1. The ONCN was founded by past members of the Overseas Nurses Network (ONN) which was located within the trade union, UNISON. However some of its members decided to expand its memberships to other isolated and vulnerable workers and their families who may or may not be trade union members. Early in 2010, it was felt that the moment was right to constitute such a group which it did in March.

2. The ONCN is a migrants-led network for migrant workers working in the health or health related sectors. The ONCN’s objectives are:
   - to provide a safe environment for migrants and their families to meet and share experiences,
   - to promote good relationship between migrants and their diasporas communities,
   - to access training and information for migrants and their families and
   - to provide a platform to enable them to influence policies to promote migrants’ rights.

3. To date the ONCN has of over 100 members.

4. In response to the Scottish Parliament’s Equal Opportunities Committee inquiry to explore the impact and contribution of migrant populations within Scottish society and the extent and nature of trafficking, the ONCN has surveyed a percentage of its memberships. This was done by email, texting, face to face and telephone interviews over a period of 2 weeks. We surveyed 28 members who also extracted this information from their families and colleagues. The respondents are from Asia, Africa and South America.

BACKGROUND

5. The health sector comprises a large and very complex workforce with more than 150 main professional groups ranging from medical and dental to nurses and doctors. There has been a long history of international recruitment of nurses in the NHS which originates from UK’s imperial history and the British Colonial Nursing Service (Solano and Rafferty 2007). In the 1950s severe nurse shortages led to recruitment from the Commonwealth and former colonies which continued until the late 1960s (Carpenter 1988).

6. The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) provides annual statistics on the number of nurses and midwives on the register. This provides a good indication of trends in the number of overseas (EEA and Non-EEA) nurses registering to practise in the UK. However many overseas nurses are unable to register as nurses and work as Senior Care Workers, care workers and
care assistants. In 2007, there were 686,866 nurses on the register. The key source countries have been India and the Philippines.

7. In the report Migrant Care Workers in Ageing Societies by Sarah Spencer et al (2009): projected that the potential future demand for foreign born workers in the older adult care sector will increase. The total number of care workers working in this sector can increase from an estimated 642,000 in 2006 to 1,025,000 in 2030.

8. This is the UK wide projection; at the same time Scotland, has an increasingly ageing population which will also require residential or home care. Against this projection is also the feminisation of the care industry, of which 88% are women and 17% are from the ethnic minority communities.

9. About 74% of the adult care workforce are in the independent (private) sector and 15% work for (but not necessarily employed by) individuals receiving direct payments. 71% of care workers in adult social care (642,000 individuals across the UK in 2006/7) are estimated to be working with older people. The average gross hourly pay is £6.56 per hour.

QUESTIONS ASKED

10. The ONCN felt that there could be more information sorted out in terms of the questions asked and felt that the responses cannot fully reflect their experiences. The way the questions are formulated limit the full elaboration of the problems and experience of migrants living and working in Scotland. There should be an acknowledgment of migrants from outside the EU as the majority of health and social care workers are from outside the EU. This group of migrants and their families has been investing in this country and they have the intention to stay and contribute to the social and economic development of this nation.

What are the trends in migration to Scotland?

11. As data is collected in England and migrants are also moving internally we feel that the Scottish government will have to map the location and employment of migrants living in Scotland. However in our survey with our members, we asked this question: how many other migrants are working in your workplace that you are in regular contact with? From our perspective the average response was a ratio of 1:10 i.e. one migrant is in contact with at least 10 other migrants. This is in the context that everyone we spoke to work within the elderly care sector. For example, one responder stated that he is in contact with 150 migrants in his church. This ad-hoc survey is unable to give us a full picture. However it does highlight the lack of data on this migrant group in Scotland.
To what extent does reliable data on migration exist to inform public policy-making?

12. Any reliable data will only be able to inform public policy-making if it can minimise the negative impact of our members’ experience of discrimination.

“We have no rights and are subjected to others peoples’ prejudices’ and discriminatory practices” (senior care worker-Edinburgh)

What is the contribution of migration to the Scottish economy?

13. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) it is estimated that in 1999 and 2000, migrants established in the United Kingdom added US$4 billion (UK£2.2 billion) net to the budget – that is, they paid more in tax and social security contributions than they received in benefits.

14. All of our responders and those with partners are working in full time employment. About 4 reported working a second job in a nursing agency and/or the hospital nursing bank. Many found living in Scotland expensive and that having ‘no recourse to public funds’, their cost of living ends up higher than for the rest of the population. Many live in poverty and a number of them also consider having children to be a luxury they cannot afford. This was highlighted by the fact that out of the 28 respondents, only 5 have young children.

What is the contribution of migrant communities to Scottish culture, society and civic society?

15. All of our responders felt that their culture added value to Scotland ranging from food to work ethics.

“Diversity, our African culture mixing with Scottish culture, making it stronger and more beautiful” (care worker- Edinburgh)

“A more relaxed way of life, we add our own tradition to local colour” (cleaner- Glasgow)

16. However over 75% of our respondents also do voluntary work ranging from working in their churches to caring for an elderly neighbour. Many felt that this contribution should be counted towards an ‘earned citizenship’ and that the definition of voluntary work is too restrictive.

How does the media portray the contribution of migrant communities in Scotland?

17. Our respondents felt that the media is fuelling the racism that they already experience, by highlighting negative stories. The story most raised was that of “British jobs for British people”. This had a major impact on the lives of the migrants. Many reported that there are more racist comments within their workplace and their local communities.
18. The idea that migrant workers are taking the jobs of national workers is based on the concept that there is a fixed number of jobs in any given country and that therefore if more people come there will be fewer job opportunities. In fact, each person creates jobs for others.

“When they think you are very ‘cheeky’ or bold, the Scottish people don’t like that, they like you to be submissive” (nurse-Glasgow)

“The media is generally more welcoming however some are ignorant stating that we are here to take their jobs. We have the jobs that Scottish people don’t want.” (care assistant- Border)

“If you are a migrant, you are less likely to be offered a higher post. It is hard to move up the ladder. If you have a different colour other than white, if your face doesn’t fit, that’s you stuck in your lowly position for a long, long time. It does not matter how hard you work and how good you are.” (care worker- Hamilton)

19. Discrimination in employment is still widespread in Scotland. This takes multiple forms. Discrimination against migrant workers most often occurs on the basis of sex, race, ethnic origin, language, nationality, religion, or migration status.

**How can positive messages regarding the contribution of migrant populations to Scottish society be effectively disseminated?**

20. We asked our members if there was one message that the Scottish government should give to the Scottish people, what that message should be:

“Government should be honest with Scottish people and tell them that we do contribute; we pay our taxes and national insurance, our contribution extends from cultural to a range of work and services that we provide including the health services.” (nurse-Edinburgh)

“Government should send out a message that racism exists in our experience and communities, they have no idea how much we have suffered.” (nurse-Fife)

“Government should tell Scottish people that when a migrant is working hard they should be allowed to stay and not put any more barriers to stop them.” (care worker-Falkirk)

“The Government should try harder to inform the Scottish population that we are hired to work here. We PAY our taxes and we don’t claim anything from the government as we are working under the work permit act and even if I had recourse to public funds, I’d rather work and earn as I am not raised to become a parasite to any government.” (nurse- Lanark)

21. Empirical studies such as “The Economic Impacts of Migration on the UK Labour Market” (IPPR 2009) have concluded that the overall immigration impact on the wages of national workers is very small. It is generally estimated that a one per cent increase in the proportion of migrant workers in the labour force lowers wages by only 0.1 per cent. However the media portray migrants as a ‘drain’ on society of jobs, incomes and community services.
22. At this point in time, all our respondents felt that there are only negative messages out there. However they themselves have positive responses about what they feel about and how they contribute to Scotland:

“Scotland is good for me. However out of 100% I give Scotland 70%” (nurse-Aberdeen)

“7 or 8 years ago when there were fewer black people it was hard, now with many more black people around, Scots can see us in all sorts of employment, they are becoming more accepting.” (care assistant-Glasgow)

“Things are getting better and people are more aware that we are contributing” (nurse-Glasgow)

What is the degree of alignment of Scottish public services with migrant populations?

23. Our respondents highlighted the fact that they are contributing to public services through taxation and national insurance that they work mainly in health or related health care services and also are users of public services, mainly in health. In view of this our respondents do not feel that they should be regarded as a ‘drain’ on public services.

What is the effectiveness of public sector responses to changing migration patterns?

24. N/A

What is the degree of awareness of the rights of migrants?

25. We asked our respondents if they are aware of their rights. Over 80% responded that they felt that they have no rights. Of all the issues, racism and impact of racism has the maximum impact on their lives. They also felt insecure of their place within Scottish society due to the constantly changing migration policies implemented by the Government. The new Point Based System and Citizenship Bill are not only confusing for migrants but also for their employers.

“We only have rights when we become citizen, the best right is the right to vote” (nurse-Glasgow)

“I feel that we have no rights to stand up for our selves and if we do there are consequences. “ (care worker-Glasgow)

“We don’t have rights to defend ourselves when we are subjected to racist harassment, we don’t get 100% support from people here”. (care worker-Edinburgh)
What is the scale of the trafficking issue, in terms of the number of people involved and the geographical areas which people trafficked tend to be sourced from?

26. Human trafficking is an extreme form of irregular migration. All types of workers are trafficked but women and children are particularly vulnerable. Trafficking in human beings increased dramatically during the 1990s. The ILO estimates that around 2.4 million people have been trafficked into forced labour. Human trafficking does not respect boundaries and no countries in the world are exempt from this problem. Therefore it may be unrealistic to try to identify ‘likely’ source countries of trafficked people.

What is the nature of the problem? Are people trafficked primarily for reasons related to sexual exploitation or with regard to false labour?

27. N/A

Given the degree of criminality that tends to be involved in human trafficking what problems does this present for public sector agencies seeking to assist the victims of this activity?

28. Any forms of discrimination, exploitation and trafficking pose challenges to governments, trade unions and NGOs as workers’ human rights are threatened. Abuses of migrant workers’ rights also affect the rights and conditions of indigenous workers. There must be recognition that Human Rights are universal. They apply to all, including migrants, regardless of their status.

29. Trafficking is also on the rise, as a consequence of restrictive migration policies. Organized crime networks are abusing potential migrant workers. The profits from trafficking have been put at US$10,000 million per year globally.

30. Government should be mindful of the complexities involved in combating trafficking. Anti-trafficking programmes must ensure that they are not further incriminating or penalising the victims who are often the migrants. Government assistance to victims of trafficking must ensure that they have the rights and interests of the victims protected at all times. A punitive approach to the trafficking issue is not the solution. As has been shown, for example, restrictive immigration policies have not reduced migration but have only increased the incidence of irregular migration and trafficking.

31. It is also critically important that migrants and victims of trafficking have access to essential public services regardless of their immigration and other status. Delivery of public services must also adapt to the needs of migrant communities e.g. providing language assistance, cultural medication, access to training and employment opportunities, etc.
CONCLUSION

32. Many jobs would not be done without migrant workers. They keep public transport running, provide badly-needed health care, and without their work many farms and factories could not produce the goods they sell.

33. Migrants in the health service and social care services make a critical contribution to Scotland. Many sectors could not function without us.

34. However, the responses we gathered have highlighted some of the deep-rooted problems still faced by many migrants in Scotland, such as racism, exploitation and lack of awareness of rights. If these issues are to be addressed in a long-term and meaningful way, the Scottish government will need to engage in constructive and sustained dialogue with groups from across the wide range of migrant communities settled here.

35. The Scottish Government should set up formal channels to have meaningful discussions with migrants and not organisations that have no migrants in their memberships. In the past, ONCN members (as the former ONN) set up annual meetings with MSPs. These were useful however ad-hoc. The migrant workers who attended these meetings would like more regular contact. They seek to participate in any government-initiated discussion on migrants and migration, employment and social issues.

36. Migration policy must be formulated hand-in-hand with human rights, social justice and social inclusion principles. Only by doing so can we truly make improvements to the lives of both migrants and citizens alike.

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ONCN
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