Migrant workers in the long-term care provision in England: Implications for users, employers and the wider care workforce

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Background

- Increasing demand for long term care
- Demographic and social changes
  - Care moving from the private to the public sphere
  - Supply issues
- Emotionally and physically demanding work
- Working conditions, pay, image and status
- More regulated: minimum qualifications, POVA and CRB checks
Position of migrant workers in this context

- Form a considerable part of the care workforce
  - Formally: through working in care homes, etc
  - In the private sphere: domestic workers providing care
  - More recently, privately employed by people with long term care needs → increasing with personalisation (cash for care)

Politically contested issue
  (effects on both sending and receiving countries)
The research

- This presentation draws on 2 recent complementary projects 2007 - 2009 in England.

1. A major national study funded by the Department of Health, Social Care Workforce Research Initiative.
   Six study sites, different stakeholders perspectives, in context of national statistics

2. A complementary on-line survey of migrant care workers examining themes derived from the qualitative interviews in study 1,
   Invitation widely distributed, self-selected sample, checked for eligibility prior to survey completion
Research aims

- Investigate trends in the demand for international social care workers and any observed changes in their profile;

- Understand current and previous experience, motivations and future plans of a sample of international recruits from six diverse geographical locations;

- Examine dynamics and process of employment from the perspective of international workers themselves, their colleagues and employers, as well as service users and carers;

- Explore and compare the characteristics of social workers who have qualified outside the UK with those from England by studying GSCC records;

- Examine the characteristics of recently recruited workers from abroad using the National Minimum Data Set for Social Care (NMDS-SC);
Data sources

- National data related to:
  - Over 5,000 recently recruited migrant care workers
  - Over 7,000 non-UK qualified social workers registered to work in England
- 232 in-depth one-to-one interviews
  - Migrant workers (96), Recruitment agencies (20), policy stakeholders (15), Employers/HR (38), UK-care workers (28), users/carers (35)
- Our online survey of migrant care workers (101 responses)
Analysis framework

- Demand for workers
- Immigration policies and relation with profile and trends of migrant care workers
- Motivations to work
- Recruitment processes
  - Within or outside UK
  - Induction and training
- Experiences in the sector
  - Discrimination
  - Dynamics with co-workers
  - Interactions with users
Key elements- cont.

- Effect of migrants’ personal and country factors
  - Skills matrix (educational capital)
  - Social and cultural capital
  - Political/economic relations between the UK and home country

- Job satisfaction and future plans
  - Mobility
  - Immigration status
  - Recession

- Implication of levels and characteristics of migrant care workers
Main findings

- Demand is unlikely to decline
- Main drive for recruiting migrant care workers is to ‘meet shortages’
  - and identification of other advantages
- Migrants’ profile is distinctive from that of UK workers
- ‘New’ migrants’ (A8) profile is different from ‘traditional’ migrant care workers
  - Particularly around educational capital, age, gender and main motivations to join the sector
Key findings - cont.

- Variability in induction, training and support on offer
  - Recruitment route and visibility of workers’ needs

- Overall positive views on the quality and calibre of migrant care workers

- Migrants are not a homogenous group

- Some tension with service users
  - particularly in relation to workers with visible social markers (e.g. skin colour)
  - Difficulties in managing such incidences

- Role and importance of training as a non-financial incentive for migrant care worker
Mobility and plans

- Levels of life investment to gain care work in the UK are much higher among non-EEA migrants
- EEA migrants appear more mobile but not necessarily
- Detachment of what migrant workers ‘want’ and what they ‘can’ do
  - Largely associated with immigration status and restrictions
- Gaps between what is expected and what is real
  - Particularly in relation to social care image and cost of living
Implications

- Meeting demand and maintaining service standards
- Conflicting policies: immigration restrictions and providing high quality care
- Language and communication issues
  - Different sets of issues for EEA and some non-EEA countries
- Managing a diverse workforce with potential tensions and conflicts:
  - Skills variability
  - Cultural differences
  - Discrimination
References


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