parties or volunteering for charities, such as working with the homeless, interpreting and driving. Unsurprisingly, those with more confidence in their language skills had engaged in this kind of activity.

### Qualifications

As detailed above, the thirty interviewees held a number of qualifications including a newly acquired PhD, masters level qualifications, ordinary degrees, professional qualifications and A-level type qualifications. All had completed their education up to the age of eighteen (high school and college equivalent). In addition, twenty-eight individuals had continued to study and gain qualifications in the UK. At year 3 of the study, the sample included one doctorate, three recent graduates and four undergraduates, including two student nurses: qualifications gained or currently studied at English universities. Furthermore, other interviewees were studying at Colleges of Further Education for a range of qualifications such as accountancy diplomas, BTECs and language certificates. Training opportunities in the workplace are also mentioned; for example, forklift driving and human resources training. Opportunities for further training or study were enthusiastically taken up by interviewees and many had ongoing plans to progress their personal development through study and training opportunities.

## 4.2.2 Intended LOS

For the majority of interviewees original plans on LOS had altered over the 3 years of the study with decisions chiefly taken to increase time in the UK.

At year 3 (and similar to year 2), for fifteen interviewees LOS was variously described as long term (e.g. 'indefinite', 'for the foreseeable future', 'forever', 'permanently' or 'all my plans are here'). These interviewees had already lived in the UK from two to six years.

Eight interviewees set time limits in the medium term e.g. 'at least another three to five years', 'I am planning another five years' or 'probably five more years'.

Five interviewees were unsure about their LOS; regardless of their length of residence in the UK.

One interviewee, having spent over five years in the country, aspired to 'leave as soon as possible' (although circumstances had so far dictated that this could not be achieved). Another interviewee left at the completion of her studies at the end of year 3 for a third country, as originally planned.

### Eade's migration goals

Eade, Drinkwater and Garapich (2006) developed a typology<sup>1</sup> related to the goals of migrants in terms of LOS and an adaptation of this has been used with interviewees to self-report their 'type' throughout the 3 years (see Appendix 2).

The largest single category identified with, in year 3, is the stayer category; although half of interviews opted for mixed categories such as searcher stayer!

Lithuanian and Slovakian participants were more likely to opt for the stayer category. Polish interviewees were more likely to opt for searcher or searcher/stayer categories. This may reflect the stronger economic position of Poland compared to Lithuania and Slovakia as well as other push factors.

The changes and continuities over time reveal that decision-making, whilst relatively flexible and recognised as contingent on the basis of a number of factors, had become more concrete.<sup>2</sup> In year 3, precisely specified lengths of stay were unusual (typically, phraseology was loose on this subject) and set dates for returns to home countries or to relocate were highly unusual (in practice, one case only).

1 Storks, Hamsters, Searchers and Stayers were used to identify, respectively, circular migrants, 'one-off' migrants, those with open options and those with long-term plans. In Eade, Drinkwater and Garapich's 2006 study, 16 per cent of their participants identified as hamsters, 20 per cent as storks, 42 per cent as searchers and 22 per cent as stayers.

2 For obvious reasons the hamster and stork categories rarely featured – hamsters usually quickly converted to searchers in practice.

## 4.2.3 Influences on LOS: personal context

Interviewees cited the wishes of partners and well-being of children (and any future children) as well as their own satisfaction with life as reasons to postpone a decision or to stay for the long-term. Eight interviewees would return to home countries for the sake of ageing or ill parents. For those who did not foresee a future in the UK, other countries were cited as possible destinations rather than a return to COO. Economic, political and personal factors featured as deterrents to any precipitous return to home countries. Pay, employment, career advancement, quality of life, discrimination (ethnic, age and gender), political and economic instability and the fear of having to start all over again convinced many interviewees that a decision to stay longer term was well-founded.

### 4.2.3.1 Factors influencing a stay in the UK

For those planning to stay in the UK, either for the long term or permanently, quality of life and relationships in the UK were key issues in decision making. In terms of lifestyles, interviewees for the most part felt that they enjoyed reasonable incomes (as one female Lithuanian interviewee noted: even on a basic wage you have some disposable income for leisure), and that they enjoyed a sense of security, and/or more respect in the workplace, (particularly for the younger age groups). The opportunity to realise personal ambitions, plan ahead and to progress educational and career ambitions and/or to start a family were also mentioned. Personal development and a sense of achievement were frequently cited by interviewees as important factors to stay longer term, with the UK seen as providing the opportunities lacking in home countries. However, eschewing political and economic factors, a sense of connection to home – nature, space, architecture, the air, food, traditions – appeared to remain undiminished for the majority of interviewees. The UK was seldom seen to be able to replace these associations with ‘home’.

### 4.2.3.2 Factors influencing a return or move to a third country

Only a small number of interviewees planning to leave the UK in the short term. One interviewee had already left the country accompanying her home-sick partner but not returning to her own COO; another interviewee was considering a job relocation to a third country to leave a country he did not particularly enjoy living in. The two remaining interviewees were young, single people who, on completion of their studies and with the possibility of limited employment opportunities in the UK wanted to realise career and travel ambitions, in third countries.

### 4.2.3.3 The impact of distance, proximity and relationships on LOS

In year 3 many interviewees, to some degree, continued to struggle with the separation from the familiar home country culture, family and relationships. The continuation, weakening, strengthening, dissolution or instigation of these relationships had a far from predictable impact on LOS. The meaning people

give to their relationships, at particular points in time, needs to be considered in the context of a range of other factors. It is especially important to avoid cultural stereotypes (reductionism) of family life and obligations in COO and of simplifying people's complex relationships.

For family, relationships, especially those which were perhaps too close for comfort prior to emigration, distance brings its advantages. The ability to live in one's own home instead of sharing a home with parents until marriage or beyond that point was one advantage recognised by some interviewees. Autonomy in decision-making – for two interviewees involving a loosening of ties between daughters and mothers, and for a further two meaning a release from the dominion of husbands – was noted as an advantage. Living and studying abroad was also as much a rite of passage as an economic necessity for the more ambitious and cosmopolitan interviewees who usually enjoyed wide social networks across and outside of Europe.

Relationships with partners or relatives within the UK further highlighted the advantages that distance from the home country could facilitate. Single female interviewees highlighted the freedom to conduct relationships in ways that would not be acceptable in home countries: e.g. living with boyfriends or dating men of different nationalities or religions. Same-sex relationships, it was noted, could also be enjoyed in the more tolerant culture of the UK.

A significant number of interviewees had either embarked on new relationships, separated from long-term partners and/or had come to the UK to start afresh. Six had separated or divorced from long-term partners during the period of the study; six had met their partners (or ex-partners) here, four of which were from other nationalities including three English partners; fourteen are in their original relationships, seven of which had started a family in the UK (including five pregnancies between years 2 and 3 of the study); and, four remained unattached. Interestingly, a number of women in the study had come to the UK or had chosen to remain here after divorce or separation, even those with weaker language skills. These interviewees reported that women in middle age were subject to age and gender discrimination in home countries (forcing reliance on men and containment in the family home), but here they could continue to work and maintain their independence. Freedom of choice exercised in the context of (a sense of) economic and social security united these different experiences.

Marriage or a serious relationship clearly had an impact on decisions on LOS. For the majority, a joint decision was arrived at on LOS; others, however, were more passive in the decision-making process with the happiness of their partners the paramount concern. For those with children, educational, language and cultural factors simplified or complicated decision-making, depending on the situation in COO, family ties and sense of identity. For example, the dilemma for both a Polish and a Slovakian couple related to the transmission of national identity and culture to the next generation whilst enjoying cultural capital accrued here (English language competency, for example). This did not appear to be shared by parents and grandparents whose dominant concerns had been the material

and physical well-being of their children and grandchildren and their future prospects.

One of the chief causes of a precipitate return home, reportedly, would be the ill-health or age-related needs of a parent. Eight interviewees cited this concern and in general this commitment was voiced as an 'if I really have to return' comment (although one interviewee appeared to have a specific agreement with parents that he would return to care for them in their old age).

There did not appear to be any specific attributes connecting interviewees with a professed propensity to return on this basis. The expressed obligation was not necessarily based on a close relationship with parents; two interviewees reported difficulties with one or the other of their parents. On the other hand, a return home was not always seen as the best strategy to support parents in home countries with weak economic conditions and poor employment prospects. There were also interviewees supporting parents or helping various family members from a distance through transfers on a regular or *ad hoc* basis, and interviewees working towards convincing parents and other close relatives to join them in the UK (particularly, from Lithuania and Slovakia). Obligations to return home, whether expressed or suppressed, then, could be perceived as constraints on the agency of interviewees, but not always necessarily experienced as such nor seen as the only option for interviewees in these situations.

#### 4.2.3.4 Identity and LOS

In terms of national identity, nine interviewees identified themselves solely by their nationality, four as solely Europeans, while identification as a European combined with a national identity was the most common position taken by interviewees. Three interviewees felt they could more readily identify themselves as British and two as European/British. One interviewee described himself as 'a person who belongs to the world' as well as a citizen of the city he lives in. Interviewees tended to reflect at some length on this issue and described in detail the complex reasoning involved – even a 'straightforward' national identity could involve some tension with regional or ethnic loyalties. Those identifying as European/national discussed the tension between a weakening sense of attachment to home countries and a growing connection to Europe as a whole, not without some ambivalence:

*'We are losing a little bit each single day, from the Polish behaviour and thinking ... but I don't think that is good for us... We are Polish so we should feel Polish' (Interviewee 018).*

*'I always say I am Polish, my blood is Polish, I always will be Polish no matter what will happen to me in my life. But I am much more European ... I've experienced many things in the last two years so I am much more open' (Interviewee 014)*

*'I've been away for 15 years and I've lived in different countries and you do lose your identity a little bit in a way, my Slovak identity. ... So I would say there is a mixture of Slovakian and European' (Interviewee 013)*

*'I feel European and Polish, ... Polish but Silesian' (Interviewee 004)*

*'I felt more Polish at the very beginning than actually European ... But then I started feeling more connected to community, more settled, more settled as an EU citizen' (Interviewee 053)*

*'Because I've been to many countries, many EU countries. ... Because I am not just Lithuanian, I do not only speak the Lithuanian language. I was born in Lithuania but then I have many friends from different countries ... So I think I'd describe myself as an EU person' (Interviewee 030)*

For those primarily identifying themselves along national lines, the historical complexities of changing borders and regimes, membership of minority ethnic groups as well as time spent away from home countries sat alongside the clear-cut identifications of other interviewees.

*'Hungarian and Eastern European: 'There is a divide between Western Europe and Eastern Europe and the mentality of the people and it is a different lifestyle. The 40 or 50 years of communism have changed people' (Interviewee 012)*

*'I definitely feel Polish and I am very proud of being Polish, but I do feel that ... I'm actually a little bit scared of going there ... this is my home country, I should feel safe going there, but I wasn't convinced. But I do identify with my home town ... it is an amazing city and I really want to spend time there' (Interviewee 010)*

For those who identified more as British or aspiring to a British identity the link to the migration status 'stayer' was obvious:

*'I don't really feel now as a part of Slovakia and so Hungarian because I feel more – I won't say British because it sounds a bit funny. Yeah, I'm British. It sounds funny because, you know why; it's not you came to this country but in a way you feel that this is your home now' (Stayer, Interviewee 006)*

*'I prefer to identify as more British than Bulgarian' (Stayer, Interviewee 206)*

*'I love the British culture and way of life and consider myself more British as time goes on' (Stayer, Interviewee 028)*

The sole European identification also indicated a stronger likelihood that the interviewee would opt for the stayer or stayer/searcher category:

*'Living here is quite good; it is peaceful and rewarding, I would say, because I like this sort of stability and the way people are in England' (World Citizen/Stayer, Interviewee 027)*

*'Since the moment when both my sons arrived I decided to stay here forever' (European Citizen/Stayer, 209)*

*'I feel mainly European, but also a little British now that the children are at school here' (Stayer, Interviewee 205)*

*'I think that I'm still European but now maybe a little bit more in the middle, because two years ago I was European but a little more Lithuanian so maybe now European but a little more English' (Stayer, Interviewee 037)*

Conversely, those interviewees who solely identified themselves in national terms were less likely to self-identify as stayers and more likely to self-identify as searchers or searcher/stayers.

*'I just don't want to stay here. I have had enough' (Interviewee 012)*

*'I know the life there is a little bit more stressful, but on the other hand I'd like my child to speak Polish and to be raised in a Polish culture. But it might change because there are so many other things to consider that you just have to decide which ones are more important, and at the moment we just cannot really decide on them' (Interviewee 009)*

However, another Polish interviewee who identified strongly with his nationality had already crossed that bridge:

*'After five years I am not thinking only back to Poland because there is my family and my friends and I feel Polish, and never being a British citizen, but I think now it is better for us to stay here, better for our child. Because my son will start speaking English and this will give him more choice' (Stayer/Searcher, Interviewee 033)*

#### 4.2.3.5 Goals and Ambitions and their influence on LOS

At year 3, goals and ambitions had become more individualistic and, at the same time, much more commonplace in tone; i.e. less recognisable as migrant goals *per se*. Distinctions between short-term, medium-term and long-term goals were also less clearly defined and more compressed as the life in the 'here and now' assumed as much importance as projections for life in the future. This aspect was highlighted further by a small number of interviewees who cited neither medium-term nor long-term goals, instead, bar one person, expressed a general satisfaction with their lives.

Short-term goals related to the completion of studies, pregnancy and preparing for the new arrivals, weekends away or longer holidays, changing jobs, settling into and excelling in current occupations, voluntary work, settling into new homes, new towns and becoming part of a community, alongside learning the guitar, passing Italian exams and winning the lottery! Only one interviewee mentioned saving money and two converting to permanent contracts (key issues in previous years). Three interviewees felt they had achieved their short-term goals and were happy with what they had. Four interviewees had no further goals beyond their short-term – 'here and now' goals.

Medium-term goals focused on educational achievements, ambitions to find more challenging jobs (or to start a business), and on improving accommodation (a larger property, own home and, moving out of an HMO, for example). Holidays, planning families, aspirations for children, the reunification of families, and relocation to a third country were also cited.

Home ownership in the UK or, for a small number, in the home country or a third country was cited as a long-term goal. Five considered returns home or relocation to other countries as a long-term goal (although this was often premised on poorer than expected outcomes in the UK); and, three wanted jobs that would allow them to travel more widely. Only one interviewee specifically referred to higher earnings; others to career progression and business expansion. One new arrival had a long-term goal of complete English fluency; another of attaining British citizenship. As a long-term goal educational achievement continued to feature in people's lives: the completion of current courses, retraining and the resumption of training opportunities once children are in nursery, and the take-up of work-based training were noted. Five interviewees did not specify any long-term goals.

#### 4.2.3.6 Coping strategies and resilience influencing LOS

In year 1 of the study we categorized coping strategies and resilience using the themes of self-help/self-reliance, mutual aid and formal support. This demonstrated a marked preference by interviewees to manage problems individually rather than to seek support either informally or formally. Despite greater knowledge of support organisations on the part of interviewees, the situation was, ostensibly, unchanged. However, the texture of comments in relation to self-help/and self-reliance in particular, revealed much more confidence and general 'know-how' in dealing with problems.

##### Self-Help/Self-Reliance

The strategies identified at year 1 were denial, avoidance, distraction, consolation, faith, stoicism, comparison, revisualisation, challenge, complain, change, and plan. Many interviewees identified themselves as optimists, positive thinkers, adaptable, enthusiastic and active planners, which enabled them to tackle problems more effectively, although it was admitted that problems could severely challenge those mindsets. However, a greater willingness to 'tackle problems head on' was recounted in a number of interviews with people researching their rights on the internet, drawing strength from inspirational quotations ('in every problem there is a possibility, there is an opportunity' Interviewee 004), learning to compromise, and using personal resources to greater effect.

*'I think that I'm the kind of person who thinks they can manage everything himself and not go somewhere to cry and complain, because I don't believe in that. You just accept it because usually I don't complain to anybody at all. Maybe I don't have anything to complain about. But I always manage to do everything myself or I sit with my wife and we talk through things and that's enough.' (Interviewee 037)*



A large component of a changed attitude to problem-solving was the growth in confidence many interviewees report. This stemmed from a greater knowledge of the language and culture including stronger English language fluency, success in the work place boosting confidence levels and also a broader sense of being in control, free to make choices. One interviewee, whose preference was to solve problems himself, notes:

*'Obviously, I feel more mature than three years ago. I have had to deal with many situations in this country, so I am just smarter' (Interviewee 014).*

However, this positive picture did not apply to all interviewees; some of whom continued to struggle with language and confidence issues and others, for better or worse, were suppressing their worries and stoically plodding on.

*'Well I didn't talk that much, you know, because I am not the type of person who talks a lot about problems. So it was all in my mind all the time, all the time. Just being a grumpy person all the time!' (Interviewee 003)*

*'I am always stressed out.' 'I automatically think that is how I was raised, that I have to deal with problems on my own. Oh yeah, I have support and everything, but I understand my problems best so I'm the best person to solve them as well.'* (Interviewee 053)

*'The ability to work hard is what gets me through life' (Interviewee 206).*

*'I am trying to keep all my problems or troubles, all my feelings, inside me. Only if I have really big problems will I try to share with other people. Essentially, though, I am a person who keeps problems and troubles inside.'* (Interviewee 207 – who listens to classical music to relax.)

Two interviewees reported frustrating situations of constrained agency where they could not resolve problems through their usual independent means:

*'I ended up shouting and swearing at hospital doctors after an 11 hour wait to be seen.' (Interviewee 021)*

*'I try to keep myself in hand, not to lose my temper. I had some situation when I desired to kick someone and to punch them, but I tried to go to my room and be quiet.'* (Interviewee 208)

*One interviewee, a psychologist by training, has had to engage with professional debriefing practices with colleagues and has 'learnt it is healthier to share problems and a better way to deal with things' (Interviewee 010).*

Overall, responses to problems were more proactive and positive than those indicated in year 1 of the study. Stoicism was still a feature of self-help strategies, but other strategies at year three were of engagement rather than withdrawal: to complain, challenge, change and plan. The growth in confidence levels, acculturation, and language acquisition had an obvious impact on coping strategies (and sense of well-being).

Interestingly, home countries very rarely featured as reference points for interviewees when relating their approaches to problems.

### **Mutual aid**

The strategies identified at year 1 were: talk, support, consult, and combine, and responses to this section of the interview suggested that whilst interviewees were drawing on the support of others a little more readily at year 3, the intensity noted in year 1 (largely borne out of necessity) was absent. Examples of where individuals combined to tackle challenging situations on arrival in year 1 did not arise in year three and there was also less reliance on friends for general language support.

Friends were drawn upon for advice about 'less complex issues' and in relation to discrete areas of experience. However, this compartmentalization did not apply to all interviewees; two interviewees noted friends' support 'helped you panic less with things' and that 'it helps ... to have a contact and to be with people who can support, who can help me'.

Partners were a key source of support (as noted by interviewee 037 above), especially when confidence levels needed building up:

*'My husband is very good support for me, and he is pushing me ... I need his support, but I would do that without his pushing now ... I appreciate his help and I would like to have his help, but still, if I would be on my own, I could the same. That's the change.'* (Interviewee 018)

An inability to help was a source of some distress for a newcomer who had limited English language skills and, in that respect, echoed the experiences related in year 1 of the study.

*'When I try to help a person and I see that the person or my friend is in trouble and I'm ready to help but I have no resources, I have no help to help, and I feel myself completely hopeless and, well, even destroyed.'* (Interviewee 207)

### **Formal Support**

In year 1, the key strategy identified was 'consult'. At year 3, the use of formal agencies also reflected interviewees' growing confidence and familiarity with life in the UK. This was not reflected in the extensiveness of engagement; only a limited number of interviewees actually noted any form of engagement with support agencies. It is, however, reflected in the way these agencies have been used and the outcomes experienced by interviewees.

Two individuals noted employing solicitors, advice from the Citizens Advice Bureaux had been commented on by two interviewees and a further two interviewees noted consulting a specific agency supporting migrant workers in a local community trust. A council housing department, a midwife, police and an MP had all been consulted on specific issues by other interviewees. Excluding the consultations with solicitors, the outstanding element of contact with public bodies and third sector agencies was the positive experiences reported

and the contribution made to people's sense of well-being and confidence:

*'I have used CAB and feel it is easier to deal with problems now that I know such places exist' (Interviewee 015)*

After an MP's intervention,

*'we got a refund and an apology from the police – we've learnt another way to deal with problems' (Interviewee 009)*

After advice from the CAB and a council housing department,

*'I now feel more independent in sorting things out' (Interviewee 023)*

*'I phone Keystone if I have a problem, but I don't need to as much as I did five years ago when I first came over' (Interviewee 210).*

#### **4.2.3.7 Knowledge of information about services and policies for migrants in the UK**

The relatively low take-up of migrant-specific formal support services was perhaps also reflected in interviewees' limited knowledge of these agencies and not solely explained by a preference for individualised coping strategies.

Almost half of interviewees were not aware of specific services for migrants at local, regional or national levels (including five who appeared to have no knowledge of any services). Knowledge of general public and third sector organisations was stronger. Local councils and the Citizens Advice Bureaux were most often cited as sources of information and services, and there was an awareness of support available at general practices and hospitals such as Polish language leaflets and use of interpreters. Some interviewees were able to identify community support organisations such as the Polish British Integration Centre (Bedford) and, more widely recognisable, the Keystone Development Trust (Thetford) and were positive about their services – 'that's what people need, organisation like this.' However, some interviewees also voiced ambivalent or negative feelings about accessing services, whether general or migrant-focused:

*'I know lots of them but because basically I don't need so many supports I am not very interested in them.'* (Interviewee 037)

*'I really feel that I fit in a community, I don't seek this kind of ... I don't seek any help' (Interviewee 013)*

*'I will not ask for it, I am against it. I am against benefits'.* (Interviewee 019)

*'I'm not interested in local organisations for migrants; you can't change anything.'* (Interviewee 021)

#### **4.2.3.8 Perceptions of Barriers and Opportunities**

At year 3, there was a certain amount of normalization of the migrant experience in evidence and the barriers and opportunities noted by interviewees often brought to the surface the mundane realities of trade-offs made in everyday life.

The frame of reference when considering barriers and opportunities continued to be knowledge and past experience of life in home countries (or for those who had lived and worked in other countries prior to coming to the UK, the COO and a third country) and positive comparisons with COO and the opportunities presented by migration continued to resound in interviews:

*'There are more positives for me here, there are more advantages for me here and I am in a better position here than I would be in Slovakia ... I wouldn't say I have got barriers'. (Interviewee 002)*

*'I think there are lots of possibilities. There are a lot more than, you know, than in Slovakia or in other Easter European countries. And the fact that they don't – I mean, here you can start your education at any age, this is just brilliant. No-one is looking at you like, 'what do you want here, 40 year old'. (Interviewee 006)*

Employment opportunities (even modest opportunities) and pay levels in the UK remained relatively well perceived compared to COO (voiced by ten interviewees) and, coupled with negative views on housing, food and other costs in home countries (voiced by a further five interviewees), presented continued disincentives for returns to COO.

Opportunities for personal development – education, career development, language acquisition – and the ability to live independently and feel in control of one's own life were also key 'stay' factors for a number of largely female interviewees.

More broadly, the freedom of movement afforded by EU membership was perceived as an opportunity by interviewees; however, as a Romanian interviewee noted, whilst EU citizenship 'gives you freedom, it gives you peace, it gives you, you know, you have the idea in your mind that you can find options' being Romanian is a barrier as

*'you don't have the full rights as the other countries of the EU' (Interviewee 003).*

Despite rising levels of confidence with English language skills, one of the largest barriers for interviewees at year three remained language fluency (specified by nine interviewees). Lack of knowledge of the legal system in the UK continued to give some interviewees cause for concern (often in combination with a lack of confidence in language proficiency).

Perceptions of barriers within the UK appeared to be weakening for the majority of interviewees in year three of the study, however. One interviewee was concerned that, regardless of further training and qualifications, she might be limited to minimum pay jobs because of her 'migrant status', another was concerned with the limited job opportunities in rural areas. There was a more extreme case of employment agency mismanagement, and one interviewee felt that other parents at the school gate may be prejudiced against her.

The texture of the responses in year 3 differs quite substantially compared to years 1 and 2 and there are key omissions related to barriers in year 3 such as housing and healthcare. At the same time, opportunities were less dramatically perceived and had become, for many, part of the fabric of daily life.

## 4.2.4 Influences on LOS: Perceptions of COO and the UK

Interviewees indicated a close interconnection between political, economic and social situations in their home countries and emphasised the relevance of these perceptions for their decision making processes on LOS. The following will look at these areas separately although connections will be highlighted where relevant.

### 4.2.4.1 Perceptions of the wider political, economic and social situation in COO

#### Political

In year 3 negative or very negative views regarding the political situation in COO remained common amongst our interviewees. Some interviewees continued to highlight corruption and bribery in their particular home countries, which were seen as having an adverse effect on the wider economic and social situation.

However, despite the criticism of the political situation in COO, many interviewees – especially from Hungary, Poland and Slovakia – were hopeful that a political change (following elections) would lead to better political, economic and social situations in their COO; although, there was often no concrete evidence regarding improvement (yet). (Not surprisingly) there were mixed views from co-nationals regarding the political change in their countries. For example, the political situation in Poland (following elections) was criticised by some interviewees referring to issues such as right-wing politics, intolerance towards minorities, homophobia and bureaucracy, while others were more positive about the economic and social consequences the political change in Poland might bring. The political situations in countries such as Lithuania and Bulgaria were viewed more consistently in a negative way and interviewees were less likely to articulate ‘hope’ regarding the (change of the) political situation in those countries.

Several interviewees did not participate in electoral processes in COO due to disillusionment with the political situation; although some interviewees did not engage due to barriers (such as the necessity to travel to London to vote). Some interviewees indicated a moral responsibility to vote in COO so that they could improve the situation for the people ‘left behind’ and/or to show some involvement and connection with their country while living abroad.

#### Economic

The employment situation in COO continued to be viewed as being bad or very bad; although the economic situation in countries such as Slovakia and Poland was viewed in a less negative way than, for example, in Latvia and Lithuania. Some interviewees thought that the economic situation in Poland was improving in bigger towns and for those who were well educated; the construction of new buildings was also seen as an indicator of economic improvement. Following elections in countries such as Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, interviewees indicated some hope regarding the improvement of the economic situation; although they often did not see any concrete evidence of economic development (yet).

The third year highlighted that perceptions and projections regarding the economy in COO were checked regularly and adjusted if necessary. For example, an interviewee from the Czech Republic thought that the economic situation in her COO had improved during year 2 but mentioned in the third year of the study that she had been wrong.

An interest in the economic situation in home countries was not only focused on potential job opportunities but also on the property market. Several of the interviewees owned a house or flat in their COO and intended to sell their properties. However, most were unable to sell their properties during the period of this study due to unfavourable property markets.

Similar to previous years, interviews in year 3 highlighted the discrimination of older interviewees (50 plus) in the employment markets of COO.

Interviewees also commented on the discrepancy between earnings and cost of living in COO whereby low wages do not correspond with increasing costs of living.

The perception of the economic situation in COO is influenced by a high level of relativism. Interviewees did not only compare the situation in their home countries with the situation in the UK but they also placed their perception in the context of other countries. For example, an interviewee from Slovakia described the economic situation in Slovakia as relatively good when compared to Poland and Russia, however not so good when compared to Germany and the UK (see also section on transnationalism below).

#### Social

As mentioned above (and noted in the earlier reports), several interviewees criticised the levels of intolerance and xenophobia in home countries towards minorities and contrasted this with a more open and tolerant situation (regarding gender, ethnicity, age and marital status) in the UK (see also section on transnationalism below).

With regard to social relations the picture varied; while some still felt that their strongest personal contacts were with the family and/or friends in COO, many said that, although they had regular face-to-face or virtual contact with their family and/or friends, these were not necessarily their ‘strongest contacts’.



It was often highlighted that co-nationals in the UK were closer as they could share the interviewee's migration experiences.

Although several interviewees stated that they were travelling home to visit doctors a few highlighted issues regarding the health care at home including bribes and the close relationships their families had with doctors in their home country.

#### 4.2.4.2 Perceptions of the wider social, economic and political situation in the UK

##### Social

As in previous years, interviewees placed emphasis on their perception of the social situation which, for the large majority, has remained a positive or very positive experience. Interviewees viewed their location of living as positive confirming findings from years 1 and 2: people are friendly; good provision of facilities including shops and leisure facilities; and, a good infrastructure were mentioned as positive experiences. A common theme in the interviews was also the advantage of living close to work, spending less time (than in their COO) on commuting and having more time for leisure and other activities.

A small number of interviewees mentioned social issues in their local area which they perceived as being negative, e.g. drug-taking in the neighbourhood, occurrence of crimes such as burglary and abuse from local residents outside their home.

With regard to social relations people in the UK were generally viewed as being friendly, honest and polite. However, interviewees continued to emphasise that British people had a different concept of friendship and the British were not perceived as individuals one could discuss problems with. This view of the different understanding of friendship had been present from the first year of the study and, after three years, none of the interviewees seemed to have changed their perceptions.

*'I've noticed people here are more polite than in my country, when they are talking. They are more like smiley and something like that, so it's not like in my country' (Interviewee 030).*

In the third year there was an increasing frustration amongst participants to be labelled (still) as a 'migrant worker'. In general participants viewed tolerance and diversity as a positive feature of British society, often contrasted with their experiences of discrimination and intolerance (e.g. relating to age, gender, sexual orientation, forms of co-habiting before marriage and xenophobia) in COO. However, this general picture of a 'tolerant UK' was also contrasted with the ongoing (at least since 2005) discriminatory representation of European citizens from A8/A2 countries in large parts of the British press. Several participants criticised and countered in their interviews stereotypical phrases such as 'migrant workers take away jobs from British people' or 'if they don't like it here they should go back'.

*'Of course, it will be not nice if they say, go back to your country, because in Poland there are many British people who are living there, and nobody says go back to your country because you take jobs from Polish people, so that will be not nice' (Interviewee 025).*

Interviewees showed concern about the negative feelings towards migrant workers amongst some of the population and were worried about their status of 'foreigner' and that they would never be equal to a British citizen.

##### Economic

Interviewees were aware of the recession and depending on place of living and employment sector participants represented quite a varied interpretation of the economic situation in general: some felt the recession was only temporary, some thought the job market was not affected as there were still job shortages in sectors such as the care sector, some felt jobs were affected due to NHS cuts and/or they felt it was more difficult to find a job in areas such as Norfolk. Although the recession was perceived in different ways many continued in year 3 to emphasise that it did not affect them to a large extent at a personal level and that they still had sufficient options open to them (especially when compared to their COO). In that respect, the recession has not impacted on shorter stay in the UK amongst interviewees.

Several interviewees highlighted their good relations with work colleagues and their employer. A small number of participants described situations where they felt unprotected in employment and had experienced discrimination in the work place.

Opportunities regarding self-employment in the UK were also emphasised by several participants. They thought it was relatively straightforward to become self-employed in the UK as there was less bureaucracy than in COO.

### Political

Several interviewees were interested in British politics and followed political developments. Views regarding the current and the previous government were mixed. Participants especially commented on migration policies developed by British governments. While some feared that the recession would lead to increasing unemployment and a stop on immigration, others thought that there would be no immigration restriction for EU citizens in the future.

Only a very small number of interviewees voted in the council elections. While several participants stated that they were not interested in (British) politics, others explained their non-participation with reference to: lack of knowledge regarding political programmes/ ideas of candidates and/or the registration process; uncertainty whether they were registered; and, uncertainty about their right to vote as a foreign national. The interviews highlighted that there is a need to inform European citizens from outside the UK about their political rights (see section on recommendations).

Not surprisingly, many mentioned explicitly the work and educational opportunities which were offered to them through European enlargement and how this wider political development had a significant impact on their life. EU citizenship was associated with positive features such as 'ability to work', 'bringing money back home', 'furthering education and career', and 'independence'.

The positive outlook on the UK has to be understood in the context of transnationalism. Interviewees in year 3 continued to view their experiences and perceptions of the UK in the light of experiences and perceptions of their COO. Transnationalism is a significant factor for a positive or very positive view of the UK and impacts strongly on decisions to stay for a long(er) time in the UK. The above findings illustrate and further confirm the quantitative findings from year 1 and year 2 which showed that most interviewees decided to stay longer than initially anticipated, justified by their positive experiences and perceptions (socially and/or economically) of the UK.

## 4.2.5 Influences on LOS: Transnationalism

### 4.2.5.1 Aspects of transnationalism

Decisions on LOS are highly influenced by experiences and thought processes relating to transnationalism. Transnationalism relates first of all to the UK and the COO and was expressed through issues such as:

- Travel and communication
- Family
- Social networks
- 'Imagining the return'
- Customs and personal experiences
- 'Feeling of control' and 'being an outsider or insider'

The above list emphasises that transnationalism is not only reflected in actions but especially in thought processes (e.g. reflections, perceptions and comparison) which influences actions (with intended or unintended consequences). Comparisons of experiences and perceptions (between COO, the UK and possibly third countries) relate to a variety of issues including:

- Economic aspects (careers, employment, recession, remittances, cost of living, mortgages etc.)
- Housing
- Education for children/ adults
- Health
- Style of living
- Environmental issues

It is important to highlight that a number of interviewees had contacts with third countries. Transnationalism is, therefore, expressed in a more complex relationship between the UK, COO and/or third countries. Often the knowledge of more than two languages supported the potential relevance of third countries in decisions of LOS. This cosmopolitanism is also reflected in the fact that many interviewees travelled to a range of countries and continents for their vacations.

### 4.2.5.2 Travel and communication

Travel and communication are important aspects of transnationalism and free or cheap communication technologies facilitate a frequent or infrequent contact with family members and friends as desired by interviewees (e.g. Skype, Facebook, email and the telephone). Access to electronic communications can be more problematic for older and relatively impoverished interviewees whose home country backgrounds neither provided them – or their relatives – with the wherewithal to purchase the requisite technology nor the experience to exploit it. These interviewees were confined to monthly or 'special event' telephone conversations and, in two cases, a fervid hope that family members would be able to join them soon. It seems that none of our interviewees used webcams for virtual interaction over longer periods of time, e.g. having the webcam running throughout the whole evening so that people from 'home' could join them virtually (research has identified this type of transnational communication for groups such as Moroccans in France or Bolivians in Spain – see for example, *Ross and De La Fuente Vilar, 2011*). This is possibly explained by the availability of relatively cheap and short flights to COO and the fact that most of the interviewees travel back to their COO (from zero to a maximum of ten times each year and for varying lengths of time; it was rare for visits to be reciprocated, however). Travel to COO was not only focused on meeting friends and family but often also on dealing with financial issues such as properties, mortgages and visits to doctors or dentists. Several interviewees owned property in their COO and intended to sell their property.

#### 4.2.5.3 Family

Factors relating to the family play an important part in transnationalism. (Extended) family situations of participants were often very complex whereby some family members (parent(s), younger and older siblings, grandparent(s), aunt, uncle, aunt's cousin, etc) might also live in the UK, in COO and/or third countries. 'Family' was seen in its supportive role but also in the context of constraint. The majority of our interviewees stated that they had regular face-to-face or virtual contact with their (extended) family in COO, in the UK or third countries (ranging from daily telephone calls and skype connections to more irregular visits and contacts with family members). Family was viewed in its supportive role whereby, for example, parents, grandparents or other relatives were moving to the UK to help and/or care for children and grandchildren. The location of the (extended) family (i.e. in COO or in the UK) often influenced whether women would return home to have a family/children or would stay in the UK.

However, family was also associated with constraint which impacted on LOS. The actual or potential care of parents in COO continued to be, for some interviewees, a reason for return in the third year of the study. In that respect 'family' limited the choice of action for interviewees (in the present or in the future). Many interviewees stated that the family was a (potential) constraint for them to stay longer or indefinitely in the UK; although one of the interviewees stated that the support of his mother in his COO meant that he could not return to his home country (his preferred option) as he needed a well paid job in the UK to support his mother.

Several participants highlighted the notion of independence from their family 'at home'. In this respect, living in the UK meant that participants could enjoy a more independent style of living (often combined with having a good relationship with family back home and visiting them several times a year). The UK was seen as a clear advantage with regard to independent living as a variety of structural factors in COO restrained their independence; for example, the requirements of university study (often spending a large amount of time in lectures, similar to full-time employment) and the lack of part-time employment meant that students could not combine study with employment. As a consequence, participants who wanted to further their education had to live with their family. Social norms as much as financial issues also had a limiting effect on independent living. For example, several interviewees highlighted that it was 'normal' in their COO that children would live with their parents until they marry. Several participants stated that they felt liberated in the UK as they could live with their boyfriend/girlfriend.

Many also highlighted the (potential) conflict between expectations from (some) family members regarding a return and the interviewees' intentions to remain longer or permanently in the UK; often causing tensions for participants regarding their feelings of self-fulfilment and feelings of guilt for 'having left' the family. As already highlighted in our first report, interviewees might be, therefore, less open to discuss LOS decisions with family member in COO. A 'diplomatic interaction' with family back home was also mentioned in the context of providing selective information about their situation and problems in the

UK, considering that family members in COO had their own lives and worries.

#### 4.2.5.4 Social networks (other than family)

Participants had a complex network of social relations linking the UK with COO and third countries. Within geographical borders, interviewees distinguished between social networks relating to work, family, children, neighbourhood, leisure, further education, church and so on. Social networks with home countries differed: while some had strong links and/or communicated regularly, others said that they felt 'distant' from their friends in their home country (especially when they did not have the 'migration experience').

Within the UK participants continued to highlight that they were less likely to socialise with British people and were more likely to socialise with co-nationals or other migrants. Although interviewees interacted with British nationals at work, in education and within the community they continued to feel a discrepancy between their idea of friendship and that of British people. Several emphasised that the pressure of work had a negative impact on their socialising.

#### 4.2.5.5 'Imagining the return'

Transnationalism was also reflected in the 'imagination of returning home' whereby potential advantages and disadvantages were identified. The majority of the interviewees felt that staying in the UK would offer them more opportunities than returning home. Factors related not only to economic considerations but also to social, personal (relating, for example, to independence) and educational factors. Interviewees had a range of issues which were potentially a barrier for them regarding return: difficulty in finding a job and/or getting a mortgage for a flat/house, the necessity of commuting to larger town, and loss of independence due to being too close to their family. Interviewees also emphasised that they 'had moved on' and had a different perspective about their COO and felt frustrated with some of the situations.

*'I think I got out of the Slovakian mentality a little bit... Because when you live abroad, when you live in a different country, you become very much open minded, you know that, oh this is not only this way things can go but there are different ways' (Interviewee 013).*

#### 4.2.5.6 Economic aspects

##### The recession

With regard to the recession it is important to highlight the transnational aspects as it explains (partly) why many interviewees were relatively unconcerned about the economic situation in the UK. Participants compared the cuts and recession in the UK with their home countries and in comparison they did not feel that the situation in the UK was as bad as the situation in their COO. Comparisons were not only made with reference to the current situation in the COO but also to earlier times. For example, one interviewee referred to the time immediately after communism highlighting how good the opportunities (still) are in the UK when compared to this historical phase in his COO.

## Remittances

Several interviewees continued to send remittances to parents (especially mothers) and to children (left behind). It was mentioned by some that the increased cost of living in COO meant that remittances had increased.

### 4.2.5.7 Customs and personal experiences

Customs and festivities relating to cultures of COO are an important aspect of transnationalism, but only a few of our interviewees mentioned this in the context of their transnational living stating that they kept their customs relating to COO and celebrated some traditional holidays.

Transnationalism also meant that experiences back home can impact on/ bias attitudes in the UK. For example, one interviewee had problems with police corruption in his home country and as a consequence did not want to interact with the police in the UK.

#### 4.2.5.8 'Feeling of control' and being an outsider or insider

Transnationalism was also discussed in the context of 'feeling in control of their lives', reflecting how participants felt their agency was fairly unlimited by structural constraints and that they could fulfil their different ideas and goals in the UK. For example, interviewees mentioned that the economic difference between the UK and their home country meant that they felt more in control in the UK, had fewer worries and felt more optimistic for the future. However, the feeling of being an 'insider' in their COO (with regard to language, knowledge of cultural norms etc.) made them feel more in control in their COO with regard to the social context. Several interviewees discussed the feeling of being a 'stranger' or 'outsider' in the UK which they compared with the more positive feeling of being an 'insider' in their COO:

*'I will be at home so more relaxed. Even when you go to shop, everywhere. I know that even when I'll be in a different part of Poland, not my city, I will be 'This is Polish, I am home' (Interviewee 025).*

*'...and here someone can say, "Well if you don't like it go back to Poland and be in Poland." In Poland no one would tell me, 'Oh if you don't like it go elsewhere' (Interviewee 035).*

Perceptions regarding insider/outsider, citizen/stranger, belonging/not belonging, home/not home were often not perceived as clear-cut notions associated with COO and the UK. Most interviewees reflected on the shifting and fluid interpretations of these concepts:

*'... but now I feel when I was in Poland and I come back here, I feel like home, that I know this place. It's very similar when I fly to Poland, I feel like home, it's my place, and I come here and I feel very similar. Because I'm living here very long. But... I don't know how to explain, because...I know this is not my home' (Interviewee 025).*

*'When I write to some people, when I write to my friends emails for example, and I just find myself sitting in the room and just having the thought in English and not being able to put it in Polish words...it's really scary. I don't want to lose that...It's quite sad actually, because I didn't expect it would be so easy to lose those things, it really is. But, I think culture is something I am trying to really, really catch up with' (Interviewee 053).*

Participants not only reflected upon their own notions of insider/outsider, citizen/stranger etc., but they also discussed how they ('the migrant workers') were (mis)perceived by 'others', i.e. 'the British' and 'the people at home'. These generalised notions regarding the (mis)perceptions of migrant workers by others impacted upon their feeling of belonging/ not belonging.

*'I think they [Polish] have wrong imagination what is happening here [in the UK]. I don't want to say only about England, but about different countries – we are so rich! We go to heaven, yeah. I haven't so many money. I live normal, but I'm not rich. And they think like that' (Interviewee 025).*

## 4.2.6 Experiences in the UK: The good, bad and ugly

**Good:** Participants highlighted good aspects in employment, education, community relations and personal lives. With regard to employment issues such as a good income, job satisfaction, good relations with work colleagues and employers, many work opportunities, support at work and 'a feeling of competence' in employment were emphasised. In the context of education, interviewees mentioned their positive involvement in further education and the educational progress of children. The housing situation, good levels of socialising and the involvement in community activities were other aspects which were defined as good experiences in the UK. At a family level situations such as 'good relations to mother' (in COO) and partner joining from COO were highlighted in year 3.

**Bad:** Several interviewees emphasised bad experiences with regard to personal lives, employment, education, housing and legal issues. At a personal level this included: limited decision power due to constraints of supporting mother in home country; no relationship; limited success regarding career and personal life.

In the economic (financial and employment) context, issues such as a failure to sell property in the home country due to falling house prices, no savings, no possibility of return (due to low wages, bad job situation and no possibility to buy/build a house) and unemployment were highlighted. Being cheated by an employer and discrimination in employment were also listed under bad experiences. The feeling that some clients might have been unhappy to be served by a non-British person was also mentioned in this category.



Interviewees also had concerns about low levels of English language competency, the inability to improve language skills in a work-place staffed by co-nationals, and gaps in educational careers whilst money is raised to pay fees.

Bad experiences regarding housing included dissatisfaction with the situation of shared housing and the denial by a landlord to return the deposit.

Legal issues were also highlighted: bad legal advice and representation and losing an original copy of a relevant document which caused problems achieving UK residency.

**Ugly:** As in the second report, most interviewees did not describe any experiences as being 'ugly'. However, particular incidences of discrimination in the context of work, in the neighbourhood, and with regard to (the lack of) medical help were mentioned by three interviewees. One interviewee also highlighted that she could not protect her rights in her case of discrimination because she lacked knowledge regarding the judicial system.

## 4.2.7 Conclusions

At year 3 it is apparent that decision-making, whilst relatively flexible and recognised by interviewees as contingent on a number of factors, has become more concrete. Economic, political and social/personal factors such as pay, employment opportunities, quality of life, discrimination, political and economic instability act as a deterrent to an early return to COO and convinced many interviewees that a decision to stay or non-decision to return was well-founded. Significant relationships and quality of life issues were often deciding factors in a continuation of stay in the UK. At the same time, people do struggle with the separation from home, family and a familiar culture and these factors have an unpredictable influence on LOS. A number of interviewees also note that the well-being of ageing or ill parents would likely induce an early return to COO. Weighted against these factors is the freedom of choice perceived to be available here, for many a new experience, and in a context of relative social and economic security.

Identity was relatively stable through the course of the study with the most common identification described as nationality plus European. However, a tension was also noted between a weakening sense of attachment to home countries over time and a growing connection to a European identity. There were clear connections discernible between self-identification – as regional/national, as national/European, as European, or as British – and attitudes to LOS with the latter categories more likely to opt for the 'stayer' category.

At year 3, goals and aspirations have become more individualistic and less recognisable as 'migrant goals' *per se*. Distinctions between short-term, medium-term and long-term are less clearly defined and more compressed as life in the 'here and now' assumes greater importance compared to projections for life in the future.

As in year 1 of the study, a marked preference to manage problems individually rather than seek informal or formal support remains. However, the texture of comments in relation to self-help and self-reliance solutions has changed revealing much more confidence and general 'know-how' in dealing with problems in the UK. Almost half of interviewees were not aware of specific services for migrants at local, regional or national levels; however, knowledge of general public and third sector organisations – for example, local councils and Citizens Advice Bureaux – was stronger.

At year 3, the perception of barriers and opportunities demonstrate a certain element of normalization in people's transnational lives bringing to the surface the mundane realities and trade-offs negotiated in everyday lives. The frame of reference continues to be knowledge and past experience of life in home countries, particularly in relation to opportunities and, in general, the perception of barriers experienced within the UK appears to be weakening.

Negative perceptions of COO regarding political and economic situations continue to influence decision-making on LOS. Discrimination, intolerance and xenophobia were also negatives observed by some interviewees in home countries.

Positive or very positive impressions of the UK continue to influence decisions to remain. Positive features included an understanding of the UK as a tolerant and diverse society, generally friendly, providing work and educational opportunities. The recession and imminent cuts on the whole did not faze interviewees who observed that the situation in home countries is more acute and opportunities remain in the UK. There was some interest in political developments, although participation in local and European elections was low; partly as a result of lack of information and knowledge of civic rights and partly as a result of a general wariness of political activity overall.

The positive outlook on the UK has to be understood in the context of transnationalism which plays a significant role in the decisions on LOS. Cheap travel and communications between the UK and COO, the complexities introduced to family relationships, the spread of social networks, and individual responses to the experience of migration: imagining a return home, feeling in control as an insider and alternatively as an outsider, are elements of transnationalism.

Finally, experiences of good, bad and ugly related to us in year 3 reveal continuities but also changes in experiences and perspectives on experiences.

The next section explores Polish blogs related to push and pull factors and LOS decision-making and provides a set of reflections unmediated by the specific drivers of a research project. The issues raised in many respects reflect those of our interviewees and, in a less structured way, highlight the multi-layered motivations and experiences of migration.



## 4.3 Analysis of blogs

### 4.3.1 Introduction

This section examines Polish blogs posted between January 2010 and October 2010. Whilst the pilot analysis in year 1 particularly aimed to capture reflections on the recession in relation to employment, the social and the political sphere, and the analysis in year 2 especially engaged with the dilemmas of transnationalism, in year 3 we focus specifically on reflections related to push and pull factors at micro, meso and macro levels. Beginning with reflections on Poland then the UK we proceed to examine comments in relation to being a migrant and LOS decisions.

### 4.3.2 Year three blogs

In the third year of the study, eighteen Polish language internet blog websites were scoped and eleven selected for translation and analysis, the majority of which were located at [www.blog.onet.pl](http://www.blog.onet.pl)

The advantages and disadvantages of this approach were considered in detail in the second report and are, therefore, not repeated here. As with years 1 and 2, the overarching concern is with Polish migrants' reflections on their experiences and the various push and pull factors that have an impact on decisions on LOS.

Most of the blogs from the previous years had not been updated or had been cancelled; however, three bloggers continue to publish from 2007/2008<sup>1</sup>. This allows us a small opportunity to extend the blog analysis to a longitudinal examination in these three cases. Interestingly, the female/male ratio of our long-term bloggers reflects that of the final interview sample.

As the previous report, a summary of the bloggers' known demographics is presented in the table below:

Table 1:  
**Bloggers' known demographics**

BLOG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Sex	F	F	M	F	M	F	F	M	F	F	F
Age	30	?	35	?	?	27	Early 30s	?	28	?	?
Marital Status	M	M	M	M	?	M	M	M	S	?	S
Children	1 to 2	1	1	?	?	0	0	0	0	?	?
Location	?	Aberdeen	Dorset	?	Edinburgh	London	London	Scot	?	Bristol	?
In the UK	6 yrs	4 yrs	5 yrs	?	?	7 yrs	4 yrs	2 yrs	?	2.5 yrs	?
Blog run since	2008	2008	2009	?	2010	2004	2008	?	2009	?	2009

Again, many of the bloggers sampled are married women and although only three bloggers are male, their blogs tend to be updated more regularly and are outstanding in the level of detailed description and discussion provided.

A thematic based analysis on what we classified in the first report as effectively 'e-diary' entries has been conducted and this can be located in Appendix 3.

### 4.3.3 Impressions

Reading through the blogs assembled in relation to push and pull factors linked to macro, meso and micro levels of experience the outstanding impression is that the advantages and disadvantages discussed in relation to the COO and the UK are not necessarily 'deal breakers'. Most of the bloggers' reflections are just that: observations on the realities the migrant status brings which include uncomfortable insights on each country made visible by a transnational positioning. The blogs may relate periods of home-sickness or various frustrations with life in the UK; however, these do not appear to provide immediate triggers for a return to the COO or relocation to another country. Of course, bloggers, as in previous years, are Polish migrants who have lived in the United Kingdom for a relatively lengthy period of time – two to seven years – and this will obviously influence viewpoints. For example, the bloggers express a general disappointment with the home country, which is perhaps thrown more sharply in relief by their experiences in the UK (although these are far from uniformly positive).

Across the blogs the following factors were repeatedly distinguished as negative aspects of life in Poland: politics, church-state relations, poor customer service and, a consequence of the migratory experience, weaker relationships with friends and relatives. Reflections on life in the UK are less corrosively critical with the most severe comments reserved for the media and their negative portrayal of Eastern and Central Europeans.

<sup>1</sup> Blogs one, seven and eight for two to three years of the study period.



(To a lesser extent British bureaucratic ‘over-protectiveness’ and the healthcare system also comes in for criticism.) In fact, bloggers reveal fairly significant signs of settling down mentioning careers, marriage to British citizens, raising children, property and study with an apparent reluctance to consider any return to Poland. Overwhelmingly, the blogs give the impression that decision making on LOS is based on an individual consideration of personal and economic circumstances: that is, satisfaction with one’s way of life or, at least, accommodation to one’s current situation. Nevertheless, what we have classified as home country push factors in section 4.1.4.1 are significant features and are especially conspicuous in blogs after a visit home.

Particularly salient are the insights blogs reveal about ‘transnational migration’ where individuals find themselves the subject of policies and regulations produced by the COO and the country of residence. The impacts on migrants’ lives include dealing with tax authorities in two countries, maintaining expensive changes in passport regulations as well as pet passports and negotiating the different bureaucratic systems and political tenor of each country. These insights accord with interview data.

### 4.3.4 Blogs 1, 7 and 8: The long view

Across all years the blogs are essentially personal reflections, e-diary entries, which provide interesting data on the day to day experience of migration and migrants’ views on a whole host of subjects related to aspects of life in the home country and the country of residence.

In year 1, there was a tendency for bloggers to talk of their migratory experience as one of ‘exile’ and noting the economic factors that brought them to the UK rather than the factors that encouraged them to stay. Blogs revealed a longing for home and the familiar and were peppered with complaints about the Polish government. At the same time, bloggers’ reflections on life in the UK extended to the observation of changes in themselves: becoming more tolerant and open and feeling happier. The topic of the media representation of Poles was a matter for discussion in all years as well as the ‘shaming’ behaviour and ignorance of some compatriots. Interestingly, comments on the economic crisis were extremely limited and in no way suggest that bloggers anticipated additional problems or barriers as a result. Authors did not appear to feel destabilised or threatened by the condition of the British economy but rather focused on the Polish economy – ‘a hopeless situation’, ‘no stability’ – and the inflexibility of Polish employers. In year 2, the dilemmas of transnationalism appeared especially relevant as the lens through which concerns about everyday life, the home country and country of residence were expressed. Blogs 1, 7 and 8 identified as active in years 2 and 3 allow a closer examination with regard to longitudinal dimensions.

#### Blogger 1, Female, children, six years in the UK

In year 2, this blogger described feeling destabilised, not knowing where home is, and talked of the ‘pain of emigration’ as grandchildren and grandparents were separated with her children growing up without fully experiencing Polish traditions and cuisine. However, this view was tempered by the ‘realities’ of life in Poland and a belief that she would not be able to afford to have children in Poland:

*When I gave birth to our son, I realised that the decision to stay in England was right. It is a right decision, mainly for our baby's good. ... I want to live in a place where no citizens are being neglected, where one knows they are not alone.*

In year 3, the blogs posted highlight the continuing economic and political problems in Poland and their impact on ordinary people’s lives. The burden the Polish state places on emigrants is related in detail and the charms of Polish life appear to be fading for this author:

*‘What kind of state is it which discourages people from ... having babies? Having a family?’*

*‘I just feel like this once much beloved Poland is becoming more and more indifferent. Even my home town, Polish dishes are becoming more distant and don’t give me the same joy as they used to ... It’s sad but thanks to this, it will be easier to say goodbye to our family and return home, our home in England.’*

#### Blogger 7, Female, no children, four years in the UK

In year 2, this blogger is recently married (described as ‘sealing my life in the UK’) and is pondering how to transfer her Polish heritage to subsequent children. Home sick and reflecting on family life in Poland round the hearth as a dearly missed aspect of life in the home country, this blogger nevertheless makes a number of positive assertions about life in the UK; for example, the benefits for women working in the UK and a description of ‘the English’ as ‘a tolerant nation – sometimes too tolerant’. In year 3 she continues to make favourable comparisons between England and Poland, particularly in relation to attitudes or ‘mentalities’ and makes it clear that she has no plans to return to Poland.

### **Blogger 8, Male, no children, two years in the UK**

This blogger talks in terms of 'being in exile' and, in year 2, noted that even though you can recreate a Polish Easter or Christmas celebration here with relatives it still does not feel right 'because I will never feel at home here'. As the year progressed the author seemed to be on the horn of a dilemma: to stay or to return home. Expressing amazement at friends returning home despite the economic crisis, the last blog nevertheless reveals property has been purchased in the UK, yet it is maintained that 'it isn't a binding decision to stay here forever ... I will treat it more like an investment for the future.' In year 3, the frustrations with the continued political and economic problems in Poland form the majority of the postings along with the discomfort provoked by Scottish 'traditions' and the seeming indeterminacy – for one official – of EU citizenship. Finally, the revelation that relationships with friends and family in Poland once considered 'sacred' had now weakened appears to underline this blogger's sense of transnational limbo.

These three bloggers demonstrate the changes and continuities impacting on decisions about LOS in the UK over time. Uppermost, it shows how personal decisions – or decisions to postpone decisions – are entwined together with micro, meso and macro concerns, from intimate relationships to state policies and macro-economics. Continuity and change in people's lives is demonstrated in more detail in the following section with eight case studies drawn from data derived from three annual interviews over a three year period.



# 4.4 Case studies

## 4.4.1 Introduction

Eade, Drinkwater and Garapich's (2006) categories of hamsters, storks, searchers and stayers – and our additional category situated within and between searchers and stayers: strategists – provide a framework for the eight longitudinal case studies below. Each is an illustration of people's everyday transnational lives over a three year period and their reflections on push and pull factors and LOS.

A left the study in 2010 and has been replaced with a case study of a female 22 year old Lithuanian who has been involved with the study from year 1; the case studies below, therefore, run from B to I. These throw a spotlight on the lives of five women and three men from Lithuania (1), Hungary (1), Slovakia (2), Poland (3) and Bulgaria (1). Ages range from 22 to 56, four are single, two divorced, and two married (one separation), and two have dependent children. Occupations at year 3 are: agency employed factory worker; call centre operative; flight attendant; two senior office workers; housewife; self-employed shop fitter; and, a recent graduate working in the service sector. Only two have remained in the same jobs held from the start of the study.

## 4.4.2 Case study B

### Norfolk; cohort 2; from Hamster to Stayer

B is a 40 year old Bulgarian national who arrived in Norfolk in May 2007 soon after Bulgaria joined the EU, although he had planned to come anyway since living and working in the UK has long been his ambition. However, before 2007 he had been unable to make the move, partly because it was too difficult for him to acquire the necessary visa and partly because his wife – from whom he is now divorced – preferred to remain in Bulgaria. He has two sons aged 15 and 18 who are still living in Bulgaria with his ex-wife. In a few years time, B would like his eldest son to attend university in the UK where he thinks he will receive a better standard of education, and have better employment prospects.

B trained as a chef in Bulgaria, and also studied business at college. He subsequently ran various businesses – four in all. Following the failure of these businesses he took the decision to come to the UK, chiefly in order to earn an adequate wage on which he could support himself and his family. Indeed, the majority of his plans and aspirations are focused on achieving this central goal of financial security. For example, B can earn in one or two days what it would take him a whole month to earn in Bulgaria. However, despite the opportunities which working in the UK allows him, B also noted that as a Bulgarian he has fewer employment rights and less job security because he is only able to work on a self-employed basis. While he maintains that he has not had any especially negative experiences since coming to the UK, one of the main difficulties he encountered immediately on arrival was getting a bank account because as a new arrival he was unable to provide the required proof of address. After searching on the internet, however, he found some information about a 'passport account' service for which he paid a fee of around £5 per month for the first year, after which he was able to apply for a standard current account.

In year 2 he was cheated by an employer who failed to pay him, however the costs of going to litigation outweighed the money owed and so he did not pursue his claim.

When looking for work, B tends to rely on formal networks such as employment agencies rather than informal contacts – although when he *first* arrived here he relied mostly on tip-offs from friends to find work. In the final year of the study B works as a shop-fitter for a major do-it-yourself chain and travels considerable distances to the various stores, but 'work is good' and he has enjoyed a rise in his salary twice in the previous year. In year two he worked in construction and was vulnerable to seasonal fluctuations in the availability of work, often having to take lower paid labouring jobs in order to maintain his income. His first job here involved working mainly with other Bulgarians, but he prefers to work with non-migrants in order to practice his language skills, and the majority of his experiences of working with British people have been positive.

Most of his friends are fellow Bulgarians who live in his city in Norfolk, and appear to have established a relatively close and tightly bounded support network. A Bulgarian friend who was already living in the city helped B when he first arrived here, and he states that being able to rely on this support made the big step of moving to another country more manageable. Although he reports that he has few British friends and has little contact with his neighbours, this overall lack of interaction has never led him to reconsider his decision to settle here and he sees the social situation in this country as particularly positive.

He has little interest in politics, either in Bulgaria or in the UK, and does not see it as relevant to his life although he does express some negative views on the extent of corruption in Bulgarian politics. He did not vote in the EU elections nor in the Bulgarian Presidential elections; he was working away during the former and did not vote in the latter 'because there was nobody to vote for: they are all the same'.

B's views on the economic situation in Bulgaria are mostly negative, and he describes the country as being in a permanent state of crisis since its transition to democracy in the 1990s. Despite some negative effects of the recession on life in the UK he still feels that life is "better" here compared to Bulgaria. He contrasts the lack of welfare support in Bulgaria, where the unemployed only receive six months' worth of financial aid, with the situation in the UK where UK citizens (and some migrants) receive both unemployment assistance and free health care (whereas, he says, in Bulgaria you still have to pay 'health taxes'). B was also highly critical of the overly bureaucratic nature of organisations in Bulgaria which had made it difficult to achieve many of his goals in the past. By contrast, B characterised life in the UK as more secure and better organised. For example, he commented on how difficult it would have been in Bulgaria to obtain a European Health Insurance Card, and observed that in the UK he could apply online and receive the card relatively quickly – rather than having to endure endless queues and a long wait.

It is, he argues, much harder to negotiate barriers in Bulgaria than here where “everything is made to be easy” and he feels more able to control his circumstances here, particularly when it comes to employment. He prefers to solve any problems by himself, and is confident that any information he needs will be available online.

Since coming to the UK B has not considered returning to Bulgaria. He plans to stay here permanently and to apply for Leave to Remain and then for British citizenship. B reports that he feels a much stronger affinity with the UK than with Bulgaria, and his positive experiences of living and working here have significantly affected his decision regarding LOS. When he first arrived in Norfolk his original plan was to stay for one year to see how successful he could be, but the higher wages and improved quality of life available to him in the UK soon led him to extend his stay indefinitely. He does, however, know of other Bulgarians who *have* returned home, only to be severely disappointed in the opportunities and standard of living available to them there – and indeed, he reports that many of them have subsequently come back to the UK again. Since arriving in the UK he has only made one short return trip to visit family (but uses Skype regularly), preferring instead to visit other areas of the UK, including Liverpool, Bournemouth and Southampton – or to take holidays to far-flung destinations such as Cuba, something which would simply not have been realistically achievable on a Bulgarian wage. However, whilst he recognises the advantages EU membership confers by way of freedom of movement and an improvement in his quality of life, he also notes, ‘I can stay, like European citizen, but, at the moment for Bulgarians and Romanians workforce is not open, we can’t work like employed persons’.

### 4.4.3 Case study C

#### Suffolk/Norfolk border; cohort 2; Stayer

C is a 55 year old divorcee who left Slovakia for the UK in August 2007. Originally arriving in a small Norfolk market town, she moved a month later to a nearby small town in Suffolk which was closer to her job in a local factory. By the third interview she has moved again, back to Norfolk. When she first left school C had originally worked in a factory, but subsequently had a range of jobs in Slovakia – including 13 years’ experience as a healthcare assistant. She has also previously had temporary work in an electronics factory in the Czech Republic. C started an English language course soon after arriving in the area, but found that the level was too high for her and so she had to withdraw. She has three adult children, all of whom are still living in Slovakia. Her son has recently separated from his wife, and C now has custody of her young grandson. Although she arrived in the UK alone, after eighteen months she was able to bring her grandson over to join her here, and he soon settled well into life in the UK and is attending a local primary school. C is very keen for him to finish his education here and perhaps also go on to attend university, and compares the quality and responsiveness of teaching favourably with the Slovakian education system. In the third interview C discusses a granddaughter who is staying with her as well and attending school.

Before her grandson moved to the UK C had been sending money home regularly to support him but finds it much easier to provide him with a decent standard of living here in this country. Her views of Slovakia are largely negative, particularly in relation to the economic situation which she feels has deteriorated further since she arrived in the UK, especially since the introduction of the Euro, which has forced prices up. She views the employment situation in Slovakia as pretty bleak, and also states that in the current climate she would find it difficult to get a mortgage there (having bought her house *before* the country’s transition to democracy). She says people, including pensioners and disabled people, are leaving Slovakia because benefits are being cut.

She has noticed the effect of the economic downturn in the UK noting in the third interview that she is not working as many hours and it is taking longer to find new temporary employment with the agency. She is not getting a lower rate of pay than other workers (as outlined in the report by the Equalities Commission, 2010), although her rate of pay has not increased. She does not know of many people are leaving the UK because of the recession. C is not interested in either domestic or European politics, being purely focused on finding work and acutely conscious of her lack of influence in this area; she did not vote in the European elections. However she is aware that EU membership has enabled her to gain employment in the UK and she notes that EU citizenship has had a beneficial impact on her life. She is also aware of *some* benefits provided by the government – for example, she currently receives Working Families Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit. Beyond that, C is unaware of specific services for migrants, or national level policies, although like many in the area she relies on a small number of trusted key *local* organisations for information and support set up precisely to address migrant worker issues.

Originally C privately rented a room in a shared house. However, she has since moved into social housing with her grandson as her original landlord was unwilling to rent the same accommodation to a family. The tenancy agreement gives her security although she does not like the area where she lives and considers it a “criminal area”. The main difficulties C has experienced in the UK centre around language issues. She speaks very little English, meaning that she has been unable to get a job where she would be able to use her nursing skills, and talks about lack of language as a significant barrier to achieving her ambitions. When C first arrived in the area she found life extremely difficult, largely because she could only get temporary, insecure jobs and often went for long periods without working. C talks about these periods of involuntary unemployment as her worst experiences since arriving in the UK. Work is central to C’s sense of self and she talks about being more able to have control over her life in the UK than in Slovakia – *but only when she is employed*. The precariousness of her situation is partly due to her heavy reliance on formal networks such as recruitment agencies to find employment, which in C’s case has not always proved a reliable strategy. At one point during the previous winter C was without work for almost four months, and accumulated a large amount of debt. However, she also talks about being able to rely on the support of her landlord at that time, a fellow migrant, who was willing to be flexible about her rent arrears.

In the third year she found little support at the employment agency when she had to return to Slovakia to care for her dying father. In year 3 she has also faced verbal threats and physically threatening behaviour on the estate where she lives, but has been too scared to contact the police.

Despite these problems, C has never reconsidered her decision to leave Slovakia and come to the UK. After three years she feels more confident about managing and sees her experience as liberating ('now I'm making decisions without his [ex-husband's] influence'). She focuses on her positive experiences, such as the reunion with her grandchildren, and the many advantages which she feels growing up in this country will give them. In fact, she reports that the difficulties she has often faced in finding work makes no difference whatsoever to her LOS in the country – rather, her sole motivation and focus is providing opportunities for her grandchildren. C has no real plans to return to Slovakia. For the first two and a half years of her time in the UK she has only returned to Slovakia once, for a family funeral. Her family have visited her here and her children and other grandchildren will all be coming for a holiday this year. In the third year she returned to stay in Slovakia for a month whilst she cared for her father until his death. It was very difficult to make all the necessary arrangements with her work, her grandson's school and her accommodation to be away for this long.

She remains firmly rooted in the Norfolk/Suffolk border area, and has not visited any other areas of the UK or any other EU countries. In terms of friends and support networks, C relies on a seemingly close and dense network of friends – fellow migrants and former co-workers – whom she trusts implicitly to help her with information and advice in solving any problems she faces. She has little interaction with her neighbours (who are also fellow migrants) or with British people, largely due to her lack of English language skills, but still feels that they are relatively friendly, despite some unpleasant experiences. Her most significant ties are to support networks in Slovakia (her children and one good friend) although she keeps in touch rather less frequently than others, usually phoning for birthdays and other special occasions. However, although these are significant relationships, they do not influence C's thoughts about LOS in the UK; securing her grandchildren's future remains her primary motivation and long-term goal. Even the difficulties she has faced in finding employment have not prompted plans for a return to Slovakia. She does not miss Slovakia emotionally and says she has "adapted".

#### 4.4.4 Case study D

##### Cambridgeshire; cohort 3; Searcher/Stayer?

D is a 35 year old single woman. She comes from Poland and is a Catholic. She graduated in Poland with an MA in English studies. After completing higher education D worked as an English teacher for a while in her home town. Later she was appointed as a PR specialist and PA to the president of a company in a large city in Poland. She came to the United Kingdom in 2008 and, three months after her arrival, found a job as a secretary in a hi-tech company. Whilst in Poland D lived in rented accommodation on her own, in the UK she lives in a flat-share. Initially D has a Slovak boyfriend. In the

third year she has split up with her boyfriend and has moved to another shared flat.

D came to the United Kingdom because of a lack of satisfaction with her job in Poland as well as low promotion opportunities. The position did not provide her with a sufficient salary to buy her own property. Despite her degree in English studies she kept forgetting vocabulary and, therefore, to maintain her level of English, coming to the United Kingdom seemed to be a reasonable choice. D was also motivated by the vision of travelling and learning new things as well as enjoying the relaxed atmosphere among British people. At the beginning D thought that she would stay for at least a few months.

D says she appreciates the British mentality as in her view British people are more relaxed when it comes to solving a problem and she would like to learn this strategy. Nevertheless, between the first and the second interview, she has made up her mind that British people tend to be two-faced more often than Polish! By the third interview she amends this saying that nationalities other than English are very open and that the English do not form strong relationships and are reserved rather than two-faced. She feels that in Poland people would tell you directly if they did not like something and that British people will not do this – she says she is aware that they will make any criticism about you behind your back. The English way of life feels artificial to her like people have to behave all the time. Having visited Italy for the first time she found the atmosphere much more like Poland and this was "so refreshing and fantastic". She does prefer English politeness in public however, rather than frowning at each other!

Her interest in keeping up-to-date with developments in Poland has decreased since she arrived in the UK and this was confirmed at the time of the second and third interviews. She does not follow politics in either her home country or in the United Kingdom although she is aware of major events such as the death of the President in Poland. In the third interview she confirmed she had voted in elections in Poland, but not in local elections in England because she is not interested. She notes that EU citizenship gives her preferential treatment in the UK compared to a non-EU migrant and feels secure in this matter, although is concerned that it is unfair to other nationalities. Overall, however, EU citizenship is viewed as an opportunity: 'it invites me to learn new languages and go somewhere else in Europe'.

The biggest fear since she emigrated concerns the level of health care in the United Kingdom. At the second interview she gave the example of a problem with her wisdom tooth. She felt the help she was offered from a dentist and in the hospital was 'completely useless' – although in the third interview she sees the availability of healthcare as a positive. At year 3, she has not been affected by the economic downturn and does not foresee any impact on her from cuts in public spending. Her rate of pay has increased each year that she has been in her job. She has little need for support from Government agencies but has been in touch with the Citizens Advice Bureau on her brother's behalf and seems confident she could get help and advice if she needed it. As a Catholic and, at one point, being in a non-formalised



partnership D felt she could not practise her religion fully. Although once the relationship ended she attended church more regularly. The decision whether or not to go to Poland for Christmas was difficult. In her view spending Christmas in the UK would be superficial. On the other hand, between the first and second interview, D now perceives Polish society as more claustrophobic. This perceived change in Polish society makes her seriously consider the option of remaining in the UK for longer. The major goal for D is to settle down and save some of her salary in order to travel and potentially move out of the flat-share and live by herself. In the long term she would like to have a family. These plans have not changed across the interviews.

D describes herself as an extrovert who is organised, but also spontaneous. Her sense of belonging is expressed as a European with a Polish upbringing. By the third interview she has been giving more thought to her family background and feels she has a better understanding of being specifically Silesian. Overall, her experience in the UK is good – she really appreciates the simple things like having coffee with friends. However, she feels that Poland is very much underestimated by western Europeans especially in areas such as the education system.

D has a wide range of friends all over the world as well as lots of friends in the place where she lives. When D came to the UK her brother was already settled here and he shared his social network with her. Therefore during the first interview she did not feel alone or isolated. Her brother is a key relationship for her, but although he considered moving back to Poland himself in the third year she did not consider the possibility of leaving too. During the second interview she spoke about becoming involved in more activities e.g. singing in a choir. In addition to this, D has enriched her education by starting an Italian class and an interior design course at a local college which she is continuing in her third year. She has bought a car and exchanged her Polish driving licence for an English one. This experience made her feel particularly proud as she is able to prove her English address. Furthermore, her English language development has made her feel more confident and comfortable. She has not made friends with English people outside work, her friendships have been formed with people of different nationalities and maintained in Poland via social networking sites. However, at the second interview, D did not have a definite view on her LOS in the UK. By the third interview D has no intention to move from the UK; she intends to stay whilst she is settled and has a good job, but has no long term plans and still considers herself a 'searcher'.

## 4.4.5 Case study E

### Cambridgeshire; cohort 1; (Stuck) Strategist?

E is a 33-year old Hungarian male migrant who has been living in the UK for the past five years. He graduated with a Master's degree in French and German literature in Hungary. In his home country E was an editor, translator and proof reader. Before he came to the UK for the first time in 2005, E was working as a French teacher in Germany and, before that, as a German teacher in France. He initially moved to Scotland where he was working as a family support worker. Soon after he relocated to a Cambridgeshire city and worked in a voluntary capacity for a homelessness charity. He spent some time away from

the UK before returning again in 2006. He had felt misled by Hungarian recruitment agencies that had assured him of a high demand for German and French teachers in the UK as, without an English background, employment as a language tutor was almost impossible to obtain. After a variety of jobs E got a job as a sales coordinator. By the third interview he has a new job in telemarketing.

Unfortunately, at the time of the second interview, he had split up from his Slovakian girlfriend. As a consequence, he has moved into alternative (and unsatisfactory) accommodation (an HMO). More positively, E has completed an Economics diploma course and is in the process of completing another course in the field of business (BA) with the Open University. He is also very positive about having taken up the guitar. At the third interview, E was in a flat share, working in a new job in telemarketing and looking forward to the completion of his economics degree in 2011, and a possible relocation to another European country once transitional restrictions applied to the 2004 accession states have ended.

E came to the UK for four key reasons: to finance his mother's medical treatment; to distribute business products; to learn a language, and to settle with his girlfriend. At the first interview E said that he was predominantly interested in a career in the publishing business and was mainly driven by money due to his mother's serious illness. Nevertheless, he expressed the possibility that his particular set of priorities might change in the future. At the second interview, E reported that his mother's health condition would necessitate the sale of his flat in Hungary to pay for medical care, by the third interview the flat has still not been sold. The four reasons he cited at the first interview are now no longer sufficiently strong enough to compel him to stay for a longer period of time in the UK. However, the poor labour market in Hungary means he has little alternative but to stay in the UK. The new job at the third interview comes with the possibility of being transferred to Germany although this is not going to happen in the near future.

At the time of all three interviews E strongly identified as Hungarian. Despite the fact that E joined the local choir and one of the societies at the local university when he first arrived, he did not feel in any way part of the community. E missed his friends from Hungary, France and Germany. Moreover, he was quite sceptical about friendships with British people which he regarded as little more than superficial 'friendships'. His sense of isolation from the local community and wariness of British people noted in the first interview is also a feature of the second interview, perhaps more so, as one year on E has felt even less sociable due to his full time work and his on-line education programme. By the third interview E is clear that he will "never fit in this environment" because of the English mentality, although he is socialising more. He has frequent, regular contact with friends and family in Hungary, France and Germany using phone, email and social networking. He returns home to Hungary twice a year at Christmas and Easter. Although he gets along with his work colleagues he does not consider them to be friends. He feels there is a strong divide between Western and Eastern Europeans and that they have very different mentalities.



E has never felt he is in a position to influence the political and employment situation in either Hungary or in the United Kingdom. Yet E is familiar with politics and knows most of the high profile politicians in his home country and in the United Kingdom. E keeps abreast of current affairs. Despite this, he did not vote in the EU or local elections. By the third interview he had voted in Hungarian elections and tried to vote in local English elections although he is put off by a lack of information which results in having to queue for too long. E is critical of the British system of education and of parenting and assistance to parents in the UK. His personal experience of the education system is mixed, he says it is very dependent on the quality of the tutor. He is also critical of the quality of journalism here. By the third interview he has started to watch Hungarian news and is positive about the changes in the political situation there.

He has no experience of initiatives or services that impact on his life. E's main positive experience over the last two years has been the assistance he received from the police when burgled. This experience, however, has not changed his decision on LOS. His biggest worry at the first two interviews was the fall in value of the pound and the impact this would have on the remittances he could send home. With the improvement in his salary in the third year he is able to send home more money and this may be less of a concern, although he has noticed price increases in both Hungary and the UK.

The second year was a bad year for E who, nonetheless, says he copes well with problems and obstacles having experienced a number of stressful situations in his childhood. Primarily motivated to come to the UK for economic reasons, E's rationale for remaining in the UK is weakening. His motivation for staying in the UK remained financial throughout the study. However, home country pressures also ensure that a return home would not be economically viable. He is optimistic with the new political situation in Hungary that this will change. He is perhaps best characterised as a 'stuck strategist'.

## 4.4.6 Case study F

### Hertfordshire; cohort 3; Searcher/Stayer?

F is a single man who is almost 30 years old. He comes from Poland and has been living in the United Kingdom for two years working as a flight attendant. He graduated in economy and pedagogy. Immediately after graduation, he was appointed as a teacher in a secondary school and changed jobs a year later, finally working as a probation officer before migrating to the UK.

His reasons for coming to the UK were diverse, although mainly driven by the need to improve his English and pay back a loan for a flat which he had bought just before leaving his home country. Working as either a teacher or probation officer did not supply a sufficient salary, and he was keen to establish his independence. F set no limit on his stay in the UK but did not envisage a long-term stay at the time of the first interview. However, his decision about LOS has changed over time and this is largely attributed to the poor economic situation and lack of well-paid jobs in Poland. His priorities have also changed in relation to developing his language skills and travelling abroad.

On the other hand, whilst these factors might encourage a longer period living and working in the UK, his position as a flight attendant is not secure. He recognises his English has improved and that his improved language skills would possibly help if he had to find new employment here. By year 3, he had registered with some job agencies but is not trying to find a new job in a more active way.

F has moved into new accommodation and now has a better social life with his new landlord/flatmate than he was experiencing at the time of the first interview. Living together with people from all over the world and enjoying the time spent with his work colleagues makes him feel more comfortable; he is not as homesick as he has been in the past. At the time of the first interview F admitted that a communication barrier was a problem for him; this was not the case at the second interview as F has travelled a lot and spent more time with British people. His improved language skills have helped to boost his confidence. By the third interview F says he feels more confident because England is no longer a "foreign country", but he also notes that he is still sometimes seen as a "bloody foreigner".

F has no particular interest in politics in either the United Kingdom or Poland. This attitude has not changed since he migrated, although he did vote in the Polish election necessitated by the plane crash because he felt it was part of his responsibility as a Polish person. He did not vote in local UK elections because he did not know what they were offering. On EU citizenship he notes, 'I'm very grateful for that, because thanks to that, my life has changes ... I don't even want to think what could've happened if I'd stayed in Poland ... but, in practice, I don't think it's that easy to work in other countries'.

Although not content with the lack of secure hours in his current employment and working below his skill level, F acknowledges that earning a good salary enables him to travel a lot and fully enjoy his life. He states he would not be able to do these things if he was still a teacher in Poland. F values his current employment more than at the time of the first interview, as it brings more financial freedom. Nevertheless, a persuasive factor for life in Poland is better healthcare and 'trustworthy' medical services – one of the reasons why he travels home so frequently. F does not use agencies in the UK which offer support because he says he does not have a need to.

Even though he believes himself to be fairly passive he has managed to broaden his network of friends in the United Kingdom. Improving his English language skills has contributed to this change and, in many ways, his life is becoming similar to the life he had in Poland. He has started to devote time to hobbies and socialise more. F has become more independent: he manages problems himself and does not speak to family or friends about his problems. He is, however, very appreciative of the assistance he receives from a British family in helping him develop his English language skills and the support he receives from his landlord who he sees more as a friend. One of F's medium term goals since he arrived is to attend an English language course but currently he is improving this by studying himself rather than enrolling on a formal course. He feels his relationships with friends in Poland are getting weaker. His

closest relationship is with his mother in Poland with whom he has regular contact and he visits Poland regularly for a few days at a time. He would also like to have his employment contract renewed when it expires this year. He has considered the possibility of being transferred to work in Poland for his current employer or a possible relocation to Germany to improve his German language; he has also considered purchasing a second property in Poland and setting up his own business.

Taking into consideration F's goals, his satisfaction living in the United Kingdom as well as plans in Poland, there is a sense that the 'intentional unpredictability' of the 'searcher' category may be shifting towards a stayer category. F does not have specific ideas about his LOS, but he does have a range of factors which might potentially determine his decision. These factors include his mother becoming seriously ill or a future relationship with a Polish woman. He does say that he intends to return to Poland but has no definite plans as to when; he is happy with the current situation particularly because of the improved financial position he is in.

## 4.4.7 Case study G

### Cambridgeshire; cohort 2; Hamster/Searcher to Stayer?

G is a 33-year old woman from Slovakia who has recently relocated from South Cambs to a small town in the Fens. In the third year G moved again to another – less isolated – Cambridgeshire town. She lives there with her husband and young son. She has no other family members around. G holds a Master's degree in Pedagogy from a Slovak university. She had worked as a teacher for a while in her home country and when this position ended she was appointed as a tutor in a school club. In Slovakia, G and her husband lived in their own flat whereas in the UK they are renting property. During the third year G returned to Slovakia for three months and sold their flat there. Her social network consists mainly of Slovak and Czech people and it has remained the same since arrival. At the time of the first two interviews G was looking after her small son and was not working, thus she had sporadic contact with British people and little chance to socialize with them. By the third interview she is about to start a part time cleaning job which will give her some contact.

G came to the UK because of the possibility of earning a good salary and to save for a house. The second reason for emigrating was to feel more independent from her parents as, in her husband's view, she was too dependent on their opinion. The initial plan was to stay in the UK for three years or so and then return to Slovakia. She now thinks they will stay longer as she wants her son to go to school in England and wishes to buy a house here. At the third interview she says they intend to stay for ten or fifteen years. She now has no concrete plans to return to Slovakia even though her parents in Slovakia are unhappy about this. G and her husband made the decision to leave Slovakia just after she had been made redundant.

When asked about people's patterns of migration she classed herself as somebody open to the prospect of building a life for herself and her family here, yet also noted that she had not considered staying in the UK for the rest of her life. The reasons for extending her stay are complex and relate to the development of new circumstances. After living in the United Kingdom for a while G and her husband are more aware of better job opportunities with secure salaries. By the third interview G is planning to retrain as a gym instructor, although her priority is to have another child first. Not only this, there are educational opportunities for their son and a chance for him to learn English as a native speaker.

Her perception of political life in her home country has deteriorated since she arrived in the UK. At the time of the first interview she did not think this would have an impact on her decision on LOS. At the second interview, the perception of political life in her home country has become an influential factor, discouraging G to go back to Slovakia. At the third interview she has voted in the Slovakian elections and whilst she still sees the economic situation in Slovakia as difficult she is optimistic that the change in government will bring improvement.

The positive attitude and nice manners of British people (e.g. smiling to strangers) were mentioned as positive factors at the first interview. In the second interview the family have moved to a town where the locals appear to be far less friendly but she is happier in the place where the family lives by the third interview. Settling down and having a 'nice' family life as well as buying a house in the UK are definite medium term goals for G, but she has not set a deadline to achieve these. She would also like to find a job which matches her interests and skills. Indeed, she is 'ready to fight for a career and not just a job', an attitude that has grown since coming to the UK.

At the time of arrival, a major problem for G was the language barrier and having to adjust to driving on the left side of the road. The former was still described as a bit of an obstacle during the second interview. However, the longer she has been here the better she has adapted to life in the UK. She likes the fact that the UK is a more liberal and tolerant society; this is a strong pull factor, especially in relation to the education of her son who is attending nursery. After the move to the town in Cambridgeshire G started taking her son to a children's centre and is mixing with people of numerous nationalities. At the time of the second interview, G was less happy about people in her town, describing them as less friendly as people from the previous place. At the third interview, a move had improved her situation and she is mixing with other parents at the clubs at the Children's centre.

She described her first work place in the UK as a good place to work; however, she has experienced prejudicial attitudes on the care home wards. She has never had a chance to work with British people as at her work place the other employees were mainly from the Philippines. During the second year, she has become familiar with health services and legal advice institutions e.g. the Citizens Advice Bureau. She has not had good experiences with the former but in her view the latter seems to be well organised.

G described herself as a very adaptable person. This perception has remained the same at the time of all three interviews. Although G described herself as an European citizen she does not believe that she could influence any policy in a wider context. She considers herself half European half Slovakian and feels as a result of EU citizenship she 'can have a wider view because if I would stay in Slovakia for the whole of my life I wouldn't know about anything else, about better things'. Living in the United Kingdom has helped her to think more broadly and her European sense of belonging has strengthened during her stay in the UK.

She does think the family have been affected adversely by the economic downturn because this has made it harder for her husband to find a job. Between the first and second interview G and her family decided to stay in the United Kingdom for longer. Their son was born here and G and her husband will be sending him to an English nursery and settling down for a while. During the second and third interviews, G expressed a desire to enlarge their family. Given this and the wish to see more of the UK and socialize with British people, G is perhaps best categorized as a 'stayer'. The decision about LOS is being discussed with Slovak and Czech friends living in the United Kingdom and family in Slovakia. G would like to improve her English and would like her husband to find job. In the end, their final decision will depend on a complex set of circumstances.

## 4.4.8 Case study H

### Bedfordshire/Yorkshire; cohort 2; Searcher to Stayer

H is a married (recently separated) woman and almost 40 years old. She comes from Poland and is a Catholic. Up to the third interview, her personal situation had remained the same during her five years stay in the United Kingdom, except for practicing her faith more frequently in the English Catholic church. There have been changes in her working life between the first and the second interview and she had been promoted twice during the course of one year. In year 3 of the study she has separated from her husband and has moved to be nearer to her workplace. The latest promotion brings more responsibilities and a higher salary. Moreover, the type of work she is responsible for at the moment suits her meticulous attitude to work. Since the last interview, H has also become involved in voluntary work and, as a consequence, she is now half way through an accountancy course.

The reason for leaving her home country was due to her financial circumstances and no possibility of getting a mortgage to build a house. She speaks perfect English (H and her husband were both working as English teachers) and was very excited to come to the United Kingdom. H was familiar with the culture and aware of the possible differences between her home country and the United Kingdom. The initial LOS was going to be five years; however, H and her husband decided to stay longer as they enjoyed their life here very much. H's intention is to eventually return to their home country as she has promised her parents that she will look after them in old age. This condition has remained the same over time, although H is applying for British citizenship. Between the first and the second interview H has become more involved in political life in the United Kingdom.

In the last year she has become politically active in one of the leading British political parties. She is also considering standing as a local councillor. For H, the quality of living and the open-minded mentality of the British society, confirms her expectations. She says she has no time to be involved in what is going on in Poland and did not vote in the Polish presidential elections because she does not see her future involved with Poland at all. At the time of the second interview H said that she was actually 'terrified' of going back to her home country because of the widespread aggression and lack of tolerance among Poles. Moreover, she sees a potential for career advancement in the UK which is lacking in Poland.

According to H, her plan for the near future is to continue with what she is doing without making any radical changes. The goals have not changed much since she and her husband came to the United Kingdom. The priority was to have good salaries in order to build a house in Poland. H now has a greater interest in developing her hobbies; she invests in learning new languages and going abroad for courses. H has had a very good experience as a migrant. She believes that speaking English very well and understanding the British culture has helped in her integration. This perception was indistinguishable between interviews. She has not found it too difficult to make friends at work. H described the United Kingdom as her home and feeling British more than anything else. Considering employment, education as well as health, H is very satisfied with life in the UK.

Her social network has not changed much during the three interviews as she does not have much spare time for socialising although she says her interaction with British people has increased after separating from her husband. She is very occupied professionally and this has increased her ties with British people. H keeps in touch with a few reliable friends who are mainly in the United Kingdom. Her contact with friends in Poland is loosening. The specific town where she lives has never been that important to H; more valuable is the opportunity for making changes and influencing the environment. This is what H felt was missing in her home country and what she is happy to have found in the United Kingdom. H made an attempt to look for a new job last year because it became mundane and intellectually boring. However, she was persuaded to stay at the same work place and this decision to stay was strengthened by her promotion. Since the last interview H has noticed the impact of the recession at her workplace and also generally from people's stories. However, she does not feel affected by this as her career is steady in the company. By the third interview H is again considering changing jobs and anticipates doing so within the next six months, although she says her employer has suggested that he has development plans in which she would be involved.

The decision about the LOS is only linked to her parents' health. The initial planned five year stay in the United Kingdom has been extended and there is now no scheduled date of return. The promise given to her parents is the only condition preventing her from staying in the UK for the rest of her life. At the third interview she says there is no pressure from them to return to Poland yet and that in reality it would be "more convenient if they [parents] moved here".

## 4.4.9 Case study I

### Cambridge; cohort 2; Stayer/Searcher

For Case Study I, leaving Lithuania and moving to the UK has been intertwined with the process of growing up, leaving her parents' home and gaining her independence. She describes herself as an optimistic, spontaneous, but organised person, who is very clearly an 'active shaper'. I arrived in the UK in September 2007, having left Lithuania on graduating from high school. At the time of the first interview she was 20 years old and working as a cashier at Cambridge Leisure, doing a drama degree and living in a shared house with other students.

I had always known, since she was a child, that she would leave Lithuania. She wanted to move to the US or the UK because they offered the most opportunities for becoming an actress, which is her aspiration. She decided to come to the UK because it would have been difficult to get a visa to the US. She came over with a friend from Lithuania, applied for her degree course, and found her part-time job within a month. Her mother had warned her that the move would be difficult but she didn't find this to be the case. Changes in her life over the three years of the study include moving out of her original shared house into a smaller flat with friends, finishing her drama degree, and moving jobs to a waitressing job as well as working backstage at a local theatre.

Over the three years, both her English and her confidence have improved. By the third interview, at age 22, she says she believes more in herself than when she first arrived. This is clearly partly to do with her succeeding in building a life for herself in the UK, and also linked to the improvements in her English. When she arrived, she found that her English was not as good as she had thought it was; for example, she could not manage to take phone calls in English at first. Her improvement has mostly been through day to day life; although she had to take a compulsory semester of English classes as part of her degree, she did not find these very useful. 'She says her accent' will make it difficult for her to get acting work but to overcome this she wants to work in physical theatre.

Factors influencing I's LOS in the UK include reasons for not going back to Lithuania as well as reasons for staying in the UK. She is adamant that she will not return to Lithuania to live. She describes how in Lithuania, 'you just exist, you're working just to pay the bills... you don't have the passion'. By contrast, in the UK, 'if you want [something] and you are not lazy, you can get it'. She is aware of the 'frozen' economic situation in Lithuania from visits home and talking to her parents and best friend there. As a student in Lithuania, it would be impossible for her to get a part time job and she would have to live with her parents, thus losing the independence she loves. Even after she has graduated, she is certain she does not want to go back. 'If my parents moved to England, to me Lithuania would be like one of the apartments I used to live in before'.

Her resolution not to go back is made easier by the communication technologies that she uses to keep in touch. She uses email, phone, texts and Skype, speaking to her parents once or twice a week.

The factors that are pushing her away from Lithuania do not necessarily mean she will stay in the UK. While there are many things she likes about the UK, by the third interview when she has graduated from her drama degree, she had decided to stay in the UK only if she finds work she likes within the next year: 'if I don't find in England [the] things I was looking for, I might look in Australia'. She has met people from all around the world while living in Cambridge, and wants to travel. However, she would clearly be happy to stay in the UK if she finds a job here. While she thinks that she pays a lot of tax in the UK, having two part-time jobs, she is happy to do so. 'You are paying those monies for being safe' and this is a security that she would notice the lack of in Lithuania. However, she does not follow politics much in Lithuania or the UK, and has not voted in any elections over the period of the interviews.

I's sense of identity did not change much during the period of the study. She describes herself as mixed Lithuanian but also European, but never as British. She describes herself in both the second and third interviews as category four, a 'stayer', despite talking in each interview about moving to the US or Australia. She has got used to her friends moving away often so she does not place any value on relationships as influencing where she wants to live.

I's plans for the future involve either working as an actress, or setting up her own design business, an idea which she talked about throughout the three interviews. She has been doing design work as a hobby throughout her degree and has done unpaid work as a designer for a theatre production. Her plan for the next five years therefore involves her 'own business, independent, travelling. No marriage, no children'. By the third interview she is talking less about her ideas for a business, but is even keener to travel, and her five year plan is settling down with a mortgage in either the UK or Australia.

## 4.4.10 Conclusion

Section 4 has examined data from eleven stakeholder interviews, thirty migrant worker interviews (a third and final interview of a series of three conducted over a three year period) with eight case studies, and eleven Polish blogs.

Stakeholder interviewees reviewing the second report prior to data collection in the third year endorsed our findings and, in addition, made a number of recommendations based on their own knowledge base and experience as well as the report's findings. Although noting significant improvements over the year, a number of areas were still seen as requiring more research and development.

Data from the Polish language blogs gave us relatively unmediated insights into push and pull factors at micro, meso and macro levels and which corresponded to interview data in large measure.

At year 3, interview data strongly suggested a maturing of 'transnational normalisation' processes and a firming up of decisions on LOS – for those that have stayed the course of the study. This includes adaptation to barriers and the overcoming of barriers, and fully utilizing perceived opportunities. The eight case studies give a flavour of the 'distance travelled' over the 3 years of the study and of the continuities and change in people's lives.

Inevitably, there has been limited information on participants who have left the study, especially, for survey participants who did not continue their involvement after year 1 (and who may well therefore correspond to Eade *et al*'s Hamster category). Interviewees who discontinued involvement with the study had,

- a) relocated, either elsewhere in the UK or to third countries, or returned to COO,
- b) decided they 'just wanted to get on with life' and,
- c) did not communicate a reason for withdrawal.

Nevertheless, it has been possible to discern potential reasons from interviews already conducted in the year/s prior to withdrawal; these include homesickness, personal relationships, travel aspirations, dissatisfaction with pay levels and/or career development, opportunities opening up elsewhere, unhappiness in the work or social environment, or with working conditions.

The next section provides an additional component to interviewees' reflections with an examination of the policy context from 2004 covering local, regional, national and European policy which directly and indirectly impacts the lives of the study's participants in the East of England.





# 5 Public policy context

Over the three year period of the study, public policy at European, national (in sending and receiving countries) and regional levels has inevitably impacted on A8 and A2 migrants' living and working in the East of England. Whilst not always recognised or acknowledged in interviews, it is clear that currents of policy activity within, across and between multiple policy locales opens up opportunities but also introduces constraints, and can act as a stabilising factor as well as a stabilising factor in people's lives. Furthermore, over the last three years it has become increasingly clear that this is the case not only for European migrants themselves but also for 'European migration stakeholders'! However, as the case studies in Section 4.4 illustrate, this does not add up to an assertion that public policy, alongside other structural factors such as economic conditions, wholly determines people's lives. Although decision-making may, to varying degrees, be framed by such 'public' factors, personal factors are also very important, and individuals are also shown to exert an 'organised agency' (Clegg, 1989) – again, to varying degrees – which, within the bounds of their own knowledge base and experience, seeks to maximise opportunities and reframe constraints. With this in mind, the following is a (partial) summary of the policy environment from 2004 to the study's end focused upon evidenced impacts on the study's participants.

Accession to the European Union<sup>1</sup> and acquisition of the freedoms of European citizenship is an obvious key determinant in the opportunities created for citizens of Poland, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic in 2004, and Romania and Bulgaria in 2007, to live and work in other member states. Interviewees talked of satisfying childhood ambitions to live and work in the UK, having the freedom – at last – to move away from post-Communist home countries to live and work elsewhere, being able to escape the limitations imposed by their home country culture/weak economies/divisive politics/personal relationships, etc, capitalising more fully on their educational achievements and English language skills, and being able to have a 'normal' life. At the same time, interviewees were also aware that their EU citizenship was not of the same order as that of citizens from other member states. Transitional arrangements granted to the 'old' member states (of a maximum of seven years in duration) constrained the full expression of their citizenship with the UK only one of three countries in 2004 applying relatively light-touch conditions: in the UK, the Workers' Registration Scheme<sup>2</sup>. In 2007, the UK imposed rather more stringent conditions<sup>3</sup> on European migrants from Romania and Bulgaria who found their EU citizenship somewhat more circumscribed than that of A8 migrants. The furore over the higher than expected numbers who entered the UK to live and work in 2004 (and which included contestation over the statistical weaknesses in accurately recording arrivals and departures – see report 2) was a significant factor in the adjusted transitional arrangements for A2 migrants. Our three interviewees from Romania and Bulgaria were conscious of and commented on the additional limitation to

their status as EU citizens. Nevertheless, across all three cohorts of interviewees, EU citizenship was viewed very positively and the opportunities EU membership had created were the dominant 'policy' feature in interviews.

At a national level, whilst home country push and pull factors were explored with interviewees including reflections on policy (particularly the Polish government's campaign to draw workers back to Poland, and the hardship caused in a number of countries by reductions in pay and pensions in response to extreme economic conditions), the conduct of our study accords greater priority to UK national/regional/local policy, which may be either directly or indirectly concerned with A8/A2 migrants living and working in the Eastern region. For example, the establishment of the Migrant Impacts Fund and the funding of specialised services at a local level as well as access to general benefits and services (with evidence of twelve months employment, NI and tax contributions). Whether indirect or direct policy initiatives, our study demonstrates a high level of ignorance about policy activity and related outcomes for A8/A2 migrants, improving only slightly with the passage of time and changes in circumstances, such as pregnancy. There were mixed reasons for this. The majority of interviewees were initially completely unaware that they could legitimately access services and benefits – i.e. they are not benefit tourists as has so often been claimed in debates – and knowledge of such entitlements was variously met with surprise and a sense of appreciation that UK citizens have the benefit of a system that provides real security, but also with indignation by some interviewees whose sense of self-reliance and independence was at odds with such 'cossetting'. The majority of interviewees did not have pre-arrival knowledge of opportunities to study with access to university education as EU citizens on a par with British citizens; this was also a revelation and subsequently taken up by a small number of younger participants. By year 3 of the study, there was increased knowledge of benefits and services operating at a general and national level with some positive impacts on people's lives in evidence: working tax credits and child benefits were chiefly referred to by interviewees, workplace rights relating to maternity leave (another revelation), nursery provision and education of children and opportunities for further study and training at HE level were mentioned too. The majority of participants, however, were low users of state services or benefits: they worked full time, did not have dependents, lived in private homes or privately rented accommodation and many often returned home for medical or dental treatment. Nevertheless, the general framework of security created by the existence of welfare, education, law and order, government administration and healthcare services was noted again and again in interviews: 'I feel safe here'.

Perhaps unsurprisingly – given the xenophobic note of many debates on migration, the complexity of the policy making environment in this area, most participants distancing themselves from the 'migrant worker' label and generally 'just wanting to get on with life' – specific interest in intra-European migration policy was very patchy. The 2010 election prompted some comments around fears that the possibility of future British

1 Accession Treaties, 2003 and 2005; Free Movement of Persons Directive (2004/38/EC).

2 Accession (Immigration and Worker Registration) Regulations 2004 – restrictions apply to 30.4.11.

3 A2 Worker Authorization Scheme – restrictions apply to 31.12.11, but could be extended.

citizenship<sup>4</sup> would be denied or that a new government would simply send people home; beyond that, and even in cases where interviewees were users of local organisations for migrants, knowledge and interest was low.

Prior to and over the period of the study, policy activity and its governance in relation to new migrants and communities in the Eastern region has been serious and sustained with a number of 'migration champions' working within a complex of networked agencies at regional and local levels. Under New Labour, key departments were the Department for Communities and Local Government (and Migration Directorate) and the Home Office (and Migration Advisory Committee) and its UK Borders Agency. From the DCLG: a Migrant Impact Forum examining the impact of migration on communities and services and, rolled out in 2009/10, the Migration Impact Fund to help localities manage the transitional impacts of new migration. These initiatives were linked to the department's commitment to community cohesion (PSA21 with an aim to maximise migrants' economic contribution and to manage the social impacts of migration in communities). Strategic Migration Partnerships (SMP), 'tiered regional networks', established in 2000, were expanded to include new EU migrant workers in 2007, funded by UKBA, channelled down to legal entities for SMP activity via government offices. In the Eastern region the SMP – linked up to Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and Local Strategic Partnership strategies, and Multi-Agency Forums at local and regional levels (for example, the Migrant Workers Forum in Cambridgeshire) – has been particularly active, headed up by a Migrant Worker Steering Group hosted by EEDA and, latterly, the East of England Local Government Association<sup>5</sup>.

Since 2004 the Eastern region's multi-agency network of 'migration stakeholders' have helped establish a number of initiatives supporting new communities, funded through various means including Migration Impact Funding. Covering community development, community engagement and policing, education, training and skills, homelessness and housing, information advice and guidance, initiatives included myth-busting packs, the appointment of community liaison and diversity officers, welcome packs, the advice hub MyUK.com and a range of services through organisations like Mobile Europeans Take Action (META) at Keystone Development Trust, Norfolk and Suffolk; Community Action Dacorum in Hertfordshire; the Rosmini Centre in Wisbech and New Link in Peterborough, Cambridgeshire; and, the grassroots Polish British Integration Centre in Bedfordshire<sup>6</sup>.

Whilst our participants have been largely unaware of the activity behind such initiatives, three interviewees have actually found employment in support work for other migrant workers linked to or funded by SMP activity. Other interviewees have also been aware of specific services (funded through the strategic migration partnership) regardless of whether they were a service user or not and, indeed, one or two interviewees had used the services of organisations which were set up specifically for migrant workers – but had not recognised that this was the case (for example, META in Thetford was consulted frequently by one interviewee who also claimed to be unaware of specific services for migrants!). Interviewees were mixed in their views as to how important such services were to them; some disclaiming the need for any support whatsoever, others drawing on discrete and specialised support, some fairly heavily reliant, and others on more generic support, such as the Citizens Advice Bureaux. Regardless of individual take-up, there was appreciation shown for leaflets published in home languages and the availability of interpreters or multi-lingual staff in surgeries as well as for language classes held in local areas. Those with weaker language skills and with more recent arrival dates were those most likely to draw on informal and some specialised formal support (for example, language classes and multi-lingual advisory groups). Interviews also suggested that, to some extent, later arrivals simply were not aware of the limited support available to the earlier arrivals and experience the support currently available as the 'norm' in the UK. Despite the variation in levels of awareness and use of formal service provision, interview data from across the three years of the study suggest that the existence of services and initiatives for migrant workers contribute to the sense of security and safety interviewees discuss in relation to the advantages of life in the UK.

A change in government in 2010 meant the realisation of the promised dismantling of regional networks (and threatens the dispersal of expertise developed through the network in the Eastern region): regional development agencies and government offices will finally close their doors in March 2012<sup>7</sup>. Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) are in development. These smaller sub-regional initiatives will assume some of the responsibilities of the RDAs. LEPS have no obvious remit for migrant workers, and no remit for the management of EU funding; this function will be assumed by the DCLG<sup>8</sup>. A change in government has also seen the reduction and cancellation of the Migration Impact Fund, and funding for the range of organisations that help alleviate pressures on local communities and provide support to new communities is becoming increasingly difficult to access.

4 A8 nationals and their families can be eligible for permanent residence once they have exercised their treaty rights for five years (post May 2004); Immigration (EEA) Regulations, 2006 (treaty rights to residence on a conditional basis).

5 See the East of England LGA (n.d) Strategic Migration Partnership (Migrant Worker Steering Group) Business Plan, 2010–2011 and associated documents, EELGA website.

6 See GO-East and EELGA (2010) East of England Migration Impacts Fund Report, 2009–2010 for more information.

7 Government Offices established, 1994 (announced 2010 to be abolished March 2012); Local Government Association established 1997; Regional Development Agencies Act, 1998 (announced 2010 to be abolished March 2012); Regional Assembly (Preparations) Act, 2003 (abolished in 2010; in the Eastern region the EELGA assumes EERA's role); Local Area Agreements, 2004; Local Strategic Partnerships (accelerated 2006, Local Government White Paper – non-statutory partnerships 'joining up' public services); Migration Impact Fund, 2008 (scrapped August 2010); Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to replace RDAs from April 2012 with some functions transferred to DCLG (and with a regional Growth Fund 1.4 billion running over three years).

8 BIS (28.10.10) Local Growth: realising every place's potential, CM7961.

As yet, this may not be appreciated by existing and new service users; however, with rising numbers of ill-equipped migrants escaping the Baltic States' stricken economies to rural locations in the Eastern region, it is only a matter of time before funding shortfalls become apparent as support services are pared back or cancelled altogether.

In May 2011, the seven year period of transitional arrangements for the 2004 Accession States comes to a close and – presumably – A8 citizens will hold the same rights as established EU/ EEA citizens<sup>9</sup>. There is also a possibility that in December 2011 arrangements in place for A2 citizens may also cease – or be extended. For interviewees, this represents a welcome shift, completing the 'normalisation' of their migration experiences and reducing the civic stratification in operation perceived as unfair and unjust by many.

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<sup>9</sup> Change made to the UK Borders Agency Workers' Registration Scheme page on the 6th of October, 2010 confirming that in line with European law the WRS will no longer be applicable from the end of April, 2011 – [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk/eea/wrs/](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk/eea/wrs/)



# 6 Conclusion

## 6.1 Key findings across mixed and multiple methods

All methods of data collection highlighted that the majority of participants are not returning home or moving into third countries in the short term. The majority intended to stay medium or longer term depending on a complex bundle of factors relating to the personal and interpersonal level and wider social, economic and political developments in the UK and COO.

The main findings of year 3 relating to reasons for a **longer stay** in the UK and confirmed by all methods of data collection were the following:

- The negative perception (and experiences) of the employment situation in COO relating to lack of employment, low wage levels, discrimination in employment (with regard to gender, age, ethnicity etc.)
- The relative positive perception and experiences (when compared to COO) regarding employment in the UK relating to job opportunities, higher wage levels than COO, lower levels of discrimination when compared to COO
- Positive views regarding social factors in the UK such as liking the area of residence, 'feeling settled', 'feeling of security', relative having good quality of life, good social contacts and overall notions of tolerance and diversity within society
- Relative negative perceptions of social and political situations in COO; relating especially to intolerance and discrimination of minority groups and certain levels of corruption and bribery
- Transnationalism and its effects on understanding migrants' perceptions relating to the UK, COO (and third countries) adding a strong relative notion to participants' experiences and perceptions
- Aspirations; relating to the advancement of careers, education and/or business plans within the UK
- Reflection of skills in employment
- Having children, being in a relatively established relationship with a partner, married and/or having (extended) family members living in the UK; being older
- Independent living (from close or extended family) in the UK
- A lack of a strong national identity combined with ideas of a European and/or global citizenship

The main findings of year 3 relating to (potential) reasons for a **shorter stay** in the UK and confirmed by all methods of data collection were the following:

- Non-reflection of skills in employment
- Lack of opportunities regarding career development, e.g. employment training and promotion
- Missing home
- (Potential) care for parents in COO
- Negative representation of A8/A2 migrants in the British media
- Younger age and having no children

The above shows that participants' experiences and perceptions in the UK were a mixture of a generally positive perception of the wider social and economic and political context combined with some concrete positive but also some negative experiences in the context of employment, housing and/or health, their social and personal lives. However, the determination, self reliance and aspirations of participants meant that the negative experiences in the UK did generally not lead to the decision to leave the UK (to return to COO or to move to third countries). Transnationalism played an important part in dealing with negative experiences in the UK, especially with regard to employment (e.g. 'it's still better than in my home country'). A certain amount of acceptance and expectations that as a migrant one might have some negative experiences (especially in the post-arrival phase) were also mentioned by participants; although this 'coping strategy' was (fortunately) in most cases not applied to cases of discrimination and a clear distinction was made between discrimination and other negative experiences (e.g. the non-fulfilment of goals or expectations).

## 6.2 Longitudinal aspect – comparing findings from year 1, 2 and 3

This section will outline the longitudinal aspects of the survey and the interviews with A8/A2 migrants highlighting that there have been some significant changes over the three years with regard to some factors (e.g. the progression in educational qualifications and further professional training) while other factors such as the strong impact of the social situation on decisions regarding length of stay remained similar over the 3 years. In this respect the longitudinal dimension of the study did not only help to identify change but it also confirmed and strengthened findings over the 3 years.

## Survey

The following trends are reflected in the findings from the overall samples of year 1 and year 2:

- Participants showed a positive perception of the social, economic and political situation in the UK especially when compared to the perception of their COO.
- Both years highlighted that social and personal factors are as important as economic factors for decisions on LOS:
  - Social factors such as 'liking the area', 'feeling settled' and 'having good social contacts' played an important role in participants' decision-making processes.
  - Both surveys highlighted the relevance of personal factors, and here especially those connected with the family, in the context of LOS; being married and having children related to a longer stay in the UK while family constraints in COO was a primary factor influencing a shorter stay in the UK.
  - Employment related factors were relevant in the context of LOS; especially 'reflection of skills in employment' was linked to LOS. The large majority of the samples of year 1 and year 2 were downgrading which potentially leads (in the longer term) to emigration from the UK due to participants' high career ambitions. In the short or medium term, they might compromise with regard to employment, especially if they are content with their personal and social situation.
  - Both surveys showed that the following objective factors were related to a longer stay: reflection of skills in employment; having children; being married or divorced and having a less strong identification with COO.

The following trends are reflected in the findings from the participants who responded to year 1 and year 2:

- In year 2 participants were more concrete regarding their LOS and less likely to show a let's see attitude.
- Although social factors remained important factors regarding decisions on LOS 'not finding employment in COO', 'non-reflection of skills in employment' and 'missing home country' gained in relevance in year 2.
- Year 2 showed a slight change regarding identity and belonging with more people in year 2 indicating a stronger national identity. This reflects the fluidity of identity and feelings of belonging, especially in the first years of migration. Respondents who did not feel very strongly about their national identity were more likely to stay long term or indefinitely in the UK.
- With regard to aspirations a larger number of participants had by year 2 changed their mind regarding setting up their own business in the UK or in their home country. They were less likely to do so than in year 1 which might be a reflection of the economic downturn in the UK and in their home country.

- Despite the economic downturn the positive perception of the economic situation in the UK (by nearly half of the respondents in year 1) increased slightly in year 2.

## Interviews with A8/A2 migrants

With regard to length of stay, interviewees in year three have reflected findings from the quantitative research in that for a large number of participants decisions regarding length of stay have become more concrete following the initial post-arrival phase; although, several participants continued to leave their options open with regard to staying in the UK, returning to their home country or moving into a third country.

During the three years of the study interviewees have changed their personal profiles considerably. Several have formed relationships, families and/or had children over the last three years.

With regard to occupations and progressions in the workplace, several participants had improved their positions considerably since the post-arrival phase, often by taking additional training and examinations to overcome barriers regarding recognition of qualifications and language proficiency. However, a large number of participants (who arrived fairly recently) remained in low or semi-skilled employment (although often having higher levels of skills and education). There was an indication that interviewees from earlier cohorts had been successful in obtaining permanent employment positions and/or had upgraded their positions; often due to high levels of 'active agency' and determination to overcome barriers.

Interviewees' 'active agency' is also reflected in the significant progress they have made with regard to further education and training. Over the three years of the study the majority of the participants had gained additional qualifications including a PhD, several master level qualifications, ordinary degrees, professional qualifications and A-levels. This reflects the high levels of ambition and aspirations of EU citizens from A8/A2 countries coming to the UK.

The determination of participants was also reflected by the setting and achievement of short, medium and long term goals. By year two short term goals which had been set in the previous year were achieved by most participants and again by year three a large number of interviewees had achieved the medium goals which they had set out in the first year of the study (e.g. moving to a better job, moving into better accommodation and/or having a family).

Throughout the study social factors remained especially influential on decisions regarding length of stay. These factors related to quality of life, positive perceptions of the areas people were living in and the wider social context in the UK which was perceived as being friendly and tolerant. Economic factors were also reflected on; however, the recession did not have a significant impact on participants' decision making mainly due to the fact that most participants were not (yet) affected by the recession, and factors relating to transnationalism (whereby the UK situation was perceived as relatively good in comparison to COO).



Throughout the 3 years participants showed high levels of resilience and developed concrete coping strategies to overcome barriers, bad and ugly experiences including discrimination in employment, unacceptable housing situations and other personal problems. The existence of good social networks in the UK and countries of origin were an important factor to counteract these negative experiences.

Transnationalism played an important role throughout the 3 years of the study and the study was able to follow how participants changed and developed their feelings of identity and belonging, and how especially the contact to family in COO reflected support and constraint in the 'migration project' of participants. Transnationalism was significant in forming perceptions of the UK and, as a consequence, the economic situation especially, but also the social situation in the UK, were perceived in a relatively positive way; whereby the economic, political and social situations in countries of origin were seen in a very negative way. In year three participants from some countries such as Poland and Hungary were slightly more optimistic regarding the economic situation in their COO, however especially highlighted the negative political situation and the intolerance and discrimination of minorities as factors which supported a longer stay in the UK.

## Blogs

A small selection of blogs which was followed through year 1 to year 3 highlights the multiple and complex factors influencing (changes regarding) LOS. It clearly shows how factors at the micro, meso and macro level impact on decision making; personal factors are entwined with issues regarding social networks and wider factors relating to the economy, politics and areas of social welfare which have been highlighted in the survey and the interviews.

## 6.3 Policy context

Over the three year period of the study, public policy at European, national (in sending and receiving countries) and regional levels has inevitably impacted on A8 and A2 migrants' living and working in the East of England. Accession to the European Union and acquisition of the freedoms of European citizenship is an obvious key determinant in the opportunities created for A8 and A2 citizens. At the same time, interviewees were also aware that their EU citizenship was not of the same order as that of citizens from other member states. Nevertheless, EU citizenship was viewed very positively and the opportunities EU membership had created were the dominant 'policy' feature in interviews.

Study participants were low users of state services and benefits and there was a relatively high level of ignorance of national and regional policy activity impacting on A8/A2 migrants. This improved slightly over the passage of time and with changes in circumstances. The general framework of security created by the existence of welfare, education, law and order, and government administration was a frequently noted aspect of interviews. The range of 'SMP' initiated local and regional services – covering community development, community engagement and policing,

education, training and skills, homelessness and housing, information advice and guidance<sup>1</sup> – also provided a sense of security, despite most interviewees being unaware of the policy activity behind such initiatives or, indeed, being service users themselves.

Stakeholders, embedded in a range of policy locales coalescing at the local and regional level, noted that over the course of the three years of the study 'things have significantly improved', although a number of areas were still seen as requiring further research and service development. Getting to the heart of push and pull factors in COO and the UK and migrants' motivations was viewed as an important aim, helping to develop understanding of the needs of specific groups, the development of appropriate services and to underscore where gaps in services still existed. Enhancing the civic participation of new migrants and, in the workplace, addressing the non-recognition of qualifications and enabling migrants to achieve their employment potential were recommendations made by the majority of stakeholder interviewees echoing our research findings.

Significantly, stakeholder interviewees had not witnessed a decline in numbers of A8 workers over the previous year; that people choosing to settle are often older (30+) and many of whom are having and bringing up children here; that numbers of migrants from the Baltic States are increasing; that language is still a core barrier; and, that the non-recognition of migrants' qualifications and skills is widespread constituting a 'brain-waste' of the individuals concerned and a wasted opportunity for the region.

A change in government in 2010 has meant the realisation of the promised dismantling of regional networks, funding cuts and the imminent dispersal of expertise developed through the SMP network in the Eastern region. With rising numbers of ill-equipped migrants escaping the Baltic States' stricken economies to rural locations in the Eastern region, funding shortfalls will quickly become apparent to new and established communities as support services are pared back or cancelled altogether. May, 2011 sees the termination of transitional arrangements for 2004 Accession States and, thereafter, A8 citizens will hold the same rights as established EU/EEA citizens. December 2011 may also see the cessation of restrictions for A2 citizens. Whilst this will be a welcome improvement in the civic status of A8 and A2 citizens, in the context of persistent issues – such as, on the one hand, the inability to effectively utilize migrants' skills and, on the other, the continuing requirements of new migrants – and the financial and political constraints building in the UK, it is questionable as to what extent, in the regional or UK context, individual lives might be enriched by this advance alone.

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1 (Government Office East and EELGA (SMP), 2010).

## 6.4 Recommendations

Based on our findings over a three year period of study and in line with the East of England LGA Strategic Migration Partnership Business Plan, 2010 – 2011; specifically, strategic objective 4 (to work with local delivery partners to design and deliver services for migrants that meet local needs in the region), and strategic objective 6 (to promote community safety and cohesion through a multi-agency approach) we make the following recommendations:

- **Develop strategies to match skills levels with corresponding employment positions;** throughout the 3 year study, participants highlighted non-recognition of skill levels as a primary factor leading to a shorter stay in the UK. Matching skills levels with employment positions would not only satisfy the generally high to very high aspirations of European citizens from A8/A2 countries but also benefit the regional economy by filling and expanding higher skilled employment positions, enhancing the knowledge economy and increasing international competition.
- **Establish and foster economic networks with COO;** several participants were considering opening up businesses in COO in the medium to long term and/or pursuing careers in COO. Anticipating an improvement of economic, political and social situations in COO in the medium term, the region could lead on developing a strategy which would enhance opportunities for business links between COO, the UK (and possibly third countries where A8/A2 migrants might relocate to).
- **Develop concrete strategies to counter an outflow of highly ambitious A8/A2 citizens from the UK caused by the significant increase of university fees;** the significant increase of university fees in the UK is very likely to lead to an increased outflow from the UK of A8/A2 migrants with high educational aspirations. Rather than returning to COO with sometimes problematic education situations (regarding fees and time of study) it is expected that the majority of migrants with high educational and career ambitions will move into third countries; for example, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden offer certain degrees in English and charge lower fees (than the UK) or have no fees.
- **Foster closer cultural ties with COO;** this could be in the form of town-twinning initiatives or other transnational ventures promoting cooperation and understanding between different EU regions. The shared history of membership of the Hanse League, for example, could support the improvement of intercultural competency of communities and migrants, from the Baltic States in particular, helping to cushion the rupture experienced by migrants between home and here. Using such measures to value and validate the transnational indexicality of EU migrants has obvious cultural, social and economic benefits for both 'sending' and 'receiving' regions.
- **Find ways to more effectively tackle hostile press coverage of EU migrants;** this often serves to undermine the confidence of new EU citizens (particularly apparent in the study's Polish participants) inculcating a sense that British people are 'against them' even in the friendliest of encounters. Reportedly, some individuals revised their decisions about their length of stay on the basis of negative media reports. At the same time, Polish participants and blogs also reported hostile media coverage in the home country. Continuing to encourage a more balanced press response to intra-EU migration in the difficult period ahead should be attempted with the use of counter-'claims-makers' and the promotion of positive news items.
- **Improve futures thinking (forward-thinking policy research) to map out potential scenarios of the implications of increased, decreased or shifts in migrant flows to the region;** identifying likely 'push' factors in COO, identifying 'pull' factors, identifying potential sub-regions of settlement, identifying prospective skills and needs profile of newcomers, preparing communities for change and so on. Furthermore, regional policy needs to be more fully cognisant of the future implications of (unfettered) EU citizenship and freedom of movement and the widely-held view of intra-European migrants of the EU as an open jobs market.
- **Consider the impact of public spending cuts on the retention of a quality workforce;** the full implications of public spending cuts are difficult to foresee at this early stage, however, job losses seem inevitable. The buffer theory has been disproved and it is unlikely to be the case that intra-European migrants will return to COO leaving vacancies for British workers (and, besides, there is no guarantee that British people will be motivated to take on the types of occupations eschewed prior to the recession). However, there is a danger of 'brain waste', a complete stalling of the movement from low-skilled occupations primarily gained through employment agency contracts to better remunerated, more stable and fulfilling occupations that our study participants have been motivated to pursue and gain. Given that the transitional arrangements granted to 'old' EU member states will end by May 2011, the alternative for some may be to relocate to third countries within the EU to seek more rewarding employment and to maintain their living conditions.

- **Be aware that anticipated length of stay is not the same as actual length of stay;** as our study demonstrates, participants re-evaluated their projected length of stay quite frequently and earlier 'let's see' or 'just a brief spell in the UK' attitudes quickly translated into a longer stay or consideration of a permanent relocation and settlement with families. Policy and service development for intra-European migrants should not be developed on the misconception that migrants are driven solely by economic considerations and come in only one shape: hamsters!<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, understanding that the searcher category is the most cited self-identification and that length of stay is contingent upon a number of factors provides a less than stable basis for service planning. However, our study demonstrates that individual COO economic and political push factors provide the key for anticipating a longer or permanent stay and, where push factors are weaker, quality of life and satisfaction of life goals play an important retaining role.

We appreciate that some of the recommendations cannot be enacted at a regional level and require policy action at a national level, and that future sub-regional economic development agendas may complicate the pursuit of the regional recommendations proposed above. However, strategic migration partnership activity could, to a large extent, ensure a coherent response to and dissemination of, the issues raised in this report.

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<sup>2</sup> Storks, Hamsters, Searchers and Stayers were used to identify, respectively, circular migrants, 'one-off' migrants, those with open options and those with long-term plans in Eade, Drinkwater and Garapich's 2006 study. We added in an additional category of strategist to define migrants who place themselves strategically between the searcher and stayer categories.

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# Appendix 1

## Occupations and Qualifications

Profile at Year 3	Occupation prior to migration	Occupation immediately post-migration	Current occupation	*Arrival: known qualifications	Current: qualifications & further study
004 Female Poland LOS 2+ years	PA/PR	Officer worker	Senior office worker	Masters	Language classes – Italian and German
009 Female Poland LOS 6 years	Pupil	Agency factory work	Supervisory/retail	FE level	Bachelors
010 Female Poland LOS 5 years	Research Asst	Mental Health recovery worker	Psychologist	Masters x 2	PhD
001 Female Lithuania LOS 3 years	Pupil	Cashier/Student	Service sector	FE level	Bachelors
002 Male, Slovakia LOS 6+ years	Office work	Au Pair then care worker	Interpreter	Bachelors	NVQ, Progressing Diplomas
003 Female Romania LOS 3+ years	Various – secretarial	Au Pair	Student/retail	Incomplete Bachelors	Progressing Bachelors
006 Female Slovakia LOS 5 years	Call Centre	Healthcare Asst	Student nurse	Incomplete Bachelors	Progressing Bachelors
013 Female Slovakia LOS 5 years	Office/book-keeper	Healthcare Asst	Student nurse	FE level	Progressing Bachelors
021 Male Poland LOS 7 years	Mechanic	Farm worker	Business owner	NVQ3	
025 Female Poland LOS 4 years	Teacher	Agency/factory work	Credit control	Bachelors	EFL
028 Female Poland LOS 5 years	Teacher	Agency/factory work	Senior office worker	Bachelors	Interpreting and accountancy quals.
030 Male Lithuania LOS 3 years	Pupil	Agency work/factory/student	Agency work/factory/student	FE level	Progressing Diploma IT
033 Male Poland LOS 6+ years	Plumber	Agency/factory work	Tiler	FE level	H&S; Food Cert; wants to gain UK tiling quals.
035 Female Poland LOS 5+ years	Marketing	Cabin crew	Student	Masters	Progressing post-grad qualification
037 Male Lithuania LOS 5+ years	Managerial	Farm work	Bilingual Support Officer/schools	Bachelors + incomplete Masters	English GCSE
053 Female Poland LOS 4+ years	Pupil	Student	Post-graduate/part-time work	FE level	Bachelors
205 Female Bulgaria LOS 7 years	Student/Fast food manager	Self-employed cleaner	Full-time parent	Masters	EFL
206 Male Bulgaria LOS 3+ years	Small business ventures	Self-employed/variou	Self-employed shop fitter	FE level	
207 Female Slovakia LOS 3 years	Nursing assistant	Agency/factory work	Agency/factory work	FE level	EFL
208 Male Lithuania LOS 2 years	Construction	Agency/factory work	Factory work	Bachelors	English improver; forklift certificate
210 Female Latvia LOS 4+ years	Laboratory worker	Agency/factory work	Factory work	FE level	EFL
012 Male Hungary LOS 5 years	Publishing/teaching	Supply teaching	Call centre operative	Masters x 2, and 4 languages	Progressing Bachelors
014 Male Poland LOS 2+ years	Probation Officer	Cabin crew	Cabin crew	Masters and 3 languages	English improver
017 Female Poland LOS 5 years	Student	Factory work	Community development	Masters	Certificate and Diploma
015 Female Slovakia LOS 5 years	Teacher	Care work	Part-time cleaner/ parent	Masters	EFL
018 Female Poland LOS 3+ years	Dental nurse	Care work	Factory work	Masters	Spanish and English improver
019 Male Slovakia LOS 5 years	Copy Centre	Care work	Recently unemployed, IT	MBA	Various IT qualifications
023 Female Czech Republic LOS 6 years	Bakery/shop	Agency/ factory work then small business owner	Full-time parent	FE level	Book-keeping (UK); Czech qualification (distance learning)
209 Female Lithuania LOS 2 years	Machinist/woodwork	Agency/factory work	Agency/factory work	FE level	English course
027 Male Poland LOS 5 years	Teacher	Agency/factory work	Technician, manufacturing	Bachelors	Work-based training

LOS = length of stay

\*Or equivalent to; for example, FE level - = academic and vocational qualifications taken up to the age of 18



# Appendix 2

## Self-Reported Migration Goals (Eade, Drinkwater and Garapich, 2006)

Profile at Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
025, Female, 34, Single, Poland LOS 4 years	Searcher/Stayer	Searcher	Searcher
018 Female, 38, Married, Poland LOS 3 years	Stayer	Searcher	Searcher/Stayer
017, 30, Female, Married, Poland LOS 5 years	Searcher	Stayer/Searcher	Stayer/Searcher
035, Female, 31, Co-habiting Poland LOS 5 years	Searcher	Stayer	Searcher
028, Female, 34, Separated, Poland LOS 5 years	Searcher	Stayer	Stayer
027, Male, Separated, 40, Poland LOS 5 years	Searcher	Searcher/Stayer	Stayer/Searcher
014, Male, 31, Single, Poland LOS 2+ years	Hamster/Searcher	Searcher/Stayer	Searcher/Stayer
208, Male, 34, Divorced, Lithuania LOS 2 years		Stayer	Searcher
209, Female, 44, Divorced, Lithuania LOS 2 years		Hamster/Stayer	Stayer
206, Male, 41, Divorced, Bulgaria LOS 3 years	Stayer	Stayer	Stayer
210, Female, 54, Married, Latvia LOS 4 years	Stayer	Searcher/Stayer	Stayer
207, Female, 56, Divorced, Slovakia LOS 3 years	Stayer	Stayer	Stayer
030, Male, 20, Single, Lithuania LOS 3 years	Searcher/Stayer	Stayer	Searcher
002, Male, 31, Single, Slovakia LOS 6+ years	Stayer	Searcher/Stayer	Stayer
001, Female, 22, Single, Slovakia LOS 3 years	Stayer	Stayer/Searcher	Stayer /Searcher
205, Female, 32, Married, Bulgaria LOS 5 years	Searcher	Searcher/Stayer	Stayer
023, Female, 32, Married, Czech Republic LOS 6 years	Searcher/Stayer	Searcher	Searcher
021, Male, 28, Co-habiting, Poland LOS 7 years	Searcher	Searcher	Searcher/Stayer
019, Male, 34, Married, Slovakia LOS 5 years	Searcher	Stayer	Stayer
015, Female, 34, Married, Slovakia LOS 5 years	Stayer	Searcher/Stayer	Stayer
010, Female, 31, Co-habiting, Poland LOS 5 years	Searcher	Stork/Searcher	Searcher
013, Female, 33, Co-habiting, Slovakia LOS 5 years	Searcher	Searcher/Stayer	Searcher/Stayer
006, Female, 33, Married, Slovakia LOS 5 years	Searcher	Stayer	Stayer
009, Female, 24, Married, Poland LOS 6 years	All/Stayer	Searcher	Searcher/Stayer
033, Male, 39, Married, Male, Poland LOS 6 years	Searcher/Stayer	Searcher	Searcher/Stayer
037, Male, 35, Married, Lithuania LOS 5 years	Hamster/Searcher/Stayer	Stayer	Stayer
003, Female, 30, Single, Romania LOS 3+ years	Searcher	Searcher	Searcher
012, Male, 33, Single, Hungary LOS 5 years	Searcher	Hamster/Stork/Searcher	Searcher/Hamster
004, Female, 35, Single, Poland LOS 2+ years	Searcher/Stayer	Searcher	Searcher/Stayer
053, Female, 24, Co-habiting, Poland LOS 4 years	Searcher	Stayer	Stayer

LOS == length of stay

# Appendix 3

## Push and Pull Factors: Poland

### Push Factors – Macro: Economics, Politics and Religion

#### BLOG 1

*Although a lot of things have left me with negative feelings – it was hard to go back to my house in the UK. It's hard to leave your family, familiar places, knowing that it will be a long time before you see them again ... :(Nevertheless Poland has left a nasty taste in my mouth: holes in the road, incessant road-works, traffic, diversions, rudeness on the roads, poverty, high prices, corruption, affairs, arguments in politics ... Ech I need to recover before I will write something optimistic ... (07/09/2010)*

#### BLOG 3

*Everything has become more expensive; prices are the same as in Western countries, but not the salaries. Beer is still cheap, this I took advantage of. Books are expensive like hell, therefore there it is no wonder people prefer to watch telly. (28/02/2010)*

#### BLOG 1

*I still can't accept the high prices of items in shops. It's terrible. Prices are so high that buying butter or bread is almost a luxury! I feel mostly sorry for the older women, dressed modestly who reach out for the last penny in their wallets in order to buy bread, and if a little better off, bread and milk. They probably struggle every day with lack of money, because how do you live in this situation where the majority of the pension goes on medication and the rest on rent and bills? And this is what we toil for almost our entire life, to struggle to find any money for bread in our wallet? I am really upset by the fact that these poor women never experience a good quality of life, a life they could have for example in England. In England the elderly do not need to pay for their medication, they go on holiday several times a year, they do not worry about their bank account balance, they just live to the fullest. I am so glad this is just a holiday in Poland:) (24/08/2010)*

#### BLOG 3

*Naturally, I reckon that the major culprit is our Polish government (the current and previous ones), which frivolously spent millions ...instead of creating new jobs for the poorest and the most disadvantaged, giving them another option other than going abroad 'on Spec' without any command of English. The reality is they end up exactly like this – on the street. Let's not kid ourselves – those migratory homeless people are victims of their own helplessness. ... (17/09/2010)*

#### BLOG 8

*Sometimes while eating breakfast I watch the news from the previous day, and what I watch is shocking but not surprising in a way. Our politicians, previous and present ones, choose quite smart, but not always fair, tactics. One of the political parties pick up an event, not necessarily linked with a political opponent, and tries to blame the opponent for everything bad and associated with the event. ... Meanwhile, the budget gap is growing, taxes have been increased, unemployment rate is rising as well the number of Poles leaving the country. The problem of queues at clinics and hospitals is still very visible, and living standards have not improved at all. How will Poles living abroad ever like to come back if nothing good is happening in this country, if the politicians can't ensure a good future? ... (01/08/2010)*

#### BLOG 3

*Even though I have lived abroad for less than five years, I understand less and less what is going on in Poland. Sometimes I get the impression that apart from the scourge of floods this country has been plagued with mental incapacity. I read Internet users' comments on some articles and quite often I am scared because there are only two options: either all Poles are radical idiots (unlikely) or it is the radical idiots who have access to the Internet and who are also motivated to comment on all events. What I mean by radical idiot here is a person who blames a political formation they like the least for every event, from a road accident to a flood. ... I can't recall any moment in my life when the nation was as divided as it is now. And if this frustration comes from political activity I don't want to have my hand in it even more. I am not going to vote ... (05/06/2010)*

#### BLOG 3

*A separate issue that has always annoyed me is this inextricable relationship Pole-Catholic. ... This is why I am so glad that I live abroad. Here I can say and think what I want and there are no wall crosses in public places. Faith should be a private matter not a public one. (19/04/2010)*

### Push Factors – Macro/Micro: Political arguments

#### BLOG 4

*Unfortunately my mum is a staunch supporter of Father Rydzyk and others like him, while I am his ardent opponent. Because of this, sometimes things even get tense between us, because my mum believes that there is a correlation between the President and Maryja radio station, and naturally she has exactly the same opinion as suggested or implied on the radio. It drives me mad and I tell her outright what I think about this ... But my mum simply summed it up as whatever happens I always need to put my foot down, which is not true, I only have my own opinion and want to defend it.... (17/04/2010)*

## Push Factors – Meso: Bureaucracy and Social Attitudes

### BLOG 3

*So finally I decided to deal with my tax issues in Warsaw, I have already sent my self assessment form three times and each time something is wrong. And now again – they don't like my English postal address and want to verify it. Moreover one of the forms wasn't filled in correctly. Frankly speaking, I am fed up with this, all the more so because I am also familiar with the British tax system which I find is ...user-friendly. You can fill the application online and each tax payer is treated very well (like a partner/customer not like a potential weak-minded swindler). (05/01/2010)*

### BLOG 7

*By the way, the attitude towards pregnancy in Poland amazes (annoys) me. Women go to visit their GPs as often as if pregnancy was a disease. Women take days off for no reason and after are surprised that employers are neither sympathetic nor helpful towards pregnant women. (20/03/2010)*

## Pull Factors – Meso/Micro: Services, Friends and Family

### BLOG 6

*There is nothing like a Polish hairdresser :) and dentist! (21/10/2010)*

### BLOG 5

*Holiday time in Poland is always a very good time for me. It's associated with the joy of meeting relatives, friends from the high school and university, an opportunity to relish the Polish cuisine that I have missed so much since I left the country. (13/07/2010)*

## Push and Pull (Stay) Factors: United Kingdom

## Push Factors – Macro/Meso: Healthcare/'Nanny-State'/Employers/Media

### BLOG 2

*I report to the ... hospital every six months for regular check-ups: always on a Wednesday and never with the same doctor (somehow a mystery). It doesn't really bother me because just as they piss on my health, I piss on their opinions. Just to cut the story short and not go into detail, Scottish doctors did not consider it appropriate to go in for the tumour on my female organs... whereas, two months later Polish doctors already snipped my belly, getting rid of not only the tumour but everything around it. It's hard to blame me though for a limited trust (euphemism) in the [hospital staff]. (28/02/2010)*

### BLOG 10

*England is called by some 'a nanny state'. In free translation it is a country that looks after its citizens. In my translation it is a country that is overprotective. I reckon that such a name is the most suitable for the UK. I already skip all these Health and Safety Rules that surrounds me everywhere. Information at the bus door warning about the gap between the kerb and the floor of the bus (you might not see it while getting off the bus) and information at the airports and train stations reminding that you shouldn't leave luggage unattended). All the celebrities on TV advise, warn, remind ... Nigela Lawson, Jamie Oliver, Delia Smith tell you how to cook, Gok tells you how to look good naked, Trinny and Susannah tell you what to wear, and others tell you how to decorate your house, how to choose the best holiday options, where to get your boobs done ... even my customers from the pub went in for advising me. ... (30/01/2010)*

### BLOG 11

*Have you ever felt like a new-born. This is exactly how I feel after giving notice to 'ufoglowy latyfundium' (nickname of current employer). Although the statute guarantees non-discrimination and equality, my employer doesn't comply with any of the laws. On the contrary, he breaks the law. (...) Moreover, I was told by one of the agencies helping me to find a job, that according to their statistical estimation I have been simply underpaid. (02/07/2010)*

### BLOG 3

*This is life in London (I am quoting 'The Guardian'), whereas the Daily Mail journalist visited a lair of Eastern European homeless gunks in Peterborough. Tents of those homeless/unemployed people, pitched in the middle of a busy roundabout, protected by a stench acting as a powerful force field aimed at scaring away all potential intruders. To my big surprise, the article didn't include the word 'Polish', only our Czech neighbours were mentioned. However, from my own experience I can say that for an average British toast-eater 'Eastern European' and 'Polish' are synonyms. Never mind that after the publication of the article local authorities in Peterborough denied that the situation looked exactly how it was presented by the Daily Mail – the stench has remained. (17/09/2010)*

## **Pull (Stay) Factors – Meso: ‘The Customer comes first’/ Attitudes/Clean Streets!**

### **BLOG 2**

*In Poland you can make a complaint but you cannot claim a refund because returns are not considered. I can possibly choose something else in a store for the equivalent amount of money, for instance, a mega-pot stew, a milk frother or a wooden spatula to scratch the damn pan's non-stick surface, which I don't want (...) In the UK you can return everything in every shop, especially if you have a receipt. Sometimes even without: with or without its original packaging. The overriding principle is a satisfied customer which means 'The Customer comes first' because such a customer will visit us again and buy more. And I will think twice before I go and buy something in Poland again ... (23/03/2010)*

### **BLOG 10**

*After a very exhausting morning of spinning classes at a local gym, I went to a Polish shop for cheese and fresh rolls for my breakfast. I am very glad that I have got this Polish shop just across the street. Whenever I am/get homesick I can always find something typically Polish, or I can simply run and get cream or oil when I run out during cooking. But the customer service is really poor there. This is the only thing which pisses me off. ... I already know that over the next few days I won't drop in there – unless I miss something good/nice/delicious. (02/08/2010)*

### **BLOG 3**

*I went on the Internet today and found two quite thought-provoking news items. The first concerns pension benefits to clergy in homosexual civil partnership. At its recent synod the Church of England voted to provide homosexual clergy with the same benefits as those awarded to vicars' spouses. ... Respect for the Anglicans: such a decision requires courage but also is evidence of a certain kind of approach to life. (12/02/2010)*

### **BLOG 2**

*I like Scotland – for everything. For the fact that over four years we have achieved more than for many years in Poland. For the fact that Miss Hanna will be bilingual without much effort, for the tolerance and open-mindedness. (08/09/2010)*

### **BLOG 3**

*Well, I was very positively surprised by the atmosphere of the election (in the UK). What surprised me the most is the attitude of voters. At work nobody discussed the election, what is more, nobody argued about who we should vote for. It turned out that it is a personal decision that everyone makes on their own. I even noticed that nobody admitted who they had voted for. It should be like that everywhere. No uproar, no arguments, only one question: 'Have you already voted? Great manners. Moreover, the debate between party leaders was at completely different level than what I remember from Poland. No 'shaking legs' or investigating who is a Jew, whose grandfather served in Wehrmacht, and who has a file in the Institute of National Remembrance. Also it is unacceptable that a pastor in a church tells his flock who they should vote for. Church is a place for conversation with God, not for political agitation. (08/05/2010)*

### **BLOG 9**

*Jesus how could I forget about the dog faeces. I promised and did not keep my word. So here on my blog I offer self-criticism. Here you go. So as far as dog faeces are concerned I was only going to write about them because of one reason. They are not visible at all. As a person who spent 23 years of her wonderful and adventurous life near Silnica... I got used to a typical view: Winter=snow=whitish and wonderful. Melted snow=brownish=green grass and stench of dog poo. .... So I was in deep shock (I still am) when half a metre of snow melted and my green and wonderful eyes couldn't notice any poo, there wasn't even a stench. ... How nice! (22/01/2010)*

## **The Migrant Experience: Public and Personal Dilemmas of Transnationalism**

### **Macro – Home Country Politics and Legislation**

### **BLOG 3**

*Even though I have lived abroad for less than five years, I understand less and less what is going on in Poland. Sometimes I get the impression that apart from the scourge of floods this country has been plagued with mental incapacity. I read Internet users' comments on some articles and quite often I am scared because there are only two options: either all Poles are radical idiots (unlikely) or it is the radical idiots who have access to the Internet and who are also motivated to comment on all events. What I mean by radical idiot here is a person who blames a political formation they like the least for every event, from a road accident to a flood. ... I can't recall any moment in my life when the nation was as divided as it is now. And if this frustration comes from political activity I don't want to have my hand in it even more. I am not going to vote ... (05/06/2010)*



#### **BLOG 1**

*My dear Poland, although so far away from us, you fooled us once again ... Today the revised law introduces that children under five will be issued with a passport valid for a period of only twelve months!!! Shocking, so shocking!!! And I am in shock! How it is possible to implement such a dumb law? What is the point in renewing a child's passport every year? Maybe, it's about fleecing migrants, to whom more and more children are born, and who would like to visit Poland at least once a year? I can't think of any other reason. What kind of state is it which discourages people from ... having babies? Having a family? Because surely the obligation to get a new child passport every year is another expense and a problem! For us, the cost of travelling to London: a whole day wasted, a day where my husband cannot work, £100 just to get to London, and also £17 for passport plus a photo ... (19/02/2010)*

### **Meso – Services/Bureaucracy and Representation in the British Press**

#### **BLOG 6**

*Today I got a call from a lady for whom I sometimes interpret at the social services' office. She was desperate and had no one to turn to so I did her a favour and went with her to a police station. The police didn't allow me to interpret for her while she wrote the witness testimony despite the fact that I have all the essential qualifications (including the Metropolitan Police Test). The only thing is that I am not registered with the Metropolitan Police interpreters' scheme, which is hard to get on to. So this lady with her seven month-old baby was waiting for a police interpreter for four hours (today is Saturday and hardly anyone is available) even though she came with 'her' qualified interpreter, who is on all other lists but the MPS official interpreters. Incidentally, I heard that on this list there are only nine Polish interpreters for the whole of London. Hooray for the police. Today is bureaucracy day. (22/05/2010)*

#### **BLOG 11**

*Those of you who have a pet and travel abroad with him/her will know that there is something paranoid about the Pet Travel Scheme. Its regulations make as much sense as a performance of Leonard Cohen on the X Factor. The scheme forces pet owners to spend a lot of money on medical examinations for their animal before leaving and coming back to the UK (at the moment £140 + annual booster). The process also includes the issuing of a dog/cat/ferret passport for which you have to pay extra even though you have already spent a lot during this multi-stage procedure. The scheme accurately reflects the nature of British bureaucracy and this nation's characteristic need for complicating simple and trivial things just to have a show. Exactly like in the Monty Python's Flying Circus. (...) ... (04/01/2010)*

#### **BLOG 8**

*... the lady asked me which documents can prove my legal status in the UK. I responded that I have got a passport and that should be enough proof. She kept asking if I have any visa and am I registered somewhere since I am from the outside of the EU. She drove me mad, however I repeated myself several times that I am an EU citizen and do not need anything like that, plus I am employed thus registered with the Home Office which is again a proof of my legal stay here. The lady wasn't sufficiently convince ... (04/07/2010)*

#### **BLOG 6**

*It's good to know that the majority of my clients appreciate the free interpreting services in this country. (19/05/2010)*

#### **BLOG 3**

*Unfortunately, the bulk of emigration from Poland to the United Kingdom coincided with the premiere of the film 'Borat'. It was undoubtedly a coincidence, however, it made the Brits think about us in a certain way even though we don't have much in common with Kazakhstan. Uncouth, without manners, speaking pigeon English and by no means in tune with respectable, royalist and traditional British society. We were depicted in this way at the beginning by newspapers with the Daily Mail at the helm. The rumour that we eat swans also comes from that period (...) I am hoping that we will be presented more (...) not as ignorant visitors from Eastern Europe, taking away jobs, exporting money, leaving only empty cans of Tyskie and swan's bones, but as individuals – valuable, taking initiative and doing something positive in this country. (13/03/2010)*

#### **BLOG 11**

*A hostile attitude towards newcomers from Eastern Europe is still present and despite the fact it is often camouflaged, you can still feel it. An example of this is a BBC documentary shown yesterday about a certain sociological experiment titled 'The day immigrants left'. The longer I live in this country the more it makes me think about 'Why, in this country, an active member state of the EU, do racist and mentally disabled... British citizens malign other workers from foreign countries, just because foreign workers are smarter, cleverer, better qualified...?! Why does this especially happen if the employer prefers to hire more productive/efficient employees? What is going to happen with employers who care more about the intelligence and efficiency of workers from Poland, Lithuania, Spain rather than persistently demanding, lazy and stupid British workers? Where is this country heading? The land of (milk and honey) benefits (...) (23/02/2010)*

## Meso/Micro: Attitudes – Brits and Compatriots

### BLOG 3

*All over the world there is a prevailing 'order of things' which was worked out a long time ago. Every society, even the smallest ones, has its own established customs, orders, hierarchy and no society likes it when this order is being changed. As it happens, however, this order can be unconsciously influenced when foreigners appear. And even when they don't change a thing, the local people are still afraid of them, don't trust them on somebody's say-so, because that is the human nature not to trust strangers. It doesn't really matter if it happens in a village in the Lemkoland or in Greater London. Here or over there, you need to work very hard not to be perceived as an intruder. Otherwise what sense does our escape make?*  
(30/01/2010)

### BLOG 7

*It concerns an observation made at work. I am not sure if it is only me who gets the impression that Poles have this tendency to embellish, exaggerate and dramatize with regard to any events they talk about. I am not saying that it's something blameworthy or ignominious. It's just the way it is but when you suddenly find yourself in an environment where this behaviour occurs rarely or never, you need to measure your words so as not to become a 'drama queen'. It becomes visible at work, especially in situations when you need to get some factual information related to a conflict situation or when people have differing opinions about a particular issue. The one exception to this tendency is the media (like everywhere else in the world), which not only create news that are not based on facts but also make a mountain out of a molehill. ... The bulk of people make judgements about an event, situation or a person very quickly. In a situation where one of our countrymen will be shown in a bad light most of his compatriots will assume bad faith, whereas the Brits (not all of them of course) prefer to stick to the presumption of innocence, which makes life much easier and reduces a great deal of unnecessary stress. ... I suppose this is historically conditioned and comes from the mentality which the majority of our compatriots had to function with, let's hope that the young generation will outgrow it.*  
(09/01/2010)

### BLOG 6

*The patient comes to see his doctor. And he waits. He doesn't go to the reception to let them know he is already here and waiting to be called. He is in the waiting room. After an hour he goes to the reception to complain that he has been waiting for such a long time. The receptionist tells him that because he didn't report to the reception earlier they will have to reschedule the appointment. The patient responds: 'You have seen me; I was sitting and waiting just over there'. The receptionist very politely explains to him that every time you have an appointment, you first have to report to the reception to confirm your arrival. And she asks him politely if tomorrow at the same time is fine for him. He replies that he will be busy working tomorrow and leaves discontented. I am not sure if his discontentment is with himself or with the receptionist. The delights of my profession! I am grateful that he didn't shout at me like the lady from yesterday when I simply had to ... hang up.*  
*It's good to know that the majority of my clients appreciate the free interpreting services in this country.* (19/05/2010)

## Micro – Personal Factors: Home-sickness, Frustrations and Solutions

### BLOG 6

*The cheesecake is delicious. I can't be bothered to interpret on the phone today. I want something different. The sun is shining ... Today I miss Poland.* (17/05/2010)

### BLOG 1

*The last visit to Poland with just the three of us. We don't know when we will be back here again as it will be hard for four of us to visit. But I have no regrets that it is the last visit. After living abroad for many years I am visiting Poland without any sentiments. I feel ill at ease and I can't find myself here. I can't accept this dearness in shops, hypocritical politics, affairs ... eeeech, I will not wind myself up because I will just get nervous once again. How can you live in this country?*  
*I just feel like this once much beloved Poland is becoming more and more indifferent. Even my home town, Polish dishes are becoming more distant and don't give me the same joy as they used to ... It's sad but thanks to this, it will be easier to say goodbye to our family and return home, our home in England* (13/08/2010)

### BLOG 8

*Easter in our house? Like with Christmas, when you live abroad as a migrant, it's difficult to feel the right atmosphere, all the more so because Easter is not as much popular holiday as the December one. Furthermore, when living here one can observe a constantly recurring routine. Every holiday in Scotland, regardless if it is a bank holiday or religious related one, is always about two activities: eating and drinking. The Scots first meet up for a big dinner with family and friends and then in the same group go out to pubs and clubs, so they can finally get drunk. Therefore it's hard to feel like home.* (03/03/2010)



#### **BLOG 8**

*It's been over two years already since I left Poland for good. I left behind my family, friends and acquaintances. I left exactly those who were sacred to me and those who were the most important people who I could always rely on and who could rely on me as well. There are moments in life, where we need these people more than ever, where only their presence is very important to us. In my whole stay in Scotland I was sure that this attitude will never change. Quite recently it occurred to me that people actually can change their behaviours, habits, and most importantly their priorities (...) It might not make any sense what I am writing here, it sounds like tautology. However, I have recently felt let down by a few of my close friends and I feel like spilling my guts and here seems to be the right place. The expectations I had before my visit to Poland were high/enormous and the reality very poor. And now it is hard to get hold of myself after this shock. The disappointment about friends; I don't feel the same way about them, and we might not stay in touch for in the long-term/our contact will be probably broken off soon. The most faithful friends might remain, however even this is not entirely certain due to that fact that being so far from each other, nothing can be sure. (08/07/2010)*

#### **BLOG 2**

*The way it started was quite silly – once again I had nothing to read ... I had exhausted the book shelves of my friends and acquaintances and I did not have any plans to visit Poland in the near future. There was nothing else to do but establish a Polish Library. It was December 2009. Less than six months later, I can be Mrs Librarian again: we have a room, bookshelves, catalogue, and what is most important – we have books! Yesterday's record: 425 items (and it is still growing). (10/05/2010)*

## **Decision Making on LOS**

#### **BLOG 11**

*I stopped feeling good here a long time ago but I tremble to think about a possible return to Poland (23/02/2010)*

#### **BLOG 7**

*Profile: I have lived in the UK since 2006. I have lived over two years in London in a lovely place – Surrey. I am happily married and not planning to go back to Poland.*

#### **BLOG 3**

*Quite recently some of my friends have decided to go back to Poland. Generally speaking I am witnessing a tendency for people to return. On one hand it worries me because nice people are disappearing around me. On the other hand plenty of bumpkins are leaving as well which is a positive (...) I have heard of cases where high skilled people with perfect English were rejected. The explanation is easy but pathetic – managers who are responsible for recruitment process prefer to hire lower-skilled employees who will not threaten their position. Sometimes there is simply no work at all because in Poland it is like that – if you don't have connections you will not get a job (...) The bad scenario is on returning you don't look for a job because you have some money to live off and therefore there is no pressure. When it comes to money, it is natural that you can spend it easily, especially when you have plenty of spare time. After some time you are left holding the baby, definitely not happy. I know from my own experience. When you start feeling down, it's even harder to look for a job and you take the first thing which comes along (...) And then the only sensible option is to go abroad again. It is easier than last time as we have done it all before, we know what and how, our National Insurance Number is still valid, job hunting doesn't take longer than a week and thanks to the salary we can have a decent standard of living.*

*Unfortunately it often appears to be a vicious circle. I know some people who go back and then come back again like that. Sometimes, when talking to them, I get the impression that they have lost confidence in where exactly they should be – here or over there. They will never feel like home here, but neither will they over there. I feel sorry for them. Fortunately I don't have such dilemmas. And even if I ... It's enough for me to spend two weeks there to feel I've had enough of the country for a long time. Finally: one of my colleagues from work told me today that he made a bet with his mate about who will last longer without going to Poland. With each year the bet increases by £200 and at the moment it stands at £800, which means that neither of them have been to Poland for four years. The one who breaks first and goes to Poland will lose and pay the other one. Quite radical, isn't it? But maybe this is the solution. (19/07/2010)*

#### **BLOG 5**

*Holiday season is also a time of reflection, asking questions such as: should I go back, what is more and what is less important in life? During my holiday I was discovering Poland afresh, this time from the perspective of nature, watching it through the camera viewfinder, invariably beautiful. (13/07/2010)*







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