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# **BOSTON**

## **EAST MIDLANDS**

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### **Recent population changes**

Though Boston has seen an increase in its ethnic minority population since 1991, this still remains low (3.03% non-white population in 2001) compared to the East Midlands average of 6.5% in 2001. Its population is ageing as young people leave and retirees move in from other English regions. Almost 95% of employers use casual labour in Lincolnshire of whom 98% are migrant workers. The initial influx of migrant labour in the agricultural and food processing sectors came from Portugal but since enlargement in 2004 this population has been supplemented by Eastern Europeans, primarily from Poland, Lithuania and Latvia. There is also some skilled immigration in the health sector.

Boston now has the highest ratio of migrant workers in relation to the average local labour force in the UK. The steep rise in migrant workers is shown in the national insurance numbers from 250 in 2002/3 to 1850 in 2005/6. Issues concerning the increase of migrant workers entered the public consciousness in February 2003 due in part to the presence of the British National Party in the run up to the May 2003 local elections. The Equality and Diversity Theme Group, set up by the Boston Area Partnership, sought to establish contacts in all minority groups and to review the presence of migrant workers from other EU countries and their impact on the community as a whole. The Migrant Workers Network first met in July 2004,

The **Migrant Workers Project**, commissioned and funded by East Midland Development Agency, Lincolnshire Enterprise, Boston Borough Council and South Holland District Council (a neighbouring council), has been widely cited as good practice. It undertook a research project *Dynamics of Migrant Labour in South Lincolnshire* to find out about the composition of the migrant population, its needs, use of services and intentions to settle. It also aimed to examine public service needs in the light of dependence on migrant casual labour; to strengthen business development through the integration of migrant labour and to build a multi-agency partnership in addressing strategic issues.

It is however difficult to estimate the number of migrant workers, many of whom may travel long distances to work. 697 migrants worker questionnaires were completed between July and November 2005, 103 labour users, 15 Gangmasters, and 26 organisations providing services. A high proportion (53%) said that they wanted to stay permanently and bring their families with them. Their future plans are closely related to family issues. 41% have children whilst 22.5% had their children with them. Their future plans are important for the development of services. Employment and accommodation were the two major considerations they took into account when deciding where to settle. It was thought that those staying in the UK settled in other areas.

## Statistics

**Total population:** 2001 (Census): 55,750; 2005 (Pop. Survey): 58,000

### Top ten countries of birth of non UK born population 2001

Germany	249	
Ireland	153	
India	123	
China	64	
Hong Kong	63	
South Africa	54	
Italy	53	
South and East. Africa(1)	49	<i>Notes (1) Other than Kenya, Somalia, South Africa, Zimbabwe; (2) Other than China, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore</i>
Far East (2)	46	
Australia	43	<i>Source: Census 2001</i>

**Total non white British population (2001):** 1,694 (3.03%)

**Total registrations for national insurance numbers from non British residents:** 2002/03: 280; 2005/06: 1850

### Top ten countries of national insurance numbers registrations

2002/03	#	2005/06	#
Portugal	120	Poland	960
Mauritius	10	Rep of Lithuania	470
India	10	Rep of Latvia	310
Nigeria	10	Portugal	190
Pakistan	10	Brazil	40
South Africa	10	Czech Rep	40
Bulgaria	10	Slovak Rep	40
Turkey	10	India	30
Afghanistan	10	South Africa	20
China Peoples Rep	10	Italy	20

### Top ten industries of employment (April 2001)

	#	%
G. Wholesale and retail trade, repairs	6,037	24.1
D. Manufacturing	4,459	17.8
N. Health and social work	3,390	13.5
A. Agriculture, hunting and forestry	1,847	7.4
K. Real estate, renting and business activities	1,817	7.2
F. Construction	1,509	6.0
I. Transport, storage and communications	1,507	6.0
M. Education	1,282	5.1
L. Public administration and defence, social security	923	3.7
H. Hotels and restaurants	908	3.6

Source: National statistics 2001

## Labour market

Low unemployment and the 24-hour supermarket culture have attracted large numbers of migrant labour. Lincolnshire's major employers are connected with agriculture, vegetable packing, food packing and processing and road and transport industries. Seasonality of employment is common though food packaging occurs throughout the year. Much of the work is done in packing factories, often exempt from the Agricultural Legislation, since they pack foreign produce. Wages in rural areas are low. Migrants from countries with lower wages have been attracted to Boston which has become emblematic of migrant workers featured in the media. Most workers are recruited through Gangmasters or agencies and are no longer recruited directly. In the migrant worker survey, 24% worked in factories, 14% were packers, 21% line operatives and altogether 59% had manual jobs. Only 29% had a contract for over a year or a permanent job with 75% having no job security.

Over half of labour users expected an increase in the next 5 years. It has been calculated that over 20,000 workers per annum are employed by gangmasters in the 16 miles between Spalding and Boston and a further 20,000 between Spalding and Ely. 66.7% of labour users said all their workforce are migrant workers. There is a high turnover of staff looking for better and more permanent jobs.

A good proportion of the Poles had degrees (34.3%) compared to only 14.5% amongst the Portuguese and 12.8% of Latvians. Migrant labour is also employed in the health sector for example in Pilgrims Hospital in Boston with a number of South Asian, Filipina and African doctors and nurses.

## Local activities and developments

Activities for an increasingly diverse population began to be developed in 2003/4 in part due to concerns from Muslims (mainly Bangladeshi and Pakistani doctors) employed in the hospital about appropriate burial sites. This was at a time when the Portuguese were the largest single migrant group.

Research (see above), in a partnership led by South Holland District Council and Boston Borough Council and supported by a number of stakeholders, including EMDA, has disseminated knowledge about migrant workers and their experiences and problems. It has been used by a variety of statutory and voluntary and community services for the development of policies. The Workers Migrant Project based in South Holland has sought to identify what qualifications individuals have, provide cultural diversity training to police, translate primary needs into the work of different organisations and provide an induction pack on health and safety to businesses.

The CAB has been active for several years in providing advice for migrants. It has given evidence to the Gangmasters Enquiry and has regular contact with the Gangmasters Licencing Authority based in Nottingham.

**Lincolnshire Community Foundation** was set up as a charitable trust in 2002 to promote social inclusion, It manages the Catalyst Fund (for projects in South East Lincolnshire) and projects for Integration Lincolnshire.

**Integration Lincolnshire (IL)** was formed in (April 2005 amongst statutory, faith and third sector organisations to provide formal BME voluntary sector infrastructure

support vehicle and to be a focal point for cross-sector co-operation between organisations. IL seeks to identify needs and develop projects. It has set up several Social Enterprises in meeting needs such as translation and interpreting services.

The **DiPSI** (Diploma in Public Service Interpreting) Course works with Boston College and the Chartered Institute of Linguists to develop the first interpreter course ever course run in Lincolnshire. There were 14 students (from Poland, Portugal, Lithuania, Russia & Slovakia) enrolled on the course with a specialism in law. The second intake is likely to specialise in health and there are plans for a Workers Cooperative (from April 2008) to provide translation and interpreting

**Community Kitchen** – a course run by an English chef for minority ethnic women and using local produce.

**Child Care Course** with National Child Minding Association delivered though Boston College. First intake are Portuguese women, the second will be with Polish women

IL also convenes expert groups for example in housing (Centrepoint, Longhurst, Mayflower and Rainer) who have been discussing topics such as accommodation for single workers; emergency shelter for the homeless; possibility of large-scale homelessness in the event of a sudden closure of a gangmaster operation. One gangmaster went bankrupt in the past year.

**Equality and Diversity Committee** (Lincolnshire Strategic Partnership) meets every 2 months. The steering group includes representatives South East Lincolnshire chaplaincy (chair), Lincolnshire Police, Multicultural Development Service, Boston CAB, Lincolnshire Community Cohesion Partnership, Lincolnshire Library

## Needs, gaps and priorities

In the context of recent and substantial immigration of a range of migrant workers, the provision of foreign language interpretation is a major issue. There are up to 70,000 migrants in Lincolnshire from 40 Countries, speaking 60 languages and dialects. Our criminal justice agencies (police, prisons, courts, probation etc) buy in over £500,000 a year of interpretation from adjoining Counties. There is no Interpreter Service in Lincolnshire. So, Integration Lincolnshire raised over £30,000 to recruit, train and organise their own interpreter work force.

**Housing** – There are a number of issues:

- \* Overcrowding in multiple occupancy and lack of available housing for single people. Insufficient funds directed to social housing in rural areas which are not seen to be areas of acute deprivation.
- \* Local authority does not give permission to build housing on farms on grounds that it would encourage isolation yet some villages have become segregated as housing has been bought up and rented to migrant workers. floor.
- \* Shortage of affordable housing, though not caused only by immigration, is also of concern.
- \* Tied housing is a major problem. It may result in destitution when a job is lost and lead to criticism of employment not being made due to fear of losing housing. The accommodation may also be poor, rents high and not of their choice. There are often no tenancy agreements and no stipulation of

responsibilities.

\* There is no provision for homelessness but a low-key hostel would be ideal. New workers often have nowhere to go. Boston Borough Council only gets £40,000 to combat homelessness.

**Education** - Big increase in local schools of children with English as an Additional Language. N primary schools there had been 85 (EAL) pupils in July 2006 but 96 new ones in September 2006; in secondary schools, the numbers were 159 and 81 respectively.

**Health**- The Dynamics of Migrant Labour study reported that 47% were not registered with a GP and that due to language difficulties, many relied on family and friends with its attendant issues of ethics and confidentiality. It could also be difficult for migrants coming from different European healthcare systems to understand the UK's primary and secondary eligibility process. On the other hand, local public service staff may not be culturally aware and demonstrate prejudices in their relationships with migrants.

**Advice and Advocacy services** – the increase in migrants puts pressure on service, for example 28% of CAB clients are migrants who often require more attention and time in resolving their problems. Immigration Advisory Service is based in Peterborough.

**Community Cohesion** involving local people identified as a longer-term objective.

## Documents

East Midlands Decent and Safe Housing (DASH) (2007) *Migrant Workers Conference* 29 March

<http://www.eastmidlandsdash.org.uk/newsarch07a.asp#MigWorC>

Fairman, A. *Rural Debt in Lincolnshire*, CAB

Lincolnshire NHS (2007) *Public Health Economic Migration and the Impact of New Communities into Lincolnshire*

Zaronaite, D. and Tirzite, A. (2007) *The Dynamics of Migrant Labour in South Lincolnshire*, EMDA and Lincolnshire Enterprise