

International migration to and from the United Kingdom, 1975–1999: consistency, change and implications for the labour market

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade or so, migration has become an increasingly important political issue in the wider context of social and economic change, with policy debate focused on three main propositions. Firstly, there is the proposition that replacement migration will be needed to meet demographic shortfalls and provide for an ageing population. Secondly, there is a perceived need to compete successfully in a global skills market, with immigration regarded as an engine of economic growth. Thirdly, there is a recognition of the contribution that migration can make to meeting identified skill shortages in the public and private sectors at the present time.

An accurate picture is needed of recent trends and patterns in population migration to and from the United Kingdom (UK) and their significance for the labour market, as a basis for informed policy-making. A great deal of relevant data exists in disparate places and a recent study carried out for the Home Office by the Migration Research Unit (MRU) in the Department of Geography at University College London has sought to consolidate and integrate a wide range of information which contributes to the overall picture.

The study focused on the period since 1975 and drew on a variety of sources, including the Labour Force Survey, work permit statistics and Home Office information on asylum seekers. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) provided a substantial amount of data from the International Passenger Survey (IPS). These included some special tables on non-British migrants, not hitherto published, which contained a breakdown of employed people into six categories based on citizenship.

The analysis of the IPS data produced some interesting insights into consistent and changing aspects of population movement into and out

This article presents some findings of a recent study¹ carried out for the Home Office by the Migration Research Unit (MRU) in the Department of Geography at UCL. The study was concerned with patterns and trends in international migration to and from the United Kingdom since 1975, with a particular focus on those in employment, and drew on many sources. The statistics analysed here derive from the International Passenger Survey, including hitherto unpublished tables provided by the Office for National Statistics on migration of the employed by citizenship. They indicate remarkable consistency in some aspects of migration flows and major change in others.

of the UK during the last twenty-five years, with significant labour market implications. It highlighted some differences in patterns and trends of migration by employed people from developed and developing countries. This article presents some of the findings.

DEFINING 'MIGRANTS'

It is necessary at the outset to state the definition of 'a migrant' and 'an employed migrant' as used below. The IPS definition of a migrant is given in *Box 1*. Employed migrants are those who were in employment before migrating and whose regular occupation was categorised as either 'professional and managerial' or 'manual and clerical'.

Box one

DEFINITION OF A MIGRANT

The IPS uses the following internationally-agreed definitions.

- A migrant into the UK is a person who has resided abroad for a year or more and who states on arrival the intention to stay in the UK for a year or more.
- A migrant from the UK is a person who has resided in the UK for a year or more and who states on departure the intention to reside abroad for a year or more.

The limitations of these definitions need to be borne in mind when assessing the labour market implications of migration. On the one hand, 'migrants' do not include those who come to the UK for less than a year but nevertheless enter the labour force for a period of time (eg seasonal workers, working holiday-makers and some highly-skilled corporate employees). On the other hand, occupation *before* migrating does not tell us what occupation a migrant will take up at their destination: some employed migrants may become unemployed or take a lower-status job, while others such as spouses who were previously inactive may find work. However, some broad indications of labour market impact may be derived from the scale, patterns and trends of movement described.

The statistics on total flows of population 1981–99 given in the next section are adjusted to take account of asylum seekers and visitor switchers, whereas only unadjusted data are available for the more

detailed analyses of population flows for the full 1975–99 period set out in subsequent sections. It is important to have regard to this fact when interpreting trends of change in flows since asylum seekers, many from less developed countries, have been a more significant element in the latter part of the period.

Because the sample of 'migrants' in the IPS is small and standard errors may be high, the analyses focus on broad trends and patterns over time and use aggregations of data into five-year periods, rather than examining detailed annual figures and changes. Further information on these and related issues are given in *Box 1* and in the Appendix.

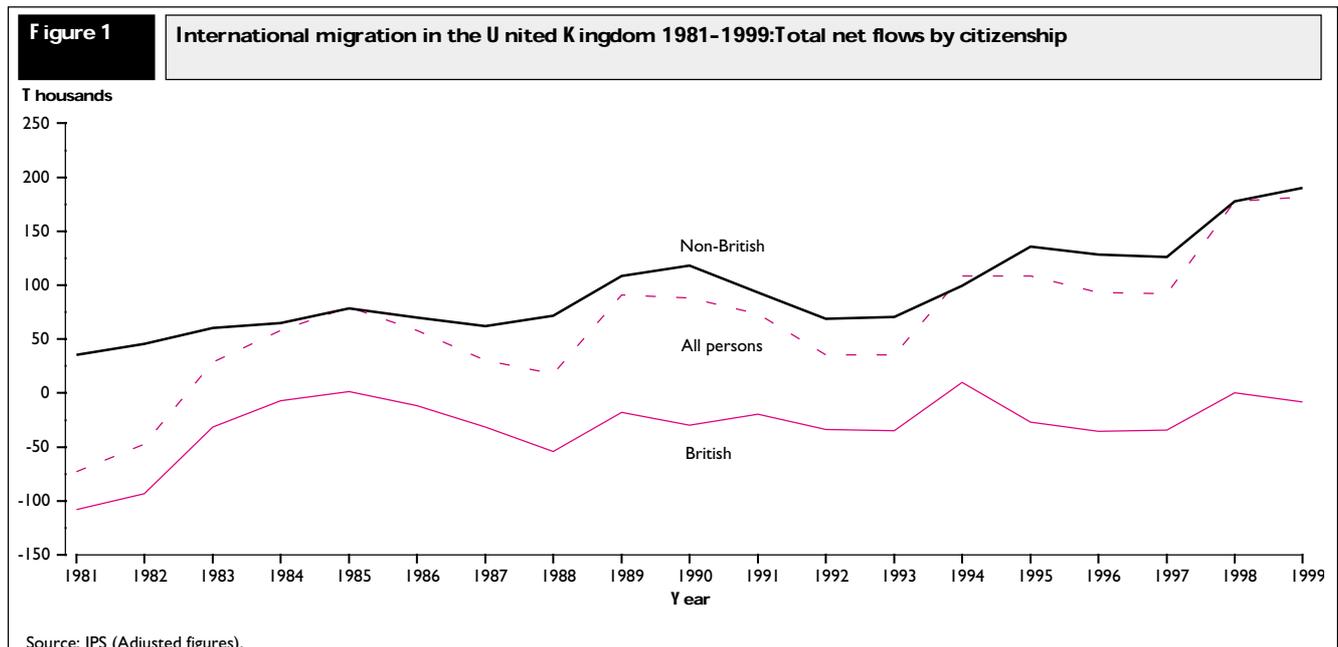
POPULATION MIGRATION: TOTAL FLOWS

Looking first at overall levels of migration into and out of the UK over the last two decades, the most striking change has been the big increase in numbers entering the country with a more constant outflow, resulting in a net gain to the UK population of some 1.2 million people between 1981 and 1999. At the beginning of the 1980s, there was an annual net loss of people. By the end of the 1990s, the annual net inflow was approaching 200,000. The growing gain to the UK population was the product of an increasing net inflow of non-British citizens off-set in most years by a smaller net outflow of British people (*Figure 1*).

The net figures conceal some changing trends in the scale of British and non-British movements. Gross British inflows remained fairly stable throughout the period, fluctuating around an annual figure of about 100,000, whereas non-British inflows increased over most of the period, from 104,500 in 1981 to 331,800 in 1999. By contrast, though gross outflows of British citizens were very much larger than those of the non-British at the start of the period, 168,300 compared to 69,000 in 1981, the two were converging from the late eighties onwards. In 1998–99, the British outflow was actually exceeded by the non-British, 126,500 compared to nearly 142,000 in 1999.

REGIONAL IMPACT

Throughout the twenty-five years, there has been a fairly stable pattern in respect of migration flows to and from different regions of the UK. London consistently received around a third of the total inflow, while the South East received on average just over 17 per cent. Thus, London and the South East taken together averaged about half of the national total. No other region reached double figures (*Table 1*).



In the outflow, just over a quarter of the total came from London during the period as a whole, though the proportion had increased to nearly 30 per cent by 1995–99. The proportion from the South East was fairly constant and almost identical to the average for the inflow – just over 17 per cent. Seven regions had a higher proportion of the outflow than of the inflow but all averaged less than 10 per cent of the total (Table 2).

There were significant differences in the geographical distribution of British and non-British flows over the twenty-five year period. British

inflows were more evenly distributed across the regions, with only 21.5 per cent on average coming to London compared to over 40 per cent of non-British. Outside London, only the West Midlands region received on average a higher proportion of the non-British inflow than of the British and the difference was small (6.2 per cent compared to 5.8 per cent).

In the case of outflows, the British and non-British patterns were even less alike. The average outflow of British citizens from London (17.3 per cent of the total) was exceeded by that from the South East (18.4

Table 1 International migration 1975–1999, five-year groups; inflows by citizenship and countries of the United Kingdom and Government Office Regions of England (percentage of the United Kingdom total)

	United Kingdom	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	North East	North West (inc Merseyside)	Yorkshire and Humberside	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England	London	South East	South West
All Citizenships														
1975–79	100.0	90.3	2.5	6.5	0.7	2.1	8.8	6.3	3.9	7.5	6.6	32.6	16.0	6.5
1980–84	100.0	90.7	2.4	6.2	0.7	2.5	8.2	5.7	4.0	6.4	7.9	30.8	17.1	8.1
1985–89	100.0	90.8	2.4	6.0	0.7	2.2	8.2	5.4	4.2	5.3	9.7	32.0	17.2	6.6
1990–94	100.0	89.5	2.4	7.3	0.7	2.2	7.2	5.9	4.3	5.6	9.7	29.0	18.6	6.9
1995–99	100.0	91.0	2.7	5.6	0.6	2.0	7.1	4.9	4.2	5.7	7.7	36.1	17.1	6.1
British														
1975–79	100.0	88.2	3.0	7.8	1.1	2.9	9.8	7.1	4.5	7.8	7.3	23.2	17.6	8.1
1980–84	100.0	89.2	2.7	7.0	1.1	3.4	9.2	5.4	5.1	5.9	7.8	20.9	20.5	11.0
1985–89	100.0	90.1	2.5	6.5	0.9	2.9	10.3	7.4	5.0	6.0	9.2	20.8	20.4	8.1
1990–94	100.0	88.3	2.1	8.7	0.8	1.9	8.1	7.1	5.7	5.7	9.5	19.5	21.0	9.7
1995–99	100.0	88.2	3.7	6.6	1.3	2.7	9.6	4.8	5.8	3.8	10.0	23.3	19.4	8.8
Non-British														
1975–79	100.0	91.9	2.2	5.5	0.4	1.6	8.0	5.7	3.5	7.3	6.2	39.6	14.7	5.4
1980–84	100.0	91.9	2.2	5.5	0.4	1.8	7.3	5.9	3.2	6.8	8.0	38.8	14.3	5.8
1985–89	100.0	91.4	2.4	5.5	0.6	1.7	6.5	3.8	3.5	4.6	10.1	41.2	14.6	5.4
1990–94	100.0	90.5	2.6	6.2	0.6	2.5	6.5	5.1	3.3	5.5	9.8	36.3	16.7	4.8
1995–99	100.0	92.5	2.2	5.1	0.2	1.7	5.8	4.9	3.3	6.8	6.4	43.0	15.9	4.7

Source: IPS (Unadjusted figures).

Table 2 International migration 1975–1999, five-year groups; outflows by citizenship and countries of the United Kingdom and Government Office Regions of England (percentage of the United Kingdom total)

	United Kingdom	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	North East	North West (inc Merseyside)	Yorkshire and Humberside	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England	London	South East	South West
All Citizenships														
1975–79	100.0	86.0	3.2	9.2	1.6	3.7	9.2	6.0	4.4	5.8	8.8	25.3	16.8	6.1
1980–84	100.0	84.6	4.1	10.0	1.3	4.0	9.4	6.1	4.6	6.0	8.8	23.1	15.7	6.9
1985–89	100.0	87.0	2.9	8.7	1.4	2.6	7.8	5.4	3.5	5.7	10.1	24.6	18.8	8.6
1990–94	100.0	87.3	2.6	9.2	0.9	1.9	6.6	5.3	3.9	6.2	10.5	28.2	17.1	7.5
1995–99	100.0	88.4	2.1	8.3	1.1	2.4	7.9	5.1	4.9	5.6	7.6	29.9	17.8	7.2
British														
1975–79	100.0	83.5	3.8	10.7	2.1	4.6	10.7	7.1	5.2	6.1	9.0	16.4	17.5	6.8
1980–84	100.0	83.0	4.3	11.0	1.6	5.2	11.3	7.3	5.2	6.6	8.8	15.4	15.8	7.3
1985–89	100.0	85.6	3.4	9.0	2.0	3.1	8.9	6.6	4.2	6.1	8.8	17.8	20.0	10.2
1990–94	100.0	86.4	2.8	9.5	1.2	2.3	8.1	6.3	4.6	7.2	11.4	18.7	19.3	8.6
1995–99	100.0	82.9	3.3	12.5	1.4	3.2	7.1	4.4	5.0	4.9	8.5	18.9	21.0	9.8
Non-British														
1975–79	100.0	91.3	2.0	6.2	0.6	2.1	5.9	3.7	2.8	5.0	8.3	43.7	15.2	4.5
1980–84	100.0	88.1	3.5	7.9	0.5	1.5	5.5	3.5	3.4	4.6	8.7	39.5	15.4	5.9
1985–89	100.0	89.0	2.1	8.4	0.5	1.7	6.1	3.6	2.5	4.9	12.1	35.2	17.0	6.1
1990–94	100.0	88.5	2.3	8.7	0.6	1.3	4.6	4.0	3.0	4.9	9.3	41.4	14.1	6.0
1995–99	100.0	92.7	3.1	4.4	-0.2	1.3	5.0	5.6	2.7	8.8	7.0	41.0	16.0	5.3

Source: IPS (Unadjusted figures).

per cent), with over 10 per cent from Scotland. By contrast, over 40 per cent of the non-British outflow came from London and 15.5 per cent from the South East.

Given the overall trends in population migration to and from the UK described in the previous section, with a net outflow of British citizens and a much bigger net inflow of non-British, the regional patterns outlined above have meant net gains of population to London in every five-year period and by far the greatest aggregate gain to this region, followed by the South East. Eight other regions experienced a net inflow in the 1995–99 period (and in some cases earlier) but London still received over half of the net gain in these last five years (Table 3).

Whilst these data relate to non-active as well as employed migrants, they have significant labour market implications at a regional level. They indicate the key position of London and the South East in the global movement of labour.

THE AGE STRUCTURE OF MIGRANTS

The total net inflow of population to the UK which began in the mid-eighties had some consistent and changing features in respect of age distribution. One of the consistent features was the predominance of those aged 15 to 24. Even in the 1975–84 period, there was a net gain of this age group while all other groups experienced a net loss. In the last five years, the 25–34 age-group also recorded a substantial net inflow (Table 4). The youth of incoming migrants clearly has labour force implications both immediately and in the longer term if family formation and expansion take place.

Trends and patterns in respect of age distribution were significantly different for British and non-British population flows. Between 1975 and 1999, there was a net loss of British citizens in every age group in nearly every five-year period, with the largest aggregate losses in the 25 to 34 group (-366,000) and the 15 to 24 group (-248,000). By contrast, there was a net gain of the non-British in every age-group in almost

every period, with by far the largest aggregate gain (over 790,000) aged 15 to 24. The greater part of the British outflow occurred in the late 'seventies and early 'eighties, while the non-British inflow of young people leapt up sharply in the late nineties.

NON-ACTIVE MIGRANTS

One of the most noteworthy changes in the migrant population has been in the composition of the non-active part of the flows – that is to say, those who were *not* in employment before they migrated (Tables 5 and 6). Table 6 shows that over the period as a whole the dominant components of the non-active population were consistently those classified as students and children under sixteen, who together comprised over 70 per cent of both inflow and outflow.

Between 1975 and 1989, children were the larger element. However, in the 1990s, students came to comprise by far the largest group, forming over half the gross inflow of the non-active in 1995–99, whereas children were only about a quarter. In terms of absolute numbers, the inflow of students in 1995–99 (359,000) was more than twice as high as in 1975–79. Though outflows also increased substantially over the twenty-five year period, there was still a net inflow of over 165,000 in the late nineties.

The increase in the student inflow has significance for the labour market in several respects: for example, the likelihood that many recorded as students before entering the UK are coming to work, not study (including the growing numbers admitted as working holiday-makers) and that some who do study will remain in the country to work when their studies are complete.

Another feature of change with labour market implications is the dwindling proportion of non-active migrants classified as 'housewives' – they were a quarter of the total non-active flows in the earlier part of the study period but only 13.4 per cent of the inflow and 15.8 per cent of the outflow in 1995–99. These changes were almost certainly due in

Table 3 International migration 1975–1999, five-year groups; net flows by citizenship and countries of the United Kingdom and Government Office Regions of England (thousands)

	United Kingdom	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	North East	North West (inc Merseyside)	Yorkshire and Humberside	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England	London	South East	South West
All Citizenships														
1975–79	-105.5	-50.5	-9.6	-35.4	-10.1	-18.9	-13.2	-3.8	-9.5	10.3	-29.3	41.7	-25.2	-2.4
1980–84	-136.0	-58.6	-20.8	-49.5	-7.0	-19.5	-24.8	-11.5	-11.8	-3.8	-20.5	39.6	-8.5	1.9
1985–89	121.1	150.0	-1.9	-21.4	-6.1	-0.6	14.2	6.5	12.1	2.2	7.9	115.7	4.6	-12.3
1990–94	112.4	124.8	-0.2	-12.5	-1.0	6.2	15.2	13.2	9.5	-0.8	1.9	40.9	37.1	1.8
1995–99	412.3	402.5	17.7	-5.6	-3.3	4.0	21.2	16.8	8.9	25.3	32.9	215.7	64.1	13.2
1975–99	404.3	568.2	-14.8	-124.4	-27.5	-28.8	12.6	21.2	9.2	33.2	-7.1	453.6	72.1	2.2
British														
1975–79	-305.2	-236.0	-14.9	-44.4	-10.2	-20.5	-36.4	-21.8	-18.6	-11.7	-34.3	-23.4	-53.1	-15.9
1980–84	-308.1	-230.2	-20.2	-50.7	-7.0	-23.5	-43.5	-30.2	-16.4	-23.1	-31.6	-24.8	-29.4	-7.6
1985–89	-113.9	-74.3	-8.6	-22.9	-8.3	-5.0	-3.1	-3.3	-0.5	-7.4	-7.7	-5.0	-20.3	-22.6
1990–94	-109.0	-84.6	-7.2	-14.8	-3.1	-4.8	-8.5	-3.0	0.8	-15.5	-22.6	-15.9	-11.6	-3.5
1995–99	-95.7	-68.5	1.6	-27.7	-2.2	-2.5	-4.2	-11.4	-4.7	-19.0	-3.1	7.3	-17.0	-13.9
1975–99	-931.9	-693.6	-49.3	-160.5	-30.8	-56.3	-95.7	-69.7	-39.4	-76.7	-99.3	-61.8	-131.4	-63.5
Non-British														
1975–79	199.6	185.5	5.1	8.7	0.1	1.4	23.1	18.2	9.2	22.1	5.1	65.2	28.0	13.5
1980–84	172.3	171.5	-0.6	1.2	0.2	4.0	18.8	18.6	4.7	19.3	11.2	64.4	20.7	9.6
1985–89	234.9	224.4	6.7	1.5	1.9	4.1	17.2	9.8	12.1	9.4	15.6	120.8	24.8	10.0
1990–94	221.3	209.5	7.3	2.4	1.8	11.1	23.5	16.0	8.7	14.8	24.4	56.9	48.7	5.2
1995–99	400.0	369.2	14.3	17.1	-0.9	6.4	22.1	18.2	15.2	39.5	27.7	160.6	61.9	17.3
1975–99	1,228.1	1,160.1	32.8	30.9	3.1	27.0	104.7	80.8	49.9	105.1	84.0	467.9	184.1	55.6

Source: IPS (Unadjusted figures).

Table 4 International migration 1975–1999, five-year groups; flows by citizenship and age (thousands)

	Inflows							Outflows							Balance						
	Total	<15	15–24	25–34	35–44	45–60	60/65+	Total	<15	15–24	25–34	35–44	45–60	60/65+	Total	<15	15–24	25–34	35–44	45–60	60/65+
All C citizenships																					
1975–79	930.8	166.5	312.4	261.2	106.0	61.4	23.3	1036.4	182.0	267.9	353.0	131.0	73.9	28.6	-105.6	-15.5	44.5	-91.8	-25.0	-12.5	-5.3
1980–84	929.6	206.6	276.2	251.9	115.4	61.6	17.9	1065.6	217.4	241.6	344.5	145.9	80.8	35.4	-136.0	-10.9	34.7	-92.6	-30.5	-19.2	-17.5
1985–89	1,159.5	214.2	356.6	303.9	168.6	88.4	27.8	1038.6	182.2	258.4	322.7	135.6	95.3	44.4	120.9	32.0	98.2	-18.8	33.0	-6.9	-16.6
1990–94	1,215.8	191.7	383.2	367.9	155.3	93.2	24.5	1103.3	173.4	281.6	373.7	154.4	89.3	30.9	112.4	18.3	101.6	-5.8	0.9	3.8	-6.4
1995–99	1,501.7	166.7	545.8	489.3	180.1	94.4	25.4	1067.2	128.2	282.8	394.8	146.6	88.3	26.5	434.5	38.5	263.0	94.5	33.5	6.1	-1.1
1975–99	5,737.4	945.7	1,874.2	1,674.2	725.4	399.0	118.9	5,311.1	883.2	1,332.3	1,788.7	713.5	427.6	165.8	426.2	62.4	542.0	-114.5	11.9	-28.7	-46.9
British																					
1975–79	395.7	83.0	82.5	115.4	58.0	42.1	14.7	701.0	134.0	168.3	225.6	93.9	56.5	22.7	-305.3	-51.0	-85.8	-110.2	-35.9	-14.4	-8.0
1980–84	415.2	98.1	84.9	112.8	68.3	39.5	11.6	723.3	157.1	145.6	221.6	106.5	62.7	29.8	-308.2	-58.9	-60.8	-108.8	-38.3	-23.2	-18.2
1985–89	521.5	105.8	113.5	130.0	91.6	60.1	20.5	635.5	111.8	155.4	183.9	81.5	69.2	33.7	-114.0	-6.0	-41.9	-53.9	10.0	-9.1	-13.1
1990–94	531.4	96.4	118.1	156.1	78.4	65.3	17.1	640.3	105.7	151.3	205.9	88.8	63.7	24.9	-109.0	-9.4	-33.1	-49.9	-10.4	1.6	-7.8
1995–99	525.8	81.0	107.0	169.9	86.7	60.2	21.0	610.6	83.1	133.7	213.1	98.0	62.1	20.6	-84.9	-2.0	-26.8	-43.2	-11.4	-1.9	0.4
1975–99	2,389.6	464.3	506.0	684.2	383.0	267.2	84.9	3,310.7	591.7	754.3	1,050.1	468.7	314.2	131.7	-921.4	-127.3	-248.4	-366.0	-86.0	-47.0	-46.7
Non-British																					
1975–79	535.1	83.5	229.9	145.8	48.0	19.3	8.6	335.4	48.0	99.6	127.4	37.1	17.4	5.9	199.7	35.5	130.3	18.4	10.9	1.9	2.7
1980–84	514.4	108.5	191.3	139.1	47.1	22.1	6.3	342.3	60.3	96.0	122.9	39.4	18.1	5.6	172.2	48.0	95.5	16.2	7.8	4.0	0.7
1985–89	638.0	108.4	243.1	173.9	77.0	28.3	7.3	403.1	70.4	103.0	138.8	54.1	26.1	10.7	234.9	38.0	140.1	35.1	23.0	2.2	-3.5
1990–94	684.4	95.3	265.1	211.8	76.9	27.9	7.4	463.0	67.7	130.3	167.8	65.6	25.6	6.0	221.4	27.7	134.7	44.1	11.3	2.2	1.4
1995–99	975.9	85.7	438.8	319.4	93.4	34.2	4.4	456.6	45.1	149.1	181.7	48.6	26.2	5.9	519.4	40.5	289.8	137.7	44.9	8.0	-1.5
1975–99	3,347.8	481.4	1,368.2	990.0	342.4	131.8	34.0	2,000.4	291.5	578.0	738.6	244.8	113.4	34.1	1,347.6	189.7	790.4	251.5	97.9	18.3	-0.2

Source: IPS (Unadjusted figures).

Table 5 International migration 1975–1999, five-year groups; non active flows by usual occupation and citizenship (thousands)

	All Citizenships			British			Non British		
	Inflows	Outflows	Balance	Inflows	Outflows	Balance	Inflows	Outflows	Balance
Students									
1975–79	153.4	81.7	71.6	30.5	30.8	-0.1	122.8	52.2	71.9
1980–84	138.5	125.0	13.5	35.3	35.7	-0.3	103.3	89.3	14.0
1985–89	190.5	148.5	42.0	51.6	51.1	0.6	139.0	97.5	41.4
1990–94	224.8	197.4	27.4	55.9	61.5	-5.5	169.0	136.2	33.0
1995–99	359.0	193.6	165.4	44.7	64.2	-19.6	314.3	129.3	184.9
1975–99	1,066.2	746.2	319.9	218.0	243.3	-24.9	848.4	504.5	345.2
Housewives									
1975–79	119.3	111.3	8.1	52.6	74.4	-21.7	66.9	38.6	29.8
1980–84	138.6	129.0	9.5	62.7	90.8	-27.9	75.8	38.2	37.6
1985–89	151.0	89.7	61.6	77.5	50.5	27.0	73.8	39.1	34.6
1990–94	127.0	80.8	46.2	62.9	47.0	16.0	64.1	34.0	30.1
1995–99	90.5	66.9	23.7	39.0	40.8	-1.6	51.5	26.1	25.4
1975–99	626.4	477.7	149.1	294.7	303.5	-8.2	332.1	176.0	157.5
Other Adults									
1975–79	44.1	45.8	-1.7	18.1	21.8	-3.8	25.8	25.1	2.0
1980–84	28.4	32.0	-3.4	14.4	20.9	-6.6	14.1	10.8	3.0
1985–89	32.5	50.9	-18.5	20.6	34.9	-14.3	11.9	16.1	-4.2
1990–94	34.3	32.3	2.0	17.4	22.7	-5.3	17.0	9.6	7.3
1995–99	47.6	23.9	23.8	27.0	18.3	8.6	20.7	5.6	15.1
1975–99	186.9	184.9	2.2	97.5	118.6	-21.4	89.5	67.2	23.2
Children									
1975–79	176.4	189.8	-13.4	87.3	139.2	-52.0	89.3	49.0	38.7
1980–84	215.9	223.0	-7.1	103.3	160.2	-57.0	112.7	62.7	49.9
1985–89	226.4	188.2	38.2	111.3	114.3	-3.0	115.0	74.0	41.1
1990–94	199.0	180.9	18.1	98.9	110.7	-11.8	100.1	70.0	30.1
1995–99	176.6	138.6	37.9	84.6	92.1	-7.4	91.8	46.5	45.3
1975–99	994.3	920.5	73.7	485.4	616.5	-131.2	508.9	302.2	205.1

Source: IPS (Unadjusted figures).

Table 6 International migration 1975-1999, five-year groups; proportions of total non active flows by usual occupation and citizenship (percentage)

	All Citizenships		British		Non British	
	Inflows	Outflows	Inflows	Outflows	Inflows	Outflows
Students						
1975-79	31.1	19.1	6.2	7.2	24.9	12.2
1980-84	26.6	24.6	6.8	7.0	19.8	17.5
1985-89	31.7	31.1	8.6	10.7	23.2	20.4
1990-94	38.4	40.2	9.6	12.5	28.9	27.7
1995-99	53.3	45.8	6.6	15.2	46.7	30.6
1975-99	37.1	32.0	7.6	10.4	29.5	21.7
Housewives						
1975-79	24.2	26.0	10.7	17.4	13.6	9.0
1980-84	26.6	25.3	12.0	17.8	14.5	7.5
1985-89	25.1	18.8	12.9	10.6	12.3	8.2
1990-94	21.7	16.4	10.8	9.6	11.0	6.9
1995-99	13.4	15.8	5.8	9.6	7.6	6.2
1975-99	21.8	20.5	10.3	13.0	11.6	7.6
Other Adults						
1975-79	8.9	10.7	3.7	5.1	5.2	5.9
1980-84	5.4	6.3	2.8	4.1	2.7	2.1
1985-89	5.4	10.7	3.4	7.3	2.0	3.4
1990-94	5.9	6.6	3.0	4.6	2.9	2.0
1995-99	7.1	5.7	4.0	4.3	3.1	1.3
1975-99	6.5	7.9	3.4	5.1	3.1	2.9
Children						
1975-79	35.8	44.3	17.7	32.5	18.1	11.4
1980-84	41.4	43.8	19.8	31.5	21.6	12.3
1985-89	37.7	39.4	18.5	23.9	19.2	15.5
1990-94	34.0	36.8	16.9	22.5	17.1	14.2
1995-99	26.2	32.8	12.6	21.8	13.6	11.0
1975-99	34.6	39.5	16.9	26.5	17.7	13.0

Source: IPS (Unadjusted figures).

part to the greater participation of spouses in the labour force – the data discussed later indicate an increased proportion of women among migrants categorised as employed.

MIGRATION OF THE EMPLOYED

Within the total flows of people to and from the UK, employed migrants were slightly under half of the inflow up to the late 'eighties and then became slightly more than half. They were consistently more than half of the outflow, on average about 56 per cent. The following sections examine these flows of employed people in some detail during the period 1975-99.

Table 7 shows the numbers of employed migrants involved. Large net outflows in the period 1975-84 were followed by a very small net outflow in 1985-89, a net inflow in 1990-94 and a much larger net inflow in 1995-99. The gross inflow of employed people doubled between the early eighties and the late nineties, exceeding 800,000 in the final five-year period. The total outflow was much more stable in size but reached its highest level of over 650,000 in 1995-99.

Although the scale of movement increased during the study period, there was remarkable consistency in the composition of the employed population entering the country in terms of broad occupational category. The proportion of professional and managerial workers in the inflow in 1975-79 was about 55 per cent and it subsequently remained at around 60 per cent. Correspondingly, the proportion of manual and clerical workers in the inflow was initially about 45 per cent, falling to

around 40 per cent. There appeared to be a slight trend of increase in the professional and managerial proportion in the late nineties.

In the outflow, there was a steady trend of increase in the proportion of professional and managerial workers. It rose from about 50 per cent to over 60 per cent during the study period, with a corresponding decrease in the proportion of manual and clerical workers. The net results of these patterns of inflow and outflow are shown in Table 8: a substantial loss to the UK of both groups in the late seventies and early eighties, followed by a gain of over 100,000 professional and managerial workers and over 50,000 manual and clerical workers since the late eighties.

The proportion of women in both the inflow and the outflow of employed people was higher in the 1990s than in the late seventies/early eighties. This was true of both occupational groups. From the mid-eighties, women comprised over 40 per cent of all employed migrants fairly consistently, though never as much as half. They formed a higher proportion of manual and clerical than of professional and managerial workers.

As noted in the case of overall population movements, there was a net loss of British citizens and a greater gain of non-British among employed migrants. In respect of professional and managerial workers, a net outflow of British people occurred every year throughout the twenty-five years apart from 1994, whereas there was a net inflow of non-British every year except 1977 (Figure 2). As a result, over the total period, the UK labour force lost 376,000 British professional and managerial employees, but gained 387,000 who were non-British citizens. In the last five years, a net outflow of nearly 65,000 British professional and managerial workers was more than compensated for by a net inflow of 174,000 non-British.

In respect of manual and clerical workers, there was a net loss of British citizens every year apart from 1994 and 1998, and a net gain of the non-British every year. However, as can be seen from Figure 3, the big net outflows of British workers in the late seventies and early eighties had dwindled to very small numbers in the 1990s. Over the twenty-five year period as a whole, there was a net loss of 371,000 British manual and clerical workers and a net gain of 218,000 non-British. But in the last five years, a net outflow of just over 11,000 British workers was more than replaced by nearly 64,000 non-British.

The final section below focuses further on the flows of employed migrants who were non-British citizens and indicates some consistent and changing aspects with regard to the citizenship breakdown. Box 2 defines the six citizenship groups.

EMPLOYED MIGRANTS: THE NON-BRITISH

Inflows of Non-British Migrants

As Table 9 shows, the inflow into the UK of employed people who were non-British citizens almost trebled over the period 1975-99. Old Commonwealth and EU/EFTA citizens formed the two largest components of this inflow, together comprising more than half of the total, during every five-year period except 1980-84. If the numbers from East and Other Europe and Other Foreign Developed Countries are added, it can be seen that migrants from developed countries formed around three quarters of the inflow from the mid-eighties onwards – nearly 80 per cent in 1995-99.

In terms of actual numbers entering the UK, every citizenship group recorded its highest figure in the final five-year period. However, trends of change preceding this were very different for different groups. Only Other Foreign Developed Countries showed a continuous trend of increase from 1975 onwards. There were similarities between the Old

Table 7 International migration 1975-1999, five-year groups; flows of total employed persons by sex (thousands)

	Inflows			Outflows			Balance		
	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
1975-79	437.6	279.4	158.1	608.3	407.6	200.6	-170.7	-128.1	-42.5
1980-84	408.0	265.9	142.1	556.7	362.0	194.4	-148.7	-96.1	-52.3
1985-89	559.0	328.3	230.8	561.3	329.7	231.5	-2.3	-1.4	-0.7
1990-94	630.5	355.8	274.4	611.9	339.9	272.2	18.6	15.9	2.2
1995-99	814.9	460.4	354.4	653.6	378.1	275.9	161.3	82.3	78.4
1975-99	2,850.0	1,689.8	1,159.8	2,991.8	1,817.3	1,174.6	-141.8	-127.4	-14.9

Source: IPS (Unadjusted figures).

Commonwealth and EU/EFTA groups, with inflows increasing substantially in the latter half of the 'eighties and again in the late 'nineties. The inflow from East and Other Europe was stable during the first ten years of the period but the large increase in 1985-89 was followed by two more in succession.

In contrast to all the above, the inflow from the Indian Sub-continent maintained a fairly constant level up to 1990, with a slight increase in 1990-94 and a large one in 1995-99. The inflow from the Rest of the World was unique in showing a large increase in the early eighties and again in the early nineties.

Comparing the inflows of each group at the beginning and end of the twenty-five year period, it can be seen that there was an increase of over 500 per cent in the numbers of employed people coming from East and other Europe, of 200 per cent in those from the Old Commonwealth and EU/EFTA, of over 160 per cent in those from Other Foreign Developed Countries and of nearly 130 per cent from Rest of World countries. In only one case was there an increase of less than 100 per cent: the inflow from the Indian Subcontinent was only 68 per cent higher in 1995-99 than it had been in 1975-79. Contrary to common perceptions, the biggest contributors to the increase in employed people coming from overseas were countries in the developed world, particularly the Old Commonwealth and EU/EFTA. However, the fact that many asylum seekers are not included in the IPS data needs to be remembered here.

Box two

THE SIX CITIZENSHIP GROUPS

Old Commonwealth: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Republic of South Africa.

EU and EFTA: 14 EU countries excluding the UK, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

Eastern and Other Europe: Albania, Andorra, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Hungary, Malta, Monaco, Poland, Romania, San Marino, Turkey and all the constituent states of former USSR, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia.

Other Foreign Developed Countries: Hong Kong, Israel, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, USA.

Indian Subcontinent: Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka.

Rest of the World: Countries not included above, including Africa other than South Africa, Caribbean, Middle East, Rest of Asia and Oceania.

Outflows of Non-British Migrants

Table 9 shows that, as in the case of the inflow, the outflow of non-British citizens who were in employment increased over the period 1975-99 but not to the same degree – it nearly doubled, rather than trebled. Old Commonwealth and EU/EFTA citizens formed the two largest components of the outflow in every five-year period, together representing over 60 per cent of the total from 1985 onwards. If the outflows of citizens from East and Other Europe and Other Foreign Developed Countries are added, then citizens from more developed countries can be seen to have constituted over 80 per cent of the outflow from the mid-eighties.

Trends of change in actual numbers belonging to each citizenship group leaving the UK were significantly different from those relating to inflows. Only the Old Commonwealth group showed a continuous increase in outflow from 1975 through to the end of the period, with the EU/EFTA outflow increasing continuously and strongly after 1985. The outflow of East and Other European citizens increased dramatically in the early 1990s and the same level of outward movement was sustained in 1995-99. The outflow of citizens of Other Foreign Developed Countries increased steadily from 1975 onwards but dropped in the final five-year period.

By contrast, outflows of citizens of the Indian Subcontinent and Rest of World countries both declined from the mid-eighties onwards, reaching their lowest levels for the twenty-five year period in 1995-99.

If the outflows of each group in 1975-99 and 1995-99 are compared, the contrast between developed and developing countries in the scale and pattern of change is even more striking than in the case of inflows. The outflow of employed citizens of East and Other Europe increased by over 230 per cent, that of EU/EFTA citizens by 160 per cent, that of Old Commonwealth citizens by 120 per cent and that of Other Foreign Developed Countries' citizens by 70 per cent. However, outflows of employed people from the Indian subcontinent and from the Rest of World countries *decreased* by about a third.

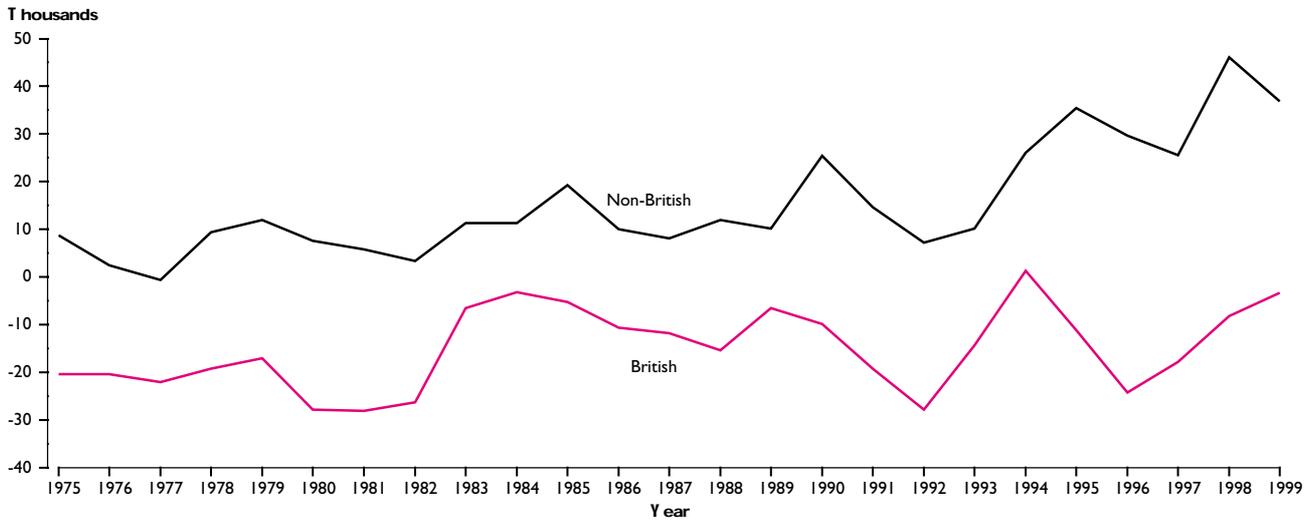
Net Flows of Non-British Migrants

The pattern of inflows and outflows described above resulted in the net flows shown in Table 9. A net inflow was recorded for every citizenship group in every period, with one miniscule exception, and every group recorded its highest net inflow in 1995-99. However, the figures reveal significant differences between groups in terms of numbers and trends over time, resulting from the different combinations of inflow and outflow within each group in each five-year period.

Over the twenty-five year period as a whole, the largest net inflow (173,000) of employed people comprised Rest of World citizens. They were the largest component of the total from 1980 to 1994 and the second largest (24 per cent) in 1995-99.

Figure 2

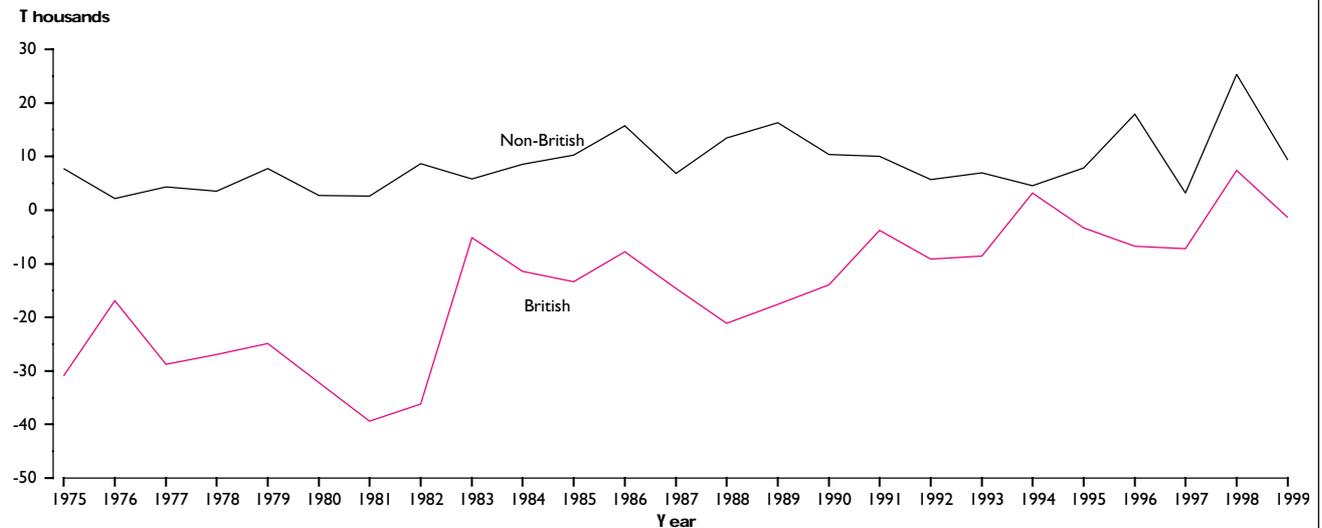
International migration 1975-1999: Net flows of professional and managerial workers by citizenship



Source: IPS (Unadjusted figures).

Figure 3

International migration 1975-1999: Net flows of manual and clerical workers by citizenship



Source: IPS (Adjusted figures).

In second place for total net inflow (154,000) during the whole twenty-five year period was the Old Commonwealth group, whose numbers showed a dramatic increase in the mid-eighties and a huge leap in the late nineties. Old Commonwealth citizens were easily the largest component of the total net inflow (31 per cent) of employed people in 1995-99.

Three groups had similar aggregate net inflows of the employed during the twenty-five years: Other Foreign Developed Countries (85,000), Indian Subcontinent (81,000) and EU/EFTA (80,000). However, trends of change differed between them. The net inflow of citizens from Other Foreign Developed Countries showed a steady increase over the whole period, with a slight fall-back in 1990-94, and more than doubled in the last five years to form 15 per cent of the total. The net inflow of the EU/EFTA group followed a similar upward path but with a sharp fall in

Table 8

International migration 1975-99, five-year groups; net flow of employed migrants by occupational group (thousands)

	Professional and managerial	Manual and clerical	Total
1975-79	-67.6	-103.1	-170.7
1980-84	-52.8	-95.9	-148.7
1985-89	9.8	-12	-2.3
1990-94	13.3	5.3	18.6
1995-99	108.8	52.5	161.1
1975-99	11.5	-153.3	-141.8

Source: IPS (Unadjusted figures).

Table 9

International migration 1975–1999, five-year periods; flows of employed migrants by citizenship group (thousands)

	1975–79	1980–84	1985–89	1990–94	1995–99	1975–99
Inflows						
Old Commonwealth	48.1	44.7	81.8	92.0	153.5	420.1
EU/EFTA	44.8	47.3	81.2	78.1	135.1	386.5
East & other Europe	3.8	4.2	8.6	13.8	23.5	53.9
Other Foreign Developed Countries	27.0	36.8	53.7	59.3	70.7	247.5
Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka	20.7	20.8	20.4	22.1	34.8	118.8
Rest of World	32.7	54.9	53.0	68.9	74.4	283.9
Total Inflow	177.1	208.7	298.7	334.2	492.0	1510.7
Outflows						
Old Commonwealth	36.2	39.9	50.6	58.4	80.5	265.6
EU/EFTA	38.9	38.2	56.4	72.2	101.2	306.9
East & other Europe	4.1	2.6	4.0	13.2	13.7	37.6
Other Foreign Developed Countries	20.9	26.6	36.0	43.4	35.4	162.3
Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka	9.8	6.4	8.4	7.8	6.2	38.6
Rest of World	26.4	27.3	21.2	18.2	17.9	111.0
Total Outflow	136.3	141.0	176.6	213.2	254.9	922.0
Netflows						
Old Commonwealth	11.9	4.8	31.2	33.5	72.9	154.3
EU/EFTA	5.8	9.0	24.8	6.0	34.0	79.6
East & other Europe	-0.2	1.6	4.5	0.6	9.9	16.4
Other Foreign Developed Countries	6.1	10.2	17.7	16.0	35.3	85.3
Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka	11.0	14.5	12.1	14.4	28.7	80.7
Rest of World	6.3	27.6	31.8	50.7	56.5	172.9
Total Netflow	40.9	67.7	122.1	121.2	237.3	589.2

Source: IPS (Unadjusted Figures).

1990–94 and a very big rise subsequently – it comprised 14 per cent of the 1995–99 total. By contrast, the net inflow from the Indian subcontinent fluctuated without any great change until the last five years when it doubled, forming 12 per cent of the total in 1995–99.

The net inflow of employed people from East and Other Europe over the twenty-five year period was 16,000. Only in 1985–89 and 1995–99 were there net flows of any size – in the latter period, the East and Other Europe group comprised four per cent of the total net inflow.

It is worth noting that the relative significance of different citizenship groups in the *net* inflows of employed people is rather different from what one might expect from looking only at *gross* inflows. Citizens of developed countries formed the major part of the total inflow but also of the outflow and both inflows and outflows of migrants from the developed world were higher at the end of the period than at the beginning. By contrast, in the case of migrants from developing countries, inflows in the final period were higher than at the start but outflows had actually decreased.

CONCLUSION

Some consistent and changing aspects of international migration over the last twenty-five years have been described above, many of them having significance for the UK labour force. The principal overarching change might be identified as the increased volume of movement of employed people or people seeking employment within the global labour market, reflected in the growth of (particularly) inflows and also of outflows of migrants in the UK. Consistencies include the dominance of younger adults in gross and net flows and the remarkable stability of the proportions of professional and managerial/ manual and clerical workers (approximately 60:40) in the inflow of employed people since the early eighties.

Key points

- The International Passenger Survey indicates that migration flows to and from the UK over the last two decades have had both constant and changing features, with implications for the labour market.
- The inflow of employed people has increased substantially but there has been remarkable consistency in the proportions of professional and managerial/manual and clerical workers (approximately 60:40).
- Up to the mid-eighties, there was a net loss of both professional and managerial and manual and clerical workers, but there has subsequently been a net gain of both, with the inflow of non-British citizens more than offsetting the outflow of British.
- While citizens of the developed world have formed a high and increasing proportion of workers both entering and leaving the UK since the mid-eighties, citizens of less developed countries have become a smaller proportion of the total inflow (though higher in actual numbers than at the beginning of the period) and a dwindling part of the outflow.
- Total inflows and outflows of population have been consistently dominated by younger adults, with 15 to 24 year-olds heavily represented in inflows, and students have become the biggest group among non-active migrants in the 1990s.
- There has been a fairly stable pattern in respect of migration flows to and from different regions of the UK throughout the 1975–99 period, with London the most significant origin and destination.

The detailed analysis of flows of non-British workers by citizenship reveal some complex and differing patterns of change over time. Citizens of the developed world, and most notably citizens of the Old Commonwealth and EU/EFTA, have formed a high and increasing proportion of workers both entering and leaving the UK since the mid-eighties. Citizens from less developed countries have become a smaller proportion of the total inflow than they were at the start of the period, though higher in actual numbers, and a dwindling part of the outflow.

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APPENDIX: THE INTERNATIONAL PASSENGER SURVEY (IPS)

This article is based on data from the IPS, a continuous voluntary sample survey carried out by the Office for National Statistics. There is no compulsory system within the UK to record international movements of population and the IPS data derive from a sample of passengers arriving at, and departing from, the main UK air and sea ports. Until 1999, the IPS did not cover routes between the UK and the Irish Republic.

The IPS is highly likely to exclude asylum seekers and visitor switchers – that is, those who enter the country as short-term visitors who are subsequently granted an extension to stay for a year or more for other reasons. The adjusted figures quoted in this article in relation to total flows of population include additions made by ONS to take account of these two groups and of migrants to and from the Irish Republic.

Most of those surveyed by the IPS are short-term travellers but a sub-sample of ‘migrants’ is identified (see Box 1). Unfortunately, the sample of migrants is small, around 2,500 in all. Hence, most cross-tabulations of particular variables, such as country of origin or region of destination, with individual characteristics need to be treated with care because the standard errors may be high.