Research Report 57   Executive summary

The Migrant Journey Second Report

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Context

The Government is committed to reforming the UK immigration system in order to reduce UK net migration. Changes to the rules for those coming to the UK in skilled work and study categories aim to help reduce the flow of migrants to the UK, whilst still attracting the brightest and best. Evidence on which migrants are coming and which are staying will help to inform future policy development in this area.

This new report follows on from 'The Migrant Journey' (Achato, Eaton & Jones, 2010) published in September 2010. It adds to the current evidence base by:

- examining the behaviour of the high-volume nationalities for migration via the four main routes of entry to the UK in 2004;

- identifying the numerically significant nationalities for settlement in 2009; and

- describing some of the characteristics and common case histories of migrants in temporary and permanent migration routes.

The report aims to improve our understanding of migrants to the UK, the countries they come from, their purpose for coming and how long they stay. However, findings are based on a single cohort of migrants granted their visa in 2004 and since then, the most prominent nationalities and patterns in entry clearance and settlement may have changed. Therefore, these findings may not necessarily be representative of more recent migration to the UK.

Methods

This report presents further analysis of the cohort of migrants described in 'The Migrant Journey' (Achato *et al.*, 2010) publication. The findings presented are based on administrative data matched from two different immigration databases: one granting visas (permission) to come to the UK, and the other in-country extensions or changes to those permissions. Migrants' immigration histories will include the grant of permission to enter the UK, and all subsequent grants of leave to remain and/or settlement. The records in the database cover the four main entry clearance routes to the UK: family, work (leading to settlement), work (not leading to settlement) and study.

Keywords

Migrant

Immigration

Settlement

Indefinite leave to remain

Entry clearance

Visa

Leave to remain

Home Office

As in the first report, these results report on two types of analyses i) a forward-view analysis and ii) a backwards-view analysis . The forward view looks at the cohort of approximately 551,220 migrants granted entry clearance in 2004. It maps migrants' immigration statuses at the end of each year between 2004 and 2009, showing the proportion with valid leave to remain or settlement five years after entry. An immigration status of 'expired' does not confirm migrants' departure, however, possible outcomes for migrants in this group are that: the migrants have left the UK, remained in the UK without permission (as an overstayer) or have submitted an application that has not been recorded.

New findings in this report identify some of the most common countries (based on migrants' nationalities) for entry clearance in 2004.

The backwards-view analysis reports on migrants (approximately 176,470 cases) granted settlement in 2009, tracing their records back through the immigration system to identify their earliest record or initial entry clearance route. This report identifies the top nationalities for settlement in 2009 and the routes these migrants used to enter and remain in the UK on their path to settlement.

In addition, a small-scale case-file analysis was carried out to answer specific questions about study route and family route migrants. Random samples of 219 long-term student route and 435 family route case files were analysed to provide additional details of these migrants' pathways to settlement.

Results

Backwards-view analysis
Key findings: The top nationalities for settlement in 2009 varied according to the dominant route used to enter the UK. However, the majority achieved settlement via the family and work (leading to settlement) route without switching categories.

Initial route of entry
The backwards-view analysis analysed data from 176,470 migrants granted settlement in the UK in 2009. Table S1 reports the dominant route of entry used by migrants in the top five countries for settlement in 2009. Migrants from India and the Philippines favoured the work (leading to settlement) route, whilst most migrants from Bangladesh and Pakistan initially came to the UK via the family route.

Indian, Pakistani, Filipino and Bangladeshi migrants tended to take a direct route to settlement with an initial entry point in the family or work (leading to settlement) route. However, a large proportion of migrants from Nigeria had indefinite leave to remain as their earliest record on UK systems or achieved permanent stay in a visa category that provided for settlement on arrival. Further analysis of migrants with indefinite leave to remain as a first record or a visa granting settlement on arrival found that many migrants could not be linked to an initial visa record, in most cases probably because they entered the UK prior to the establishment of the electronic databases from which these data were drawn.

Table S1   Top five nationalities for settlement in 2009 by the dominant initial route of entry

	Number granted settlement in 2009	Dominant entry clearance route	% granted via the dominant entry clearance route[a]
Indian	37,390	Work (leading to settlement)	55%
Pakistani	22,180	Family	60%
Filipino	9,970	Work (leading to settlement)	59%
Nigerian	9,730	Settlement	42%
Bangladeshi	8,510	Family	55%

a   Based on 172,600 migrants who entered the UK from 2000 onwards. Data quality and completeness of records mean that records prior to 2000 are less reliable.

Forward-view analysis

Key findings: The countries with the highest number of family route visas in the 2004 cohort had varied outcomes five years later. The proportion of settlers in the individual country cohorts was as low as one in ten and in some cases more than eight in ten.

Similarly the top five countries in the work leading to settlement route showed contrasting settlement patterns after five years. The lowest settlement rate amongst the five countries was five per cent, the highest 69 per cent.

Approximately 21 per cent of all students in the 2004 cohort still had valid visas after five years (including the 3% who had gained settlement). The top five countries within this group showed differing results with between five per cent and 47 per cent having either settled or had valid leave five years after entry.

Family route

The family route grants entry clearance to someone on the basis of their relationship to a British citizen or settled migrant. The majority (91%) of the 63,400 migrants in the 2004 family route cohort were main applicants, the remainder were their dependants.[1] Analysis of the most common nationalities in the family route showed that although the average settlement rate for all family route migrants in 2004 is 55 per cent, migrants originating from different countries showed markedly different patterns – see Table S2. Pakistan (ranked 1st in terms of volumes) and Bangladesh (ranked 7th) showed very high proportions of family route migrants (over eight in ten) who had settled over the five years of this study. In contrast only one in ten Australian migrants applied for and was granted settlement over the same period.

Table S2   High-volume nationalities in the family route by end-of-year immigration status

			End of 2009 immigration status		
	Migrants in 2004 cohort	% dependants	% with expired LTR	% with valid LTR	% with settlement
Pakistani	9,650	8	16	3	81
Indian	6,730	13	21	9	70
Australian	5,840	2	74	16	10
American	5,580	4	69	1	30
South African	3,380	10	41	28	31
New Zealander	2,850	2	70	19	11
Bangladeshi	2,230	13	12	2	86

There are many possible explanations for why migrants from some countries appear to favour particular immigration routes. In the case of the family route, some British citizens or settled migrants are more likely to marry a spouse who lives abroad, based on shared cultural practices or traditions. In addition, historical ties, particularly to Commonwealth countries, mean that established migrant communities make it more attractive for others to come to the UK and stay permanently.

A separate case file analysis of a sample of 435 migrants granted visas for entry as a spouse of a British citizen/settled person looked at i) the immigration statuses of UK sponsors (spouse), ii) whether migrants had married in the UK or abroad, and iii) how long the couple waited after their marriage before applying to come to the UK.[2] In most cases (91%) migrants were married to a British citizen, although 29 per cent were marrying a person who had been born abroad but acquired British citizenship. The vast majority of marriages (84%) took place in the migrant's home country (that is, outside of the UK). Migrants most commonly waited less than a year between getting married and applying for a visa on the basis of their relationship.

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1   A dependant is a husband, wife, partner/civil partner, child or other dependent relative.
2   Approximately 67 per cent of all visas issued to family route migrants in 2004 were for the purposes of marriage.

Work (leading to settlement) route

The work leading to settlement route comprises migrants granted entry clearance under categories replaced by Tier 1 and 2 of the Points-based system (PBS), primarily for skilled work. There were approximately 108,880 migrants granted work (leading to settlement) visas in the 2004 cohort, a notable proportion (41%) of these were dependants.[3] Results from analysis of the highest-volume nationalities indicate that the average settlement rate for this route (29%) masks significant differences between nationalities (see Table S3).

Table S3   **High-volume nationalities in the work (leading to settlement) route by end-of-year immigration status**

	Migrants in 2004 cohort	% dependants	End-of-2009 immigration status		
			% with expired LTR	% with valid LTR	% with settlement
Indian	32,390	45	56	12	32
American	11,190	42	76	15	9
Filipino	8,060	69	20	11	69
Ukrainian	6,870	2	96	2	2
South African	4,150	41	47	21	32

Work (not leading to settlement) route

The work (not leading to settlement) cohort grants entry clearance to migrants coming to the UK for temporary work. In 2004, 94,540 migrants came to the UK in this route; only two per cent were recorded as dependants. The high-volume nationalities in this route were: Australia, South Africa, India, New Zealand and the Philippines. These nationalities made up more than half of all work (not leading to settlement) route migrants that year; many will have arrived under the Working Holidaymaker category (now known as the Youth Mobility scheme) which allows young people into the UK to work for up to two years. In all of the top nationality cohorts, the vast majority of migrants no longer had valid leave to remain five years after entering the UK. This route does not lead to settlement and some categories restricted migrants from bringing dependants.

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3   The large number of dependants in this route may be due to dependants entering in 2004 to join a spouse who was already in the UK with valid leave to remain in this category. Not all such cases will relate to a new arrival of a skilled worker that year.

Study route

Approximately 185,600 visas were granted to migrants in the study route cohort, of whom seven per cent were recorded as dependants.[4] Five years after initial entry, the majority (79%) of these migrants had left the immigration system. Those who remained were mainly in the work (leading to settlement) (7%) and study categories (6%). Approximately three per cent reached settlement after five years although some of those with valid visas in other categories will go on to settle at a later stage. Table S4 shows that in terms of settlement, the high-volume nationalities did not differ greatly from the overall average for this route. The India and Nigeria cohorts were the only groups to show a settlement rate notably higher than the average. However, just under half of migrants in the Pakistan and Nigeria cohorts still had valid leave to remain at the end of 2009.

Table S4   High-volume nationalities in the study route by end-of-year immigration status

	Migrants in 2004 cohort	% dependants	End-of-2009 immigration status		
			% with expired LTR	% with valid LTR	% with settlement
Chinese	20,300	4	78	21	1
Indian	18,500	10	56	34	10
Pakistani	12,890	7	53	44	4
Russian	9,940	1	95	4	1
American	9,030	5	89	8	2
Taiwanese	8,300	2	97	2	0
Japanese	7,490	2	91	7	2
Nigerian	6,930	5	51	42	6

A separate case-file analysis was carried out, looking at 219 cases from the just under 10,000 students in the 2004 cohort who had extended their stay at least twice and who still had valid leave in the student category in 2009. The sample of long-term student migrants included students from the most numerous nationalities – Pakistan, Nigeria and China – and a random selection from other nationalities. Analysis of the data available showed that in 2009 these migrants commonly studied courses in Business, IT and Accounting and were mostly (83%) studying at degree level and above.

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4   The study route excludes migrants granted student visit visas for courses of less than six months.