
LEWISHAM

LONDON

Recent population changes

According to the 2001 Census Lewisham's population was 248,922 but the Population Survey shows that its population had declined to 247,500 by 2005. However, the Greater London Authority (GLA) predicts that the overall population of Lewisham will rise by 10 per cent, to just over 273,000 by 2016. The increase will be particularly concentrated in the 15 to 24 age range, which is expected to grow by about 21 per cent.

The borough has a younger age structure than the national average, with a relatively higher proportion of residents in the 0-4 and 15-44 age groups. It has a highly diverse population, both ethnically and culturally. Approximately 43% of the overall population and 50% of pupils in Lewisham schools are from BME communities. 59,505 (23.9%) of them are non-UK born (census 2001). The largest resident communities are of Caribbean and African origin, but it is also home to sizeable Asian, Chinese and Turkish/Turkish Cypriot communities.

The growing number of new migrants, particularly from Eastern Europe, has been further diversifying the local population. The registration for NINOs (national insurance numbers) from non British residents shows a significant increase (though less dramatic than other London areas such as Lambeth) in Eastern European workers from Poland (920) and Republic of Lithuania (350) in 2005/6. It also shows a steady growth from traditional countries of emigration to Lewisham such as Nigeria (from 280 in 2002/3 to 620 in 2005/6), and France (from 230 to 370) in 2005/06. According to some local service providers, a significant number of new migrants, particularly from Eastern Europe, are temporary and might later move to different London boroughs or England localities.

The total number of refugees in Lewisham is estimated as between 8,000 and 12,000. From a 2003 research project it is known that almost 76% of refugees lived, at that time in the North of the borough, mainly in New Cross and Deptford. The remaining 24% were evenly scattered in the south of the borough. Somali and Vietnamese communities are the two most prominent refugee groups in the borough, particularly in the New Cross and Deptford areas. Lewisham is one of three boroughs (along with Hackney and Newham) where the school refugee population continued to rise between 1998 and 2003, going up from 2,618 to 2,923.

Statistics

Total population: 2001 (Census): 248,922; 2005 (Pop. Survey): 247,500

Non UK born (2001)

Total: 2001: 59,505 (23.90%)

Top ten countries:

Jamaica	8,165
Nigeria	5,297
Sri Lanka	2,156
India	1,965
Cyprus	1,941
Sierra Leone	1,192
France	53
Italy	1,108
Germany	1,087
South Africa	957

Source: Census 2001

Non 'white British' population: 2001 (Census): 107,108 (43.02%)

Registration for NINOs (national insurance numbers) from non British residents

2002/03	4,600	2005/06	6,770
Jamaica	450	Poland	920
Nigeria	280	Nigeria	620
France	230	France	370
Sri Lanka	180	Rep of Lithuania	350
South Africa	180	India	310
Ghana	170	South Africa	290
China Peoples Rep	160	Jamaica	280
Australia	150	Australia	180
Italy	140	Ghana	180
India	130	China Peoples Rep	170

Number of refugee status granted in 2005: 175 (Source: Home Office)

Asylum seekers receiving NASS support (June 2006)

Dispersals	#	Subsistence only	#
Total:	10	Total:	290
Countries:		Top 10 countries	
Afghanistan	5	Sri Lanka	60
Iran	5	China (Peop. Rep.)	25
		Ivory Coast	20
		Sierra Leone	20
		Afghanistan	15
		Somalia	15
		Serbia	15
		Vietnam	15
		Iran	10
		Jamaica	10

Top ten industries of employment

April 2001	#	%
K. Real estate, renting and business activities	20,553	17.9

N. Health and social work	14,848	13.0
G. Wholesale and retail trade, repairs	14,758	12.9
M. Education	10,498	9.2
O. Other community, social and personal service activities	9,489	8.3
I. Transport, storage and communications	8,582	7.5
J. Financial intermediation	8,234	7.2
L. Public administration and defence, social security	7,647	6.7
D. Manufacturing	7,106	6.2
F. Construction	6,380	5.6

Source: National Statistics 2001

Labour market

There are 4,860 businesses in Lewisham; a relatively low number compared with other London boroughs. The number of non-domestic properties is 6,619 and there are 62,600 people employed in the borough. Real estate; renting and business activities are the dominant form of employment in Lewisham, providing 17.9% of jobs, followed by health and social work (13%), and wholesale and retail trade and repair of motor vehicles (12.9%). In 2004 Lewisham ranked as having the 82nd poorest labour market position out of 407 local authority districts in Great Britain. Lewisham has an economy that has undergone substantial change. Over the last 20 years, the borough has lost the majority of large private sector firms, with small retail and business service companies becoming dominant. With an employment base of 60,000 jobs and a workforce of around 115,000, Lewisham is a net exporter of labour and a major contributor of skills to the London economy. The unemployment rate in some wards such as Deptford, New Cross, Evelyn, and Grinling Gibbons was over 10% in 2002 (Lewisham Strategic Partnership 2002).

According to a business and employment advisor, some new migrants are more “entrepreneurial”, while others are more “pragmatic”. Eastern Europeans, for example, we were told, tend to be more pragmatic and independent and are prepared to take any kind of job: “They want to do something, no matter what. They do not have cultural but language problems”. Among those who have families, men are more skills oriented, while women mainly work in the care sector or catering industry. Finally, Chinese and Vietnamese are more entrepreneurial and aim to run their own business, while Somali and Afghanis may present some cultural problems of adaptation.

Local activities and developments

The Lewisham Strategic Partnership: The Lewisham Community Strategy has been developed by the Lewisham Strategic Partnership (LSP). The LSP brings together 20 representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. Its purpose is “to promote and sustain joint working across these sectors and to secure meaningful ways of engaging the community at all levels, both in terms of setting strategy and delivering modern, effective local services”. Unlike other partnerships that tend to focus on single issues, the LSP looks at the many different issues that affect life in Lewisham - crime, jobs, education, health and housing, with particular emphasis on addressing social exclusion. Crucially, through being a partnership of all key sectors, it can meaningfully assess and address how each issue impacts on the others.

The Local Authority and the LSP consider the diversity of population and workforce as one of their greatest strengths and a core value in Lewisham. As the local council

states in its website “Our Equality and Diversity Policy is core to all we do” (<http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/CouncilAndDemocracy/PoliciesPlansAndPerformance/>).

Since 2001, the Local Council has promoted two Race Equality Schemes in order to ensure equal rights for the residents. The second Race Equality Scheme and Action Plan, 2005–2008, was published on 31 May 2005. It sets out how the Council undertakes its responsibilities to challenge discrimination, to promote equal opportunity, and to promote good relations between groups in the community. As a result of it, the local council has set up a number of services:

- Lewisham's asylum seeker team assists and supports eligible asylum seekers in finding accommodation, providing financial support for weekly living needs, referring to Lewisham Council's education department, and advising on registering with local GPs.
- The Interpretation and translation service for those people whose first language is not English. They have qualified interpreters who provide telephone interpretation in 140 different languages and help migrants in talking to the Local Council offices or in having a letter or written documents, like bills, explained. They can also arrange for translators and signers to be present at face-to-face meetings, such as social care meetings and school meetings.

However, according to a respondent from a council office, “We are talking about activating some sort of joint policies involving public and private sectors jointly [in order to help migrants workers to have work experience], but at the moment there are no concrete policies or programmes. We are talking about a partnership to offer employment, a joint approach. For some communities, not only migrants but also disabled people, it is difficult to get work experience”.

In this respect, the third sector seems to be more active and has set up a number of more concrete initiatives to address the diverse needs of the migrant population:

- **REETA (Refugee Employment, Education, Training and Advice Partnership):** provide information, advice and guidance on employment, education and training for refugees living in the London Borough of Lewisham. The project was established in December 2002 to break down barriers to refugees gaining meaningful employment commensurate with their aspirations and talents. Its own objectives are: to identify and capture information on the barriers to refugee employment; establish working links and partnerships with statutory, commercial and community organisations to overcome the barriers; develop an integrated approach to the deliver of services; connect learning outcomes from this work to other community interface organisations. According to the REETA manager the Centre is open “for 5 days a week. 2000 people came in last four years. People rate our services as a success. 788 refugees have received employment advice and guidance; 368 refugees have completed ESOL/IT training; 149 refugees have obtained employment; 250 refugees have attended job fairs; 400 have attended Refugee Week event in 2004 and 2005 and we have organised 3 Refugee Employment conferences”.
- **Simple Business Solutions:** they provide enterprise support and training for business support to community organisations. They work jointly with ethnic minority community organisations (at the moment they are working with six local community organisations) and with the Lewisham Council.
- **Lewisham Law Centre:** they provide free and independent legal advice and representation to people living, working or studying in the London Borough of Lewisham. “We work towards the relief of poverty, discrimination and injustice by providing legal advice and assistance to low paid and unemployed persons on

legal matters". They offer help in the following areas: employment, housing, welfare rights, immigration and asylum. In Lewisham there is a high demand for their services. They see 12 to 15 clients fortnightly at the law centre. They also do outreach work on a monthly basis.

- The Health Action Zone Young Refugee Project (YRP) was a multi-agency project that aimed to improve access to services for young refugees and asylum seekers (0-18 years) during 2001-3. It was set up with funding from the Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham Health Action Zone National Innovations Fund and was based in the Child Health Directorate of Lewisham Primary Care Trust. The YRP project team consisted of three link workers, a health promotion specialist, a social development officer, a training officer, an information officer, a project co-ordinator and a project administrator. The team worked in partnership with local agencies and feeds into the strategic development of services for young refugees. An Executive Group made up of representatives from partner agencies oversaw the Project's work.
- The Refugee Health Team continues some of the work of the HAZY RP, working with migrants and refugees in Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham (LSL). Their activities are broad; ranging from setting up health clinics, helping people to access ESOL classes and other services, providing alternative therapies and health promotion.

Needs, gaps and priorities

Service providers have underlined three main connected key concerns for new migrants:

- **Jobs/employment advice:** employment advice (awareness of rights) is one top priority for new arrivals. The expectations of economic migrants are high, and they are often in low paid jobs because they do not know their rights and how to employ their skills. Advice services in general (welfare, housing, training) and guidance programmes (even for basic things such as how to access the mainstream services) are also strongly recommended.
- **English/Language** is another key issue. It implies assistance with translations and helping people to learn English for themselves. Key informants see English as a key factor in integration and a means of smoothing racial relations, particularly for older people. Language is also seen as a strong barrier to accessing better employment and career opportunities. Although there are some advice services in the area, the level of understanding required makes it difficult for service providers to communicate. For many migrants going back to work is difficult because of the lack of language skills. Several key agencies, such as Lewisham council and the PCT, rely on English and communication skills in all significant posts.
- **Decent education opportunities for all ages as a key access to employment.** Some key informants recommended a form of partnership with employers in organising comprehensive induction programmes. Initial work placement and mentoring can make it easier for refugees to fit into the work environment.

Documents

Dixon D., Carter M., Lukes S. (2006), *Research into employability issues affecting refugees in East London*, Commissioned by the Employability Forum and LORECA

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(www.loreca.org.uk/downloads/LORECA_Mapping_Exercise.doc)