Introduction
1. The Glasgow Housing Association Ltd (GHA) welcomes the opportunity to provide written and oral evidence to the Parliamentary Equal Opportunities Committee’s inquiry into the impact and contribution of migrant populations within Scottish society and the extent and nature of trafficking.

2. As we have no direct experience of trafficking for either labour or sexual exploitation we shall confine our answers to those questions where we have direct knowledge or experience.

Background
3. The Glasgow Housing Association Ltd (GHA) was formed in 2003 as a result of a stock transfer from the Glasgow City Council. We have a network of Local Housing Organisations (LHOs) providing housing services to 56,000 tenancies in Glasgow. We also provide a factoring service to 26,000 factored homeowners. There are around 105,000 people living in our tenancies including economic migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and foreign national students. As the largest social landlord in Scotland we house a great number of vulnerable people and our tenants are some of the poorest in Europe. Our service provision and the continued regeneration of both houses and local communities are dependent on a steady rental income. Sources of private funding are also dependent on a guaranteed income stream (i.e. rents). We are often the first port of call for migrants seeking social housing and we are contracted to provide housing to the two main providers of asylum support services. Consequently, we have some knowledge and experience of the issues facing both migrants and service providers and feel we have a contribution to make to the debate.

Response
4. As part of this inquiry, the Committee seeks written views on a number of key questions:

What are the trends in migration to Scotland?
5. There has been a substantial change in the population of Scotland and in Glasgow in particular, as a result of migration. Glasgow is the only local authority in Scotland which accepts dispersed asylum seekers awaiting the result of their asylum application, under an arrangement with the Home Office. In 2000, Glasgow City Council entered into a contract to provide accommodation and support services to asylum seekers within Glasgow. Since then, at any one time there have been between around 2,500 to 1,500 asylum seeker households living in Glasgow. The majority of asylum seekers live in GHA accommodation which is leased to Glasgow City Council and the YMCA, which is...
also contracted to provide support services to this group. Once asylum seekers have received a decision and have leave to remain (refugee) status they can choose whether they leave Glasgow or stay. There is no reliable information about the numbers of refugees who have remained in Glasgow, but we estimate that we have around 1,500 refugee households who are GHA tenants. The largest groups are Afghani, Chinese, Nigerian, Somali and Iraqi.

6. The most substantial change in population through migration has occurred through economic migration from within the European Union. The expansion of the European Union in 2004 to include Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia (the A8 countries) and then Romania and Bulgaria in 2007 (the A2 countries) has had a substantial impact on the population of Glasgow. A study by Glasgow City Council estimated that there were around 7,000 A8 and A2 migrants in Glasgow\(^1\).

7. We have around 700 tenants from A8 countries. The vast majority (approximately 90%) are Polish. In addition, around five per cent of our applications for housing are from A8 nationals. Until 2009, the number of new applicants and new tenants from A8 countries was rising. However, we have seen some fall in the last year.

8. There is also economic migration from other countries. We have tenants and applicants from a wide range of other countries including France, Germany, Ireland, China, Pakistan, India, Nigeria and Egypt.

9. It is worth noting the uneven migration patterns across Scotland with cities like Edinburgh and Glasgow hosting higher numbers of European migrants. Some rural areas also host high numbers of European migrants due to the nature of work available in those areas. For example, the majority of A2 workers are only permitted to do seasonal agricultural or catering work. The consequent development of public services is also patchy as migration has a disproportionate impact on certain cities and towns.

10. There is a range of issues arising from migration that impact on service provision which we have tackled in a number of ways e.g. language provision, tenancy support, advice and information. We refer to these throughout the paper.

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

11. Generally, there is a lack of reliable data on migration and we need to trawl through a number of sources just to get an incomplete picture of migration to Scotland. For example, European migrants from A8 countries are required to register with the Workers Registration scheme (WRS) if they plan to work here. However, despite being used as a source of statistical data the WRS statistics are unreliable and incomplete as:

- self employed people or relatives and family of workers are not required to register

\(^1\) A8 Migrants in Glasgow, Blake Stevenson, 2008
• some workers are not aware that they have to register on the scheme
• no account is taken of people who leave the country after registering.

12. Data on workers from the A2 countries presents even more difficulties as they are affected by a number of different employment schemes all of which record information separately.

13. Clearly this has repercussions for service delivery and planning future services. We have no clear data on the number of A8 and A2 migrants who have returned home despite media reports indicating this trend.

14. To estimate the number of migrant households/workers there is in Glasgow, we have worked with Glasgow City Council to combine a variety of data sources. This includes our own waiting list and tenancy data, the Worker Registration Scheme and school rolls to estimate trends. We have also commissioned research into the impact on GHA of the influx of migrants following the expansion of the European Union, to which we refer throughout this response. This has helped us to shape some of our services but we are mindful of the lack of reliable up to date information and statistics.

**What is the contribution of migration to the Scottish economy?**

15. We commissioned research into European migrants following the expansion of the European Union and an increase in applications from this group, particularly Polish workers. First Bus was recruiting large numbers of Poles and needed accommodation for their workers. We agreed to provide First Bus nominees with furnished accommodation but it became clear that this was not an affordable option for many people. We wanted to identify the issues for migrants and explore the impact on GHA as a social landlord.

16. Our research\(^2\) on A8 workers in GHA tenancies found that they work in a wide range of jobs and in different sectors of the economy. Often work is sourced through employment agencies. Employment included working as bus drivers, cleaners, warehouse assistant, in business administration, in factories, hotel & catering, retail, construction as well as more skilled occupations such as electrical engineering, plasterer, mechanic and a physiotherapist. A8 and A2 migrants tend to be relatively young and healthy and make up a significant proportion of the workforce in the agricultural, food processing, hospitality and care sectors.\(^3\)

17. Migrants have taken jobs which are often temporary and low paid. However, in the past year a number of our tenants have lost their jobs and have not been able to find other employment. If A8 workers have not been registered on the Worker Registration

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\(^2\) Housing Migrant Workers: The Impact on GHA, Tribal, 2008

Scheme and in employment for 12 months, they are not entitled to Housing Benefit generally.

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

18. Asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers have helped Scotland to become more diverse and culturally rich. Scotland, and particularly Glasgow, already has migrant populations of Italian, Irish, Polish, Afro-Caribbean, Indian, Pakistani and Chinese people. The new migrants often come here with little or no knowledge of their host country and tend to gravitate towards those existing communities for advice and support if possible.

19. A number of new migrant community organisations have developed in Scotland as migrants themselves have come together to support one another, network, share experiences and advice and lobby for services. The initial reasons for setting these up were isolation and a lack of knowledge of rights and entitlements. Many have since developed further to encompass involvement with cultural events at both local community levels and city-wide levels.

20. In Glasgow there has been a growth in the number of Eastern European shops, bakers and small businesses catering for migrants. These offer Scottish people the opportunity to try different foods, clothes etc.

21. The increase in new migrants has also triggered an increase in the number of people learning other languages, both English as a second language and Polish or other Eastern European languages like Russian. GHA has supported these developments both financially and in policy terms.

22. Migrant participation in our political structures is increasing, evidenced by the Cross Party Group on Poland established by the Scottish Parliament. At a local level in Glasgow we work with the local integration networks. These were originally set up to support the integration of refugees, but a number now support the integration of new migrants from Europe. Those networks play an important role as a consultative forum for local issues and policy development. They also support cultural events and facilitate communication between new communities and the host communities.

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

23. It is clear that there are still many myths and misconceptions about asylum seekers, refugees and migrants among the population. This is not helped by the media coverage. The media tends to portray migrants as if they were almost a homogenous group. Often there is no distinction made between the different categories of migrants; illegal immigrants are rarely distinguished from asylum seekers, refugees, European nationals and other foreign nationals. This can lead to an erroneous image of migrants and lack of understanding of the different humanitarian and economic issues affecting them.
There has been considerable negative press in the past focussing on illegal immigration and anti-immigration commentators. The press also has an English focus, which has little relevance for Scotland. There has been little mention of the Scottish Government’s focus on welcoming migrants to counter-act the impact of Scotland’s declining and ageing population.

24. In the same vein there is a focus on the lack of skills, levels of illiteracy and cultural differences among migrants when in fact many people taking low paid unskilled jobs are actually highly educated and skilled. However, we believe that media coverage is slowly improving. There have been a number of positive television programmes about migrants and the media are beginning to hear the voices of migrants themselves.

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

25. The Scottish Government has helped to send positive messages about equality and diversity. Agencies such as the Scottish Refugee Council, Positive Action in Housing, Glasgow Anti-Racist Alliance and the local Integration networks have sought to dispel the myths and foster good relations through the media and through events.

26. The Positive Images network established by Oxfam and Amnesty International was set up to tackle misinformation, and provide facts and figures to journalists to address negative stereotyping and reporting. Building on the work stated by this group would be a positive first step. We would encourage discussion with migrant community organisations to on the way forward.

27. There is considerable scope for focussing on positive outcomes from migrant communities, highlighting achievements and perhaps looking to set up a forum or award for recognition of positive contributions to Scottish culture, politics and business.

28. We have used our own publications to highlight positive contributions by migrants and plan to do more in the future. We have also made our own contribution to community cohesion by funding cross cultural events and integration events. We have also ensured that refugees and other migrants are able to access our wider action programme including our Modern apprenticeship scheme, a project aimed at supporting young mothers to gain academic qualifications and training and supporting Positive Action for Training in Housing (PATH) trainees.

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

29. We cannot comment on this definitively. However, as migration patterns are uneven across the country, it is likely that service provision is also uneven. In Glasgow, when asylum seekers were first dispersed here in 2000, there was no proper assessment carried out on the impact on services such as education and health care. It is also assumed that people would leave the city once they were given leave to remain. Similarly, there was little work done with host communities to prepare them for asylum seekers coming into the area, and many of the initial services were provided by local
voluntary agencies and churches. This provided an important lesson for all concerned and has since been addressed. Glasgow’s efforts to integrate its new communities are now held up as a model for other cities.

30. Subsequently, when the European Union expanded, Glasgow City Council brought together representatives from health, education, housing (GHA), Job Centre plus to try to determine impacts on services and the need for robust advice and information. We worked with the Glasgow City Council and other partners, to produce Welcome Packs in a number of Eastern European languages. However, efforts were hampered by the lack of reliable data on both incoming and out going migrants.

31. Changes in immigration rules have also served to complicate matters and make it even more difficult to project migration trends and develop and align services. Service providers need to consider language requirements, knowledge of rights and obligations, cultural and religious diversity, location, timing and accessibility of services. Service providers are expected to deliver cost effective solutions to service provision whilst striving for excellence. As patterns of migration are uneven there is likely to be a disproportionate impact on some local authority areas. Additional resources may be needed to ensure a proper alignment of services. Registered Social Housing providers have had no access to additional funds to support the influx of migrants and GHA as the biggest landlord in Glasgow has had a disproportionate role to play in service development. The answers to the following two questions are also relevant here.

What is the effectiveness of public sector responses to changing migration patterns?
32. In GHA we have developed specific services aimed at migrants. We improved access to translation services, by contracting a telephone interpreting service and increased the range of publications that we offer in translation. This includes a dual translation of the tenancy agreement and pro-active translation of core leaflets on key services such as repairs, hate crime and making a complaint. We are currently producing a range of short videos explaining key services which will be subtitled in key languages. We have also supported and funded ESOL (English as a Foreign Language) schemes to help both refugees and migrants to learn English. As noted in the response to the next question we have recently obtained funding for a Migrant Support worker to further develop services and keep abreast of developments.

What is the degree of awareness of the rights of migrants?
33. Our research found that migrants are often not aware of their rights or their responsibilities as tenants. At the time of the research there was considerable reliance on assistance from within the community, word of mouth and informal interpreting arrangements through friends and family. Where migrant workers have lost their jobs, there are additional issues due to the complexity of the problems. EU migrant workers have differing levels of access to housing and benefits but any entitlement is bound up with work. As a result the law around entitlement to housing and assistance is extremely complicated and subject to regular review. Evidence suggests that many

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migrants are falling through the gaps in welfare provision and that the levels of destitution are increasing.

34. Our welfare benefits advisors have supported some migrant workers to obtain benefits and we have worked closely with other agencies such as Glasgow City Council Welfare Benefits service and Positive Action in Housing.

35. As immigration is a complex and ever-changing policy area we find that staff are also not aware of the rights, entitlements, requirements and barriers for migrants. It is a highly specialist area and people need to be supported to make the correct decisions and provide the correct information to applicants and tenants. We have produced briefing material for our Board on the issues and we have written guidance for staff. We have successfully obtained funding from the Lintel Trust (the Scottish housing association charitable trust) to employ a Migrant Support worker. This person has now been appointed and will take up their post shortly. The remit of the post is to provide support and guidance to GHA staff, to forge and encourage relationships with other agencies supporting migrant workers and to promote best practice throughout the Registered Social Landlord sector.

36. We feel that it would be very useful if the Scottish Government were to produce guidance for public sector and housing association landlords on accommodating migrant workers, particularly those who are not eligible for access to public funds and have no means of paying their rent if they lose their employment. The guidance should be clear about the tenure that should be made available to migrants in this situation. Scottish guidance for migrant workers on their rights and entitlements would also be useful.

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?

37. As we noted at the outset we do not have direct experience of trafficking and any observations would be purely conjectural.

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

38. As above we do not have direct experience of this issue as a social landlord.

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?

39. As above we do not have direct experience of this issue as a social landlord.

40. I trust that the foregoing is of assistance to you.

The Glasgow Housing Association Ltd (GHA)
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