

BARRIERS TO MIGRANT INTEGRATION: CHALLENGES FACING MIGRANTS AND THE MIGRATION SUPPORT SECTOR IN BIRMINGHAM AND THE BLACK COUNTRY

A **MIGRATION POLICY AND PRACTICE** EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The current state of the migration support sector in the region can be characterised as one of challenge. For voluntary sector organisations working with migrants this does not just involve seeking appropriate funding for services in an increasingly competitive environment, but also maintaining and developing services to support the needs of an increasingly diverse group of clients.



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MIGRATION IN THE REGION

The West Midlands region, and in particular Birmingham and the Black Country, remains one of the most diverse areas in the UK. In four of the five Local Authority areas, over 10% of the population are estimated to have been born outside of the UK. There are also significant populations of non-UK nationals resident within all areas, highlighting the number of migrants living throughout the region.

Local Authority	% Population Non-UK born	% Population Non-UK Nationals
Birmingham	21	11
Dudley	5	4
Sandwell	23	19
Walsall	11	5
Wolverhampton	18	13

Source: Annual Population Survey (APS), Office for National Statistics, Mid-2020

RIGHTS

- Migrants find it difficult to access specialist legal advice to deal with the situations they experience.
- A significant number in the region will not have applied to the EU Settled Status Scheme prior to deadline.
- Many who have applied for the EUSS are still waiting for cases to be resolved and may experience difficulties in accessing essential services until this is resolved.
- The availability and quality of housing provision remains a significant problem in the sector, not just for those in the asylum system, but for many other migrant groups.
- Significant difficulties have been experienced by many of those who have no access to public funds (NRPF) conditions of their immigration status. These numbers are likely to rise due to economic and political factors

HEALTH

- Many migrants experience barriers in accessing healthcare treatment, including a reluctance to access over fears of charges or revealing their immigration status.
- Many migrant groups have been adversely affected during the COVID pandemic, with existing inequalities being further highlighted and exacerbated.
- There is a need for increased access to mental health services for migrants.
- Further work needs to be conducted by statutory bodies and health agencies to ensure that the specific health needs of migrants are included in the planning of service provision.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Access and provision of relevant ESOL services for migrants remains problematic.
- Future provision and demand for ESOL in the region is likely to change as a result of both government policy and demographic change.
- Issues around digital exclusion and a lack of appropriate training pathways are the primary barriers to migrants seeking meaningful work and career development.
- It is important that both migrants and their employers are aware of statutory rights, with information available to understand the processes around both employment and protections.

COMMUNITY

- Although local authorities have recognised the need to support community integration, and included these in their strategic planning, there are still a number of gaps.
- Despite Eastern Europeans forming significant populations within the region, representation within official activities is much lower.
- Local Authorities could assist through refining the way in which they record and define the ethnicity of their service users.
- Hate Crime remains a problem experienced by many and is made worse by systemic delays in dealing with offenders and a lack of confidence in the police to investigate instances thoroughly.
- The region as a whole continues to experience significant issues with individuals being subjected to Modern Day Slavery (MDS) practices.

Read our full report on our website
www.migrationpolicy.org.uk

Migration: Policy & Practice
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