1. Positive Action in Housing Ltd is a Scottish wide charity working with communities, housing providers, voluntary organisations and faith groups to enable everyone to have an equal chance to live in good quality, affordable and safe homes, free from discrimination and the fear of racial harassment and violence.

2. We offer advice, information and support to people from new migrant, refugee and minority ethnic communities. We run a free, confidential and impartial casework service for those facing poverty, homelessness, racism or poor housing. We run a Hardship Fund and provide emergency shelter and practical resources for destitute asylum seekers and their families.

3. We provide volunteering and sessional work opportunities. We support human rights and anti-racist campaigns. We inform social policy from a user-led perspective. We offer training, consultancy and best practice guidance to Registered Social Landlords, voluntary organisations and minority ethnic/refugee organisations.

4. The New Migrants Action Project is funded by the Scottish Government to promote equality of rights, opportunities and access to support for new migrant communities. Since April 2007, the project has been working towards these goals in partnership with new migrant community groups, local authorities, housing associations, voluntary organisations, trade unions and service providers across Scotland.

What are the trends in migration to Scotland?

5. The majority of new migrants who have arrived in Scotland in recent years have been from the Central and Eastern European A8\(^1\) and A2\(^2\) countries. In Scotland 77,325 A8 nationals registered on the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) from May 2004 – Mar 2009\(^3\). At the time of registration, 23% of A8 workers in Scotland were working in hospitality and catering, 21% in admin, business and management and 17% in agriculture.

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\(^1\) The term A8 nationals refers to people from the Central and Eastern European countries that joined the EU in May 2004, namely Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

\(^2\) The term A2 nationals refer to people from Bulgaria and Romania, both of which joined the EU in January 2007.

\(^3\) www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration-asylum-stats.html
6. Not all areas of Scotland are affected equally by this migration. In early 2008, Edinburgh was found to be host to the highest number of A8 migrants, followed by Glasgow, Perth and Kinross, Highland, Aberdeenshire and Fife.

7. Since 2000 Glasgow has been a designated dispersal area for asylum seekers coming to the UK. As a result of this, the number of people seeking asylum in Scotland has risen in recent years from very few to approximately 5000 people per year, mainly in Glasgow. After they obtain Leave to Remain, the majority of people settle in Glasgow. Other migrants have come to Scotland for Higher Education and remained subsequently due to employment opportunities through the Fresh Talent Initiatives.

To what extent does reliable data on migration exist to inform public policy-making?

8. Lack of availability of reliable data on migration has been a constant problem for planning and delivery of services. WRS data is commonly used to assess how many A8 nationals are present but this is not effective because: only workers, not the self-employed or family members must register; not all workers register due to lack of awareness of the scheme; this scheme does not count how many people have since left the country.

9. Data on A2 nationals is even harder to use because of the many different employment schemes affecting them which all record data separately.

10. Some improvements have been made in the use of migration data recently with the inception of the GRO reports\(^4\), but more work needs to be done. Several media reports have stated that A8 and A2 nationals are returning home, but it is hard to tell how true this is, particularly in Scotland. The Labour Force Survey, which IPPR\(^5\) and EHRC\(^6\) reports are based on, is not representative of migrants because it only samples from private homes, not hostels or tied housing where many migrants live. It excludes people who do not consider the sampled address their permanent residence and have lived there for less than 6 months.

11. There is a lack of availability of updated and reliable data related to asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland. Asylum figures in Scotland are available through COSLA statistics but there is shortage of updated published data.

What is the contribution of migration to the Scottish economy?

12. Migrants have been found to be net contributors to the UK economy\(^7\). Migrants tend to be relatively young and healthy, so they work long hours, pay taxes and make relatively few demands on the health service and benefits system.

\(^4\) www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/migration/index.html
\(^5\) www.ippr.org/publicationsandreports/publication.asp?id=603
\(^6\) www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/new_europeans.pdf
\(^7\) www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/new_europeans.pdf
13. Migrants compose a significant proportion of the workforce in some sectors of the Scottish economy such as agriculture, food processing, hospitality and the care sector, and employers struggle to fill many of these vital jobs without recruiting migrants.

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

14. Migrant community organisations (MCOs) are beginning to emerge across Scotland. Many of these organisations were initially established because migrants felt isolated and unaware of their rights and entitlements in Scotland, so wanted to create a space where they could meet other migrants, discuss problems and provide support. Some MCOs have been established for a particular nationality, e.g. Polish migrants or Lithuanian migrants, but others encompass many nationalities. Local authorities and voluntary sector organisations have assisted with the establishment of MCOs, helping participants to become constituted groups, find meeting space, plan events, and apply for funding. Most MCOs have grown beyond their initial purpose and now organise cultural events which allow people from different nationalities to learn about each other’s culture and gain a better understanding of why migrants from different countries are settling in Scotland.

15. The growth of Central and Eastern European migrant communities in Scotland has increased the diversity of types of food available in shops and supermarkets which have brought in new product ranges to cater to new migrants’ tastes. Many new migrants have established their own small businesses such as grocer’s shops, bakeries, restaurants and pubs which cater to new migrant communities and allow Scottish people to learn more about different cultures. There has been an increase in Scottish people attending language courses e.g. Polish classes to improve communication with their new neighbours, friends, colleagues, service users or partners.

16. Migrants are gradually becoming involved in Scotland’s political structures. The Scottish Parliament recently established a Cross Party Group on Poland which is attended by several representatives of MCOs, service providers and individuals. The Scottish Migrants Network supports the involvement of MCOs in consultation processes and in shaping services for their communities, and hopes to secure funding for a development worker who could expand this work. There have been drives in different parts of Scotland to encourage migrants to register to vote in Scottish and European elections.

17. Migrants who have lived in Scotland for 5 years are eligible for permanent residence here and can apply for British citizenship. Many migrants will choose to return to their home country eventually, or live in another EU country, but others will settle here permanently and continue to contribute to our society.
How does the media portray the contribution of migrant communities in Scotland?

18. One of the major difficulties with media coverage of migration is that journalists conflate different categories of migrants e.g. refugees, asylum seekers, EU nationals, “illegal immigrants”. Members of the public become confused by this and often do not understand the differences between people who have come here for humanitarian purposes and economic purposes, or the differences in rights between different categories of migrants.

19. The media gives a lot of coverage to anti-immigration commentators such as Migrationwatch, which is often treated as an unbiased commentator despite its clear anti-immigration agenda, as well as BNP representatives and supporters. This is generally not balanced with the voice of migrants, or commentators who understand the positive contribution that migrants make to the UK and Scotland.

20. Media coverage often fixates on the perceived difficulties experienced in the South East of England where population density is higher and there is more pressure on services both from migrants and from long established communities. The situation in Scotland is different and migration makes an essential contribution to our aging, declining population, but this is not highlighted enough.

21. The most dangerous aspect of negative media coverage is that it leads politicians to believe that voters want a government that is tough on immigration and influences the policy of all the main UK political parties, even though it does not genuinely reflect the full ranges of voters’ opinions and is often ill-informed and biased. Ill-judged remarks by politicians who are saying what they believe voters want to hear based on negative media coverage exacerbate community cohesion tensions and reinforce myths about migration.

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

22. Oxfam, Amnesty International and several other charities established a Positive Images network to inform journalists of the facts and figures around asylum and encourage more responsible reporting. This has led to an increase in articles focusing on the reasons behind migration and the positive aspects of migration. There is plenty of scope for further work in this area by highlighting achievements from migrant communities, regulating published articles and taking tougher actions against journalism which misguides people and fragments communities.

23. Community events which encourage integration of migrants and long established populations can combat some of the negative perceptions perpetuated by the media. We worked with a migrant community organisation in Govan to organise a St Andrew’s day party which celebrated the patron
saint of Scotland and Poland and allowed participants to learn about each other’s traditional cuisine, music and dance.

24. Glasgow’s integration networks were established when asylum seekers were dispersed to the city and involve local residents and service providers. They aim to foster good relations between all different ethnic groups living in the local area and do this is a variety of ways – running integration events e.g. International Women’s Day, Refugee Week etc, supporting service provision to BME communities. Integration networks could be established in other areas of Scotland to bring together local people, new migrants and service providers and find innovative ways of fostering good relations.

25. The Scottish Migrants Network created an employment rights poster in a variety of languages which aimed to inform new migrants of their employment rights but also to inform Scottish people of the contribution that new migrants make to the Scottish economy. It featured case studies about migrants from Poland and Lithuania who experienced exploitation or difficulties with their employment on arrival in Scotland but later learned about their rights and progressed in the job market. This has been distributed throughout Scotland.

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

26. In many areas of Scotland, public services have been slow to respond to the needs of new migrants. The main considerations that must be made by service providers when delivering services to migrants are language, timing, location, awareness of rights and entitlements, and cultural awareness. Many new migrants are not fluent in English when they arrive in Scotland, so bilingual staff or interpreters are necessary for effective communication and to comply with race equality duties. When translating documents it is important to consult with local new migrant communities to ensure that only the relevant languages are being used and that only documents which are necessary are translated. Public bodies should also be aware of local English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision and signpost/refer new migrants to classes.

27. Timing of service provision is crucial, particularly for migrants who are working shifts. Public bodies should ensure that their services are available in the evening and/or weekends to allow migrants who are working long hours to access them. Location of services is also important. Ideally services should be delivered in a place that migrants are aware of and feel confident accessing. This may involve service providers running outreach surgeries at community centres, libraries etc, at least until migrants become aware of their service and feel more confident about accessing it.

28. When migrants first arrive in Scotland they often have little awareness of Scottish law, employment rights, the Scottish education system, social housing or the UK benefits system. It is important for service providers to start from first principles and fully explain what service they offer, how it operates and what the eligibility criteria are.
29. Service providers should have an awareness of any local support that may be of assistance to migrants, for example local migrant community organisations. Such organisations often fill the gaps left by official service provision and should be supported by public bodies, financially and in terms of community development.

30. Roma migrants are one particularly vulnerable group due to the oppression that they have faced over centuries in the Central and Eastern European countries they have migrated from. Service providers working in areas where Roma communities or individuals are living should have an awareness of the Roma peoples’ history, and issues which may arise from their treatment in other countries.

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

31. It is difficult for public bodies to monitor the changes in migration patterns due to the difficulties with statistics described previously, so it is difficult for them to respond effectively. It is unclear how many migrants have returned to their home countries due to the recession and how many remain in Scotland. The recession has affected A8 and A2 countries’ economies and there have been some cases of migrants returning home and finding things are worse there, so coming back to Scotland to search for work again. Population churn will be an ongoing issue with EU migrants – freedom of movement allows them to choose to live in whichever country is favourable to them at any given time.

32. We have seen no indication of a decrease in demand for our services - established clients continue to attend frequently and new migrants are registering every week.

33. In 2011 transitional restrictions on A8 nationals will end. A8 nationals will no longer have to register to work and they will have the same rights as other EU nationals. At the same time A8 nationals will gain full rights in all EU countries so may choose other locations rather than the UK. This process will occur for A2 nationals in 2014. If the Scottish Government wishes to attract and retain migrants they must ensure that migrants in Scotland are sufficiently supported by public services.

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

34. Migrants from A8 and A2 countries have had transitional restrictions imposed on them by the UK Government which they are often completely unaware of because the restrictions have not been well publicised. Public sector staff should be trained so that they are aware of these restrictions and understand the implications that they have on migrants’ access to employment, access to the benefits system and access to local authority housing and homelessness assistance. This has not yet been done in a coherent way, so service providers commonly give new migrants
inappropriate advice which in the worst case scenario can lead to destitution and exploitation.

35. Many local authorities have produced welcome packs for new migrants which provide useful local information on rights and services, but these have often been translated at high cost and then only been made available online or distributed to local advice agencies once but not circulated repeatedly for new arrivals. Local authorities should consult migrants on how useful the packs have been and on how best to distribute them.

36. Public bodies should recruit new migrants to deliver services to the communities that they serve, using positive action measures where appropriate. Employing bilingual staff reduces spending on interpreting and translation, makes migrants more confident about accessing services because they know that the service provider understands their cultural background, language and restrictions affecting their community, and shows the general public that the public body is serious about reflecting the community it serves and meeting the needs of all local people.

37. Awareness of the rights of refugees and asylum seekers has improved in the last few years amongst many public service providers. However we still come across a few public service employees who are poorly informed about the entitlements and housing rights of these groups.

Positive Action in Housing
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