Introduction

1. This submission draws on evidence and observations based on the following two regional studies:
   - de Lima et al (2007) Migrant Workers in Grampian\(^1\).
   - de Lima et al (2005) Migrant Workers in the Highlands and Islands\(^2\).

2. These studies focused mainly, though not exclusively, on labour migration from the Accession 8 (AS) countries. The studies used the following methods: literature reviews; analysis of secondary data sources to identify migrant worker populations; interviews and focus groups with migrant workers, employers and service providers.

3. The following is an overview of the main recurrent issues that emerged based on the findings of the two studies, but is also supported by other studies that have focused on migrant workers in the UK.

Overview of findings

Predicting Trends at a local level

4. Two recurrent issues that emerged from across the public sector were the challenges in identifying the current ‘stock’ of migrant workers at local level and in predicting future trends, especially in a context of changing internal and external (including global) drivers. There has been a growing view that labour migration is likely to become more circular and more unstable, especially within the context of an enlarged Europe, cheap travel and the changing economic circumstances of sending countries. This raises some questions, such as whether one off efforts to ‘pin’ numbers down is likely to yield meaningful results and issues related to competition between countries for attracting and retaining migrants particularly in areas where there is a weak infrastructure for responding to ethnic/cultural diversity (de Lima and Wright 2009)\(^3\).

5. There have been some creative efforts to understand the diversity of local populations. In this context, perhaps Scotland may wish to take cognisance of some efforts in England to undertake detailed mapping of local migrant and

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\(^2\) de Lima, P., Jentsch, B and Whelton, R (2005) Migrant Workers in the Highlands and Islands Inverness: Highland and Islands Enterprise
\(^3\) de Lima and Wright (2009), Welcoming Migrants? Migrant labour in rural Scotland in Social Policy and Society, issue 8:3, 391-404
minority ethnic populations moving beyond the census categories in a way that recognises their diverse origins as well as the changing nature of migration at a local level (e.g. Robinson et al\textsuperscript{4}; Craig et al\textsuperscript{5})

6. While there are efforts being made to improve data at all levels, it may be worth considering how the current mechanisms in place (such as monitoring data) related to the equality legislation, may be utilised more effectively by public agencies than currently appears to be the case as a means of supplementing the data sources that might be generated by Grosseto. This would involve a number of complementary strategies: consideration of how equality legislation such as the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) can be used to monitor the number and profile of all migrants and their impact on services in local areas; public and voluntary sectors agencies working closely with local employers to develop a picture of trends concerning migrant workers in the present and future. Within all of this it is important to be clear what the purpose of data collection is and how it will be used and for what purposes.

Employment
7. With very few exceptions migrant workers in the two studies were concentrated in a narrow range of sectors (especially food processing, hospitality, construction and agriculture). They were mainly undertaking semi skilled and unskilled work, with very few opportunities for training and progression within the sectors they worked in or progression outside the sector into other employment.

8. Employers expressed preference for migrant workers because they were seen to be hard working and flexible. They also revealed a preference for some nationalities over others, because they were seen to ‘fit in better’ in the locality and/or work environment. In addition, the attitudes of local workers were often contrasted negatively with migrant workers as local workers were seen to be unwilling to take on what is often termed the ‘3 D’ (Dirty, Dangerous and Difficult) jobs, where as migrant workers were seen to be flexible and willing to take on these jobs.

9. Migrants’ networks and word of mouth appeared to be growing in importance with regard to accessing employment, though in some sectors (e.g. construction) agencies still appeared to play an important role. There was a tendency for most migrants to be employed through third party agencies- i.e. employers had contracted out their human resources/employment functions.

10. The majority of migrant workers in both studies were overqualified for the mainly semi-skilled or unskilled positions they were working in. Poor grasp of

\textsuperscript{4} Robinson, D., Reeve, K., Coward, S., Bennington, J. and Buckner, L. 2005. Minority Ethnic Housing experiences in North Lincolnshire, Sheffield: Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research, Sheffield Hallam University.
English and lack of recognition of their qualifications were cited as barriers to obtaining employment commensurate with their qualifications. However, in discussions about the underemployment of migrant labour generally what appears to have been absent is any explicit recognition that some local labour markets may not have the ability to actually absorb skilled labour generally due to the lack of skilled work, and also the impact of restructuring of workplaces (i.e. hiring workers through agencies) for all workers.

**Service provision**

11. Assessing impact on services was problematic because of a combination of factors: lack of data on migrant workers; limited to non-existent monitoring systems amongst agencies providing services; and lack of knowledge and clarity on rights/entitlements of different categories of migrant workers. The latter applied both to service providers and migrants. Overall the present approach towards addressing the needs of migrant workers has tended to be ad hoc, reactive and dependent on the personal knowledge and commitment of individual staff on the ground and on information passed around informally by migrant workers.

12. The transient and ever-changing profile of migrant workers made it difficult to plan and meet their needs effectively, and local authorities reported feeling overwhelmed. Problems were exacerbated by the fact that AS nationals were migrating to geographical areas which had not experienced significant migration before and where service providers lacked experience in responding to the requirements of diverse groups. However, even areas that had experience of addressing the requirements of a diverse population — e.g. Aberdeen City — reported feeling stretched.

**Language needs**

13. The language barrier was the most consistently cited problem by service providers, employers and migrant workers, impacting on issues such as accessing services and understanding rights and responsibilities. Whilst a small number of employers were very supportive of migrant workers learning English, others did not feel it was relevant to the types of employment (low skilled) people were engaged in.

14. Often English language classes were difficult to access as a result of long and/or irregular shift patterns coupled with the inflexible nature of provision. In addition migrant’s commitment to learning English also depended on their motivation for migration and how long they intended to stay in Scotland. Migrant workers expressed a preference for classes on site at work and for provision that focused on occupationally relevant teaching. There had been a rise in levels of demand for English as an Additional Language service in schools and for some schools having children whose first language was not English was a new experience.

15. While some services did provide interpretation and translation services, generally service providers reported that budgets to support English language provision were overstretched. Lack of consistent provision of translation and interpretation facilities resulted in a heavy reliance by employers and service
providers on migrant workers with better English to translate for their co-workers, friends and family. Local service providers felt that financial constraints prevented the development of an appropriate infrastructure for translation and interpreting facilities. However, language and communication barriers can take on a special significance in the context of health and social work/care contexts. Migrant workers expressed concerns about issues of confidentiality, especially given the practice of services relying on migrants with good levels of English to accompany their compatriots to services such as health.

16. Overall issues of access to service were shaped as much by weak institutional infrastructures and skills for responding to diversity as by migrant’s expectations of what they should expect the state to provide or not provide, their biographies, reasons for migrating and demography (e.g. age, gender, etc) as well as issues such as language where there has already been a considerable public emphasis.

Information and advice
17. Lack of access to appropriate information and advice on entitlements and rights was a major concern of both migrant workers and service providers. The vast majority of migrant workers in the two studies pieced together information on rights and responsibilities through ad hoc information from friends, family and the internet. The internet — generally accessed at the local library — was a crucial resource on which the majority of migrant workers relied for accessing information and for keeping in touch with friends and families at home. Employers were often also a significant source of information and advice for migrant workers.

18. While there has been growing provision of information through agencies such as CABx, Trades Unions (if and where these exist) churches/faith groups for those who belong and the production of ‘welcome packs’ it was difficult to assess the extent to which material targeted at migrant workers was effective in actually reaching all groups.

Housing
19. Housing was consistently identified as a major issue. There was a tendency for those working in the agricultural, construction and hospitality/tourism sectors to live in tied accommodation. In the Grampian area, an increase in homelessness applications from migrant workers who had lost their jobs and as a consequence their accommodation was being reported at the time of the study. Issues of multiple occupancy and overcrowding were widely reported. Often this was partly because migrant workers wished to minimise their costs and maximise their income.

20. With regard to non-tied housing (private rented or social housing) the housing experiences of migrant workers were not dissimilar to those of the local population, for example high rents for the quality of accommodation or demand outstripping supply. Housing was a potential source of conflict between migrant workers and the so called more ‘established communities especially where there was already an overall lack of accommodation.
Social activities/interaction and civic engagement
21. Most migrant workers were keen to develop good relationships with their co-workers and the communities in which they lived. Instances of racism and stereotyping were highlighted. In general, lack of time due to patterns of working, the need to save as much money as possible and inability to communicate in English was main the reasons cited for not being involved in social activities outside work. Concerns were expressed by some about the strong prevalence of a drink culture which made some spaces in towns and rural areas ‘exclusionary’ for those perceived to be ‘different’. Whilst there some examples of young men joining local football teams and migrants attending church or engaging in faith activities, perhaps not surprising given the relative recency of the A8 and A2 migration and the rapidly changing turnover of the population there is yet little independent evidence based knowledge and understanding which has explored in any depth the nature and scale of their engagement in social, civic and political activities.

Some Concluding Thoughts
22. There are some cross cutting issues that require be discussing and debating further.

Issues of language and definition
23. In much of the recent (since May 2004 especially) discussion the term ‘migrant’ has increasingly come to be conflated with the migration of Accession Sand Accession 2 nationals into Scotland /UK. This is reflected in popular discourse and the plethora of locally commissioned research since May 2004. Despite the rhetoric of inclusivity much of the recent discourses in Scotland about migrant workers have reflected an exclusionary approach marginalising migrant workers from outside the EU as well as those from minority groups from within the enlarged EU. If Scotland is genuinely interested in welcoming all migrants, it is vital that it adopts a more inclusive and consistent definition of migrants rather than promote implicit ‘hierarchies’ of migrants and marginalise particular groups because they are small in number.

Context is important
24. There is a need at times to tease out whether some of the experiences of migrants are specific to their migrant status or are also experienced by the population in general in order to avoid spurious conclusions. For example in many rural areas the types of job available are limited generally irrespective of whether you are a migrant or not. In addition it is also highly likely that specific trends in the workplace, such as the tendency to contract out employment to agencies may not be specific to migrant workers but are the consequences of restructuring of workplaces in general and applies to all workers. In this sense there is a need to focus on all vulnerable workers to build alliances and avoid exclusionary practices by focusing on some groups and not others.

Migrant workers are diverse
25. Whilst it is important to tackle and address the exploitation of migrant workers, it is also important to recognise that migrant workers are not
homogenous. Their ‘migrant labour’ identity is one identity amongst others (e.g. gender, class, etc) and which aspects of their identity are mobilised are contingent on context (see de Lima & Wright for further discussion).

‘Integration’
26. ‘Integration’, though a contested term, has also received considerable support when conceptualised as “a two-way process that requires adaptation by migrants but also the receiving society”, and that initiatives should be “targeted at the whole of society, not just at migrants and minorities.” (Rudiger and Spencer 2003, p41). However, the rhetoric has not matched the reality. Much of the discussions and policy focus has verged on assimilationist approaches with little or no focus on trying to understand the perspectives, skills and preparedness of ‘receiving’ communities and services to cope with diverse /changing populations in their area. Much of our understanding of the receiving communities has tended to rely on large scale national attitudinal surveys and newspaper headlines, with little understanding of how migration might change whole communities over time.

27. While recognising that integration is a problematic ‘politically loaded’ concept, it is also important to recognise like many contested concepts it is also socially constructed and can take on the meaning we give it in the way its plays out in policy and practice and in the lives of people. To be effective and move away from assimilationist tendencies, ‘integration’ is perhaps best conceptualised and operationalised in policies as follows:

• ongoing, open and evolving over time;
• targeted at the whole society;
• comprehensive in the domains and the dimensions they cover, moving beyond the economic sphere to include the social, legal, civic, and cultural and the political spheres;
• built on a recognition that people have plural identities and their ‘migrant identity’ is one among others which may or not be mobilised depending on context;
• inclusive, building on the perspectives of migrants and receiving societies and focus on mobilising from the bottom up and as well as top down through effective leadership.

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April 2010