

Migration Statistics User Forum Conference 15/09/15 - Breakout session notes

- How should national policy aims be measured by migration statistics? If so, which numbers and which routes of entry?
 1. In addition to net migration there should be some measures of fairness (“play by the rules” etc. Should cover employers as well as migrants.
 2. Exit checks should be associated with visas to assess compliance. Other data should be linked (e.g. with DWP and HMRC sources). Unique identifiers would make this easier (Biometric Residence Permits?). Stocks and activity measures are important as well as flows. Migration indicators should be added in to other data collections.
 3. Some discussion of splitting out components (asylum, study etc.).
 4. Should use the “WhyUK variable in the LFS more.
 5. Employment rate of refugees might be a measure.
 6. Better handle on numbers of illegal migrants would be useful (overstayers, clandestines etc.).
 7. It would be good to track better changes in status of migrants.

- What issues stem from the broader numerical picture across Europe and how should this influence migration statistics?
 1. There is a lag between events occurring, their recording and analysis and publication which is made worse by having so many EU countries to deal with, This makes it difficult to get an EU wide picture at any one time.
 2. In relation to illegal moves, there is a need for people-centred rather than event-centred (detection) statistics, especially in relation to protection rather than formal asylum. This would avoid double counting.
 3. More data are needed on the processing of claims. This is particularly a problem where some form of asylum seeking is involved. The objective is a joint database across countries.
 4. How do estimate absorption capacities at both national and local levels. We also need better data on the ebb and flow through national talent bases.
 5. What do we want better statistics for? If we had them would we make different decisions?

- What are the principal statistical concerns at the local and devolved level? How equipped are we to measure and deal with them?
 1. Request for data on where asylum seekers and refugees ultimately settle, AFTER they have been given leave to remain – [I think we could say where they live 6 months post-acceptance]. This is for two reasons 1) to more accurately distribute and understand need for financial resourcing to support these groups long-term and ii) to provide facts to the debate about where settlement ultimately takes place. [Assuming that asylum seekers and refugees get NI numbers I can’t see why there shouldn’t be a cohort match

with the L2 system / DWP records – much more straightforward than the matching work around Troubled Families]

2. Needs to be more systematic collection of personal characteristics data across administrative systems to indicate service demand and issues relating to migrants – for example NHS record ethnicity, but country of birth would be much more useful for looking at issues such as FGM.
3. Currently Local Authorities know nothing apart from a modelled estimate of total numbers of new international migrants – a need was expressed to understand much more detail about new migrants – both understand changing communities – (e.g. country of origin) and to provide services (household characteristics / age breakdown).
4. International emigration details at a local level are virtually non-existent – so very difficult to understand net change
5. Annual Population Survey/ Scottish Health Survey – could be enhanced in sample size (to enable more local analysis) AND/OR further questions re recent migration added.
6. Local agencies have limited capacity and capability to monitor and interpret migration data sources – there does need to be more consolidation / signposting of what is available, especially at a local level.
7. Number of migrants - without an understanding of family composition, skills, economic activity, age etc. provide very little evidence for planning of local resources