# Beyond Naturalisation:

## Citizenship policy in an age of super mobility

A research report for the Lord Goldsmith Citizenship Review

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March 2008



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This paper was first published in March 2008. 

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All of the authors of this report work in ippr's Migration, Equalities and Citizenship team, a key centre of research on migration policy. The team plays an important role in promoting a rational, balanced and fair debate on issues of asylum, migration, integration, race equality and citizenship.

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## Acknowledgements

The authors are indebted to those who have provided support, advice and encouragement during the course of our work. We are grateful to those whose academic work on integration and citizenship has influenced our thinking.

We are especially grateful to our colleague Naomi Pollard, who helped design our interview guide and carried out some interviews. We would like to thank those who gave valuable feedback on our work, including Laura Chappell, Rick Muir and Kate Stanley at ippr, as well as Emran Mian from the Lord Goldsmith Citizenship Review. Georgina Kyriacou at ippr copy edited the text.

The project draws on the data and research findings of two previous ippr projects *(From Refugee to Citizen* and *Moving up Together*) that examined migrants' integration and we would like to thank Refugee Support, the Barrow Cadbury Trust, the City Parochial Foundation, Metropolitan Housing Trust and Trellis for their generous financial support of these projects.

Material from the Labour Force Survey is Crown Copyright and has been made available by National Statistics through the UK Data Archive and has been used with permission. Neither National Statistics nor the Data Archive bear any responsibility for the analysis or interpretations of the data reported here.

Lastly, the interviewees who gave their time to us deserve particular thanks. Their names remain anonymous, but we are deeply grateful to them.

## About the Lord Goldsmith Citizenship Review

The Prime Minister has asked Lord Goldsmith to carry out a review of British citizenship, in particular:

- To clarify the legal rights and responsibilities associated with different categories of citizenship, in addition to those enjoyed under the Human Rights Act, as a basis for defining what it means to be a citizen in Britain's open democratic society
- To consider the difference between the different categories of British nationality
- To examine the relationship between residence, citizenship and British national status and the incentives for long-term residents to become British citizens
- To explore the role of citizens and residents in civic society, including voting, jury service and other forms of civil participation.

Over its course, the Review will be publishing a series of pamphlets to draw out new ideas and to stimulate discussion.

This is an independent Review and each pamphlet represents the views of the authors.

You can find out more about the Review at www.justice.gov.uk/reviews/citizenship.

# Introduction

International migration to (and from) the UK has increased since the early 1990s. Rising asylum inflows, labour migration responding to strong economic conditions, student migration to the UK's large higher education sector and large-scale movements from new European Union member states have together added some 2 million over the last decade to the foreign-born population resident in the UK.

These increased flows, which have brought important economic and social benefits to the UK, have also involved a greater diversity than ever before. While immigrants to the UK had tended to come from Commonwealth and Western European countries in previous decades, the late 1990s saw a large increase in people coming from other regions that had previously not had such close ties with the UK. The UK is now home to a generation of migrants less familiar with the country, the English language and British cultural practices than previous cohorts of immigrants, and the emergence over the last decade of many new immigrant communities who had little presence before 1997. They include, for example, many Afghans, Congolese Filipinos, Poles, Slovaks and Somalis.

One way in which the UK Government has responded to this increased and increasingly diverse immigration has been to introduce a range of policies around the process of naturalisation[1] in order to make the acquisition of British citizenship a more meaningful process. This has been done through the introduction of such measures as the citizenship ceremonies, the citizenship test and a requirement to show knowledge of the English language. Many senior political leaders see these changes as important ways to promote the integration of new migrants who have decided to settle in the UK and also in promoting a shared and more inclusive notion of 'Britishness' (see Blunkett 2005; Brown 2006; Kelly and Byrne 2007; Khan 2007).

Yet, as discussed in this report, it is increasingly clear that the changing characteristics and behaviour of migrant populations is likely to mean that naturalisation will not be a relevant or important step in the integration of growing numbers of migrants. While there will no doubt continue to be interest in some camps in taking up British citizenship, our research shows that increased mobility will mean that fewer new migrants will be eligible or interested in taking up British citizenship. We argue that new patterns of temporary and circular international migration, coupled with greater residential mobility and increased diversity among immigrant groups, challenge orthodox assumptions about what government can and should do to promote migrants' integration through the process of naturalisation. Indeed, this coincidence of what has been called 'super diversity' (Vertovec 2006) and what we call 'super mobility' presents new challenges not just for naturalisation but also for achieving social integration in an increasingly diverse society, helping migrants to identify with their local neighbourhoods, and encouraging active civic participation among newcomers.

This report examines how a government committed to progressive notions of citizenship might respond to the fact that fewer people are willing to take up British citizenship or able to establish long-term roots within communities. In other words, we ask how government can promote citizenship (membership of and active participation in a community with a shared understanding of rights and responsibilities) among a population that includes growing numbers of non-citizens (that is, people who are not interested in taking up formal membership of the community). We hope that the report will contribute not just to Lord Goldsmith's review but also to other debates about social cohesion, integration, and Britishness and citizenship.

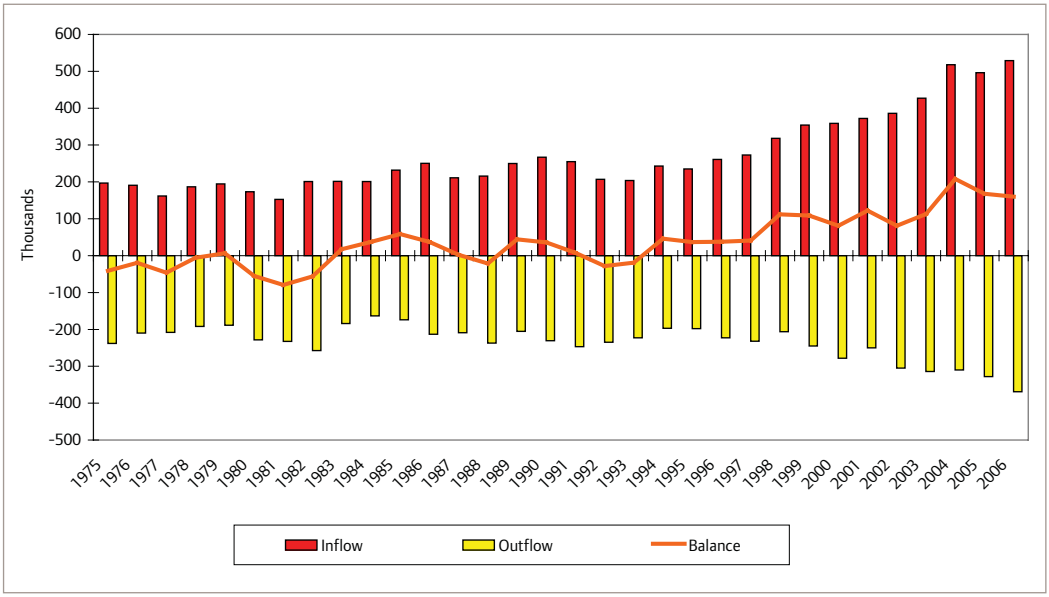
1. Naturalisation, as described on the Home Office's website, is 'a way of applying for British citizenship which is open to people who have indefinite leave to remain and have lived in the United Kingdom for a minimum period' (http://press.homeoffice.gov.uk/faqs/immigration/)

# 1. New patterns of 'super mobility'

Although international migration has always been a feature of national life, both inflows of immigrants and outflows of emigrants have increased substantially since early 1990s (see Figure 1). In recent years, around 400,000 non-British nationals have arrived annually in the UK with the intention of staying a year or longer. At the same time, nearly 200,000 non-British nationals have emigrated annually from the UK. Importantly, while net migration (the solid line in Figure 1) may have increased in recent years, so too has there been an increase of the gross flows in and out of the UK that drive net migration. In other words, the churn of population through migration has increased, with a record one million people crossing the border in both directions as migrants in 2006 (including British nationals who emigrated and returned) (ONS 2007).

**Figure 1. Total non-British migration to and from the UK, 1975-2006**

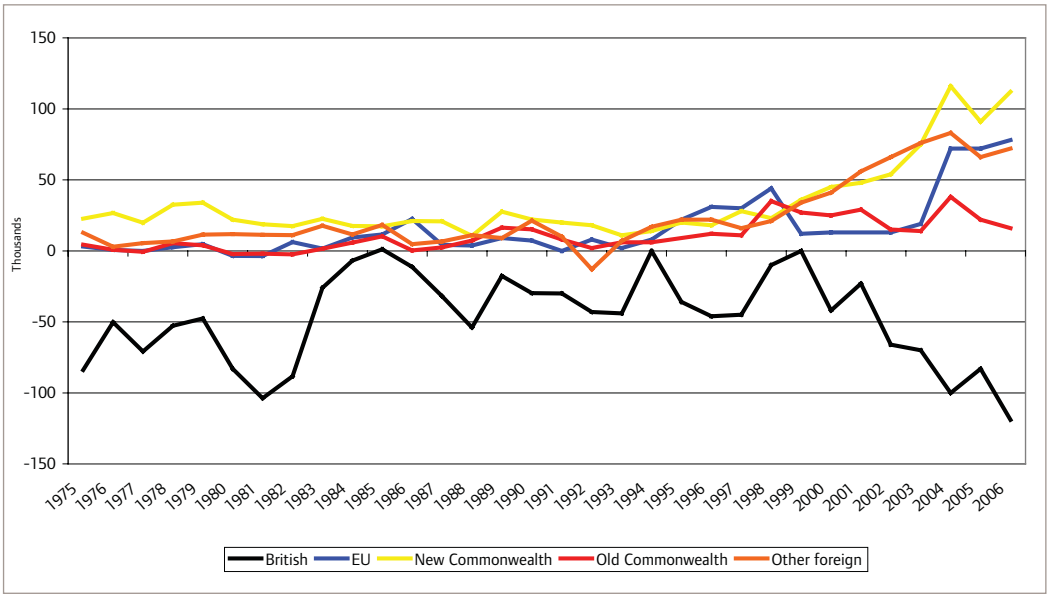
Source: International Passenger Survey, Office for National Statistics




There are also many indications that contemporary patterns of migration are very different from those in previous eras. Importantly, as well as increasing in numbers, **migration flows have become more diverse**, with more people arriving from a larger range of countries for a more diverse set of reasons. For example, while immigrants to the UK have tended to come from the Commonwealth and European Union, between 1999 and 2004 net immigration from other regions of the world was larger than from the Commonwealth and EU put together (see Figure 2). Since 2004, enlargement of the EU has

**Figure 2. Net flows of international migrants to the UK, by region of origin, 1975-2006 (thousands)**

Source: International Passenger Survey and Total International Migration, Office for National Statistics



facilitated migration and mobility from the new accession countries such as Poland and Lithuania, with the former emerging as the single largest country of origin of international migrants to the UK in 2005.

These flows have resulted in increases in the total numbers of foreign-born people resident in the UK. For example, using the Labour Force Survey, the foreign-born population of the UK has increased by around 2 million in the last decade (see Table 1). Perhaps more important than this overall increase has been the **increased diversity within the immigrant population** in the UK. As shown in Table 1, in 2007 there were an estimated 35 groups as defined by common country of birth that had more than 40,000 people living in the UK, five groups more than in 2002 and 12 more than in 1997. It is also interesting that some of these 'country-of-birth' groups, notably Polish-born, have seen large increases in the last five years.

**Table 1. Foreign-born population by country of birth, various years**

| Rank (2007) | Country | 1997 | 2002 | 2007 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | India | 404,100 | 424,600 | 553,300 |
| 2 | Poland | 67,800 | 49,600 | 423,300 |
| 3 | Ireland | 534,600 | 490,500 | 410,400 |
| 4 | Pakistan | 222,400 | 281,600 | 357,900 |
| 5 | Germany | 227,900 | 266,700 | 255,300 |
| 6 | Bangladesh | 140,200 | 179,900 | 203,800 |
| 7 | South Africa | 93,400 | 140,900 | 194,500 |
| 8 | China and Hong Kong | 86,500 | 125,500 | 173,600 |
| 9 | Jamaica | 139,900 | 149,800 | 173,500 |
| 10 | United States | 126,800 | 141,900 | 170,600 |
| 11 | Nigeria | 59,400 | 78,600 | 146,600 |
| 12 | Kenya | 122,300 | 119,900 | 135,400 |
| 13 | France | 66,400 | 94,800 | 133,700 |
| 14 | Australia | 85,900 | 107,400 | 123,800 |
| 15 | Sri Lanka | 51,200 | 84,000 | 113,600 |
| 16 | Philippines | .. | 52,600 | 106,700 |
| 17 | Zimbabwe | .. | 68,000 | 106,000 |
| 18 | Italy | 91,800 | 94,200 | 102,000 |
| 19 | Somalia | 46,100 | 70,400 | 90,300 |
| 20 | Ghana | 41,300 | 45,700 | 87,200 |
| 21 | Portugal | .. | 67,400 | 73,400 |
| 22 | Turkey | 64,600 | 55,800 | 72,500 |
| 23 | Cyprus | 57,200 | 78,300 | 72,400 |
| 24 | Canada | 69,200 | 71,500 | 71,800 |
| 25 | Spain | .. | 55,400 | 64,000 |
| 26 | Netherlands | .. | .. | 61,700 |
| 27 | New Zealand | .. | 59,600 | 59,100 |
| 28 | Iran | .. | 45,500 | 57,900 |
| 29 | Lithuania | .. | .. | 54,800 |
| 30 | Slovakia | .. | .. | 54,600 |
| 31 | Iraq | .. | .. | 53,000 |
| 32 | Malaysia | 48,100 | 63,400 | 50,100 |
| 33 | Afghanistan | .. | .. | 45,400 |
| 34 | Uganda | 50,500 | 51,100 | 42,500 |
| 35 | Singapore | 41,900 | .. | 41,800 |
| 36 | Former Yugoslavia | .. | 56,600 | .. |
| | TOTAL foreign born | 4,152,000 | 4,765,000 | 6,219,000 |

Source: Labour Force Survey and ippr calculations. Quarter 2 data are used for 2002 and 2007, quarter 3 data are used for 1997. Note: .. is used where estimated populations are less than 40,000 or where there is no information available.

Recent increases in immigration have also had an impact on the proportion of people in the UK who have been here for relatively short periods of time (see Figure 3). It is estimated that **about a third of all foreign-born people currently in the UK, or around 2 million people, have been in the UK for five years or less. Around half have been here for 10 years or less**. While we might expect recent arrivals to be relatively over-represented in an immigrant population, it is important to note that there has been a relative growth in the proportion of immigrants who are recent arrivals over the last decade (see Figure 4). While a fifth of immigrants in 1997 had arrived within the previous five-year period, this proportion had increased to a quarter in 2002 and stands currently at a third. At the other end of the spectrum, the proportion of immigrants who had been in the UK for 20 years or more fell from around a half in 1997 to a third in 2007.

**Figure 3. Foreign-born population in the UK in 2007, by period of arrival**

Source: Labour Force Survey 2007, Q2

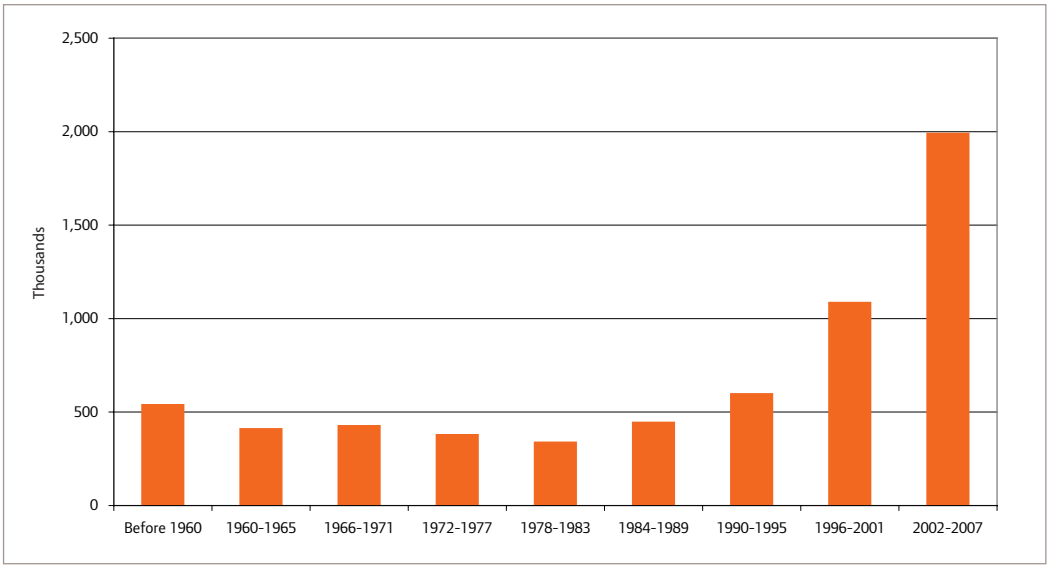
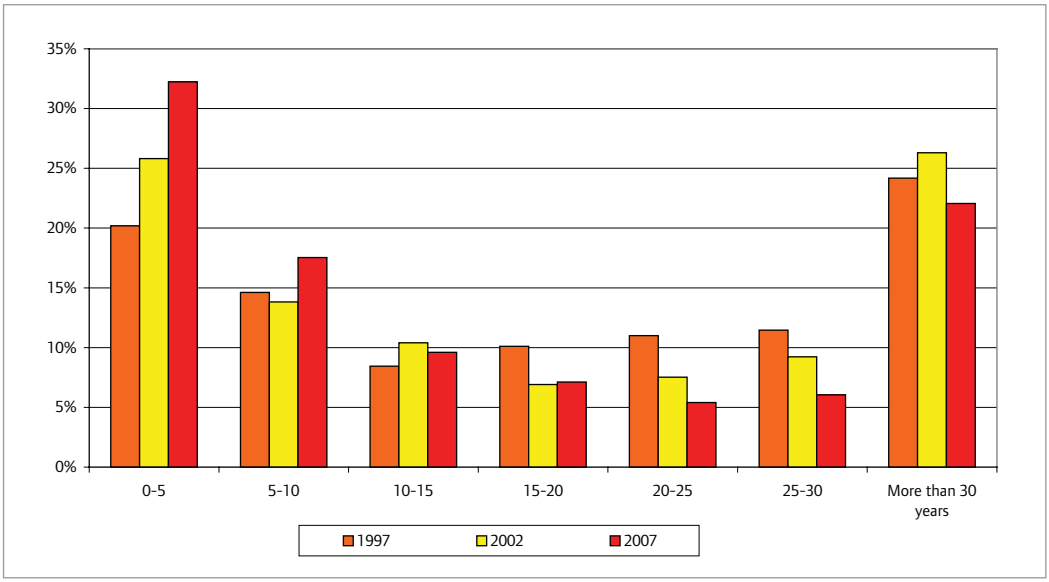



**Figure 4. Foreign-born population by number of years spent in the UK, for three sample years of 1997, 2002 and 2007**

Source: Labour Force Survey 2007, Q2, 2002 Q2, 1997 Q3 and ippr calculations




Perhaps the most important change in migration patterns that has direct implications for naturalisation and citizenship has been the **large increase in temporary and circular migration** (the latter being when migrants move to and fro between their country of origin and foreign place of work). In previous decades, many immigrants who came to the UK did so with the intention of living here permanently or at least for a long period. For example, according to one estimate, more than two-thirds of the foreign-born immigrants who arrived in the UK during the 1980s and 1990s stayed for longer than two years and just over half for longer than five years (Rendell and Ball, 2004: 24). Within some groups of immigrants emigration rates were very low; only 15 per cent of immigrants

born in the Indian subcontinent who immigrated to the UK during the 1980s and 1990s were thought to have emigrated within five years of their arrival (ibid).

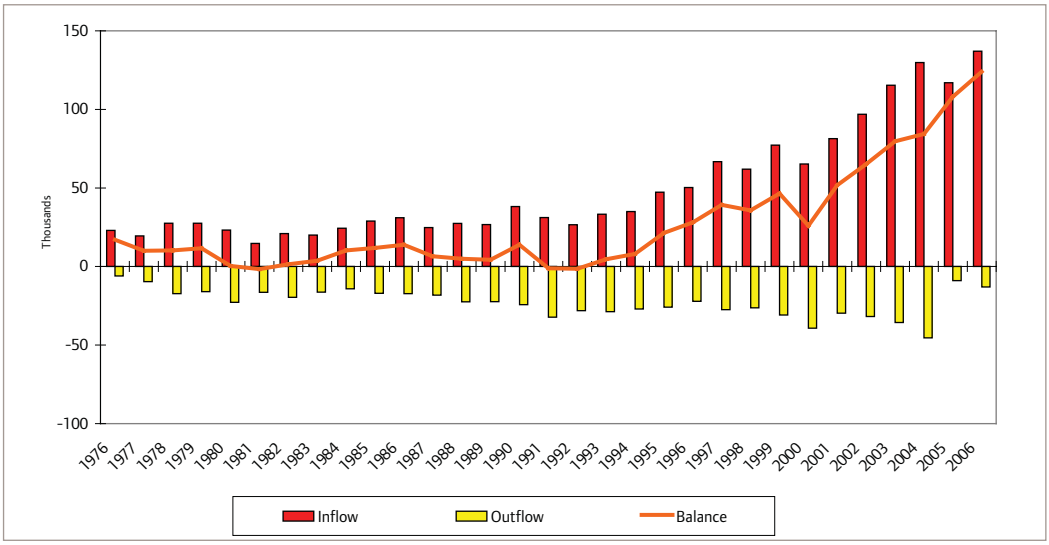
In contrast, it is likely that many of today's migrants are coming to the UK with the intention of staying only for a certain period of time before returning home or going elsewhere. Proving this conclusively is difficult, if not impossible. Yet, we suggest that there are five trends that explain and predict growth of temporary and circular migration in recent years:

1. By far the most important reason for the growth in temporary and circular migration has been the propensity for such behaviour among the largest group of migrants in recent years, namely those coming to the UK from the new EU member states in Central and Eastern Europe. Research among Eastern European migrants conducted in 2006 suggested that only about a quarter of them had considered settling in the UK for the long term (that is, a year or longer (Spencer *et al* 2007). **Only 15 per cent of Polish migrants surveyed in early 2007 said they intended to settle in the UK permanently** (CRONEM 2007). While such surveys must be treated with caution because intentions can and do change, there is already evidence of there being substantial outflows of Central and Eastern European migrants. In 2006, arguably at the peak of recent migration from this region, outflows were already running at a quarter of all long-term immigrants (ONS 2007). According to one Polish agency, there are some 500,000 Polish nationals now living in Poland who have spent some time living in the UK (CBOS 2007).
2. A high proportion of the skilled migrants who come to the UK from outside with a work permit, traditionally seen as a route for permanent settlement, are much less likely to settle in the UK. For example, about half of the nearly 100,000 new work permits issued in 2006 were for periods of less than a year, and in recent years around a third of all work permits (and some 80 per cent of work permits issued in the information and communication technology sector) were for intra-company transfers. While around a third of all work permit holders extend their permit in one way another, **even those who hold long-term work permits will not settle in the UK**. Many of the other work-related routes for non-EU nationals, such as working holidaymaker schemes, are also temporary in nature.
3. Another area of increased migration over the last decade has been in the numbers of international students, some 309,000 of whom entered the UK in 2006 (Home Office 2007b). The largest proportion of this group come to study in universities, but significant numbers of overseas students are also studying in private English language colleges and as self-funded English language students in further education colleges. Importantly for the concerns of this report, **a significant proportion of international students return home after completing their studies in the UK**. Figure 5 shows student migration to and from the UK. It shows the increase in international students coming to the UK, as well as numbers leaving. Between 1975 and 2006

**Figure 5. Total non-British student migration to and from the UK, 1975-2006**

Note: shows immigration and emigration flows whose purpose of travel is formal study

Source: International Passenger Survey, Office for National Statistics



around 1.2 million foreign nationals in total entered the UK for the purpose of study and some 640,000 left (Findlay and Stam, 2006). Those international students who are enrolled on shorter courses and have less recourse to extend their stay in the UK are particularly likely to leave at the end of their studies.

It is interesting to note that the drop in the numbers of students emigrating in the more recent years shown in Figure 5. This could be for various reasons, such as:

- Recent initiatives encouraging international students to seek work in the UK on completion of their studies (for example, the *Fresh Talent: Working in Scotland* scheme and its English equivalents give international students in higher education the right to remain in the UK for a period of time after their studies end)
- Students from the new EU member states staying on after studying to work following EU enlargement (our interviews as well as much other research on this group showed that many Poles entered the UK on student visas before May 2004, then became EU students in 2004, and were not counted as student emigrants; see also Spencer *et al* 2007)
- Many international students studying for longer in the UK than before.

The key question for the concerns of this report is what proportion of recently-arrived international students will settle permanently in the UK as opposed to leaving upon completion of study or after a period working. It is too early to answer this question as yet.

4. Although the numbers of asylum applications have decreased since the peak of the early 2000s, asylum flows still account for large numbers of people (some 23,610 asylum applications were lodged in the UK in 2006, amounting to 28,320 persons when dependents are included (Home Office 2007a). Before 2005, those asylum seekers granted United Nations Convention refugee status were granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK. Since 2005, the period of initial settlement for those with refugee status has been limited to five years[2], revocable at any time during this period. Government now has a clear expectation that those with refugee status will return if conditions improve in their home countries.
5. Under current government policy, it is unlikely that many of the several hundred thousand irregular migrants (people who are liable to be deported for issues related to their immigration status) estimated to be living in the UK (Pinkerton *et al* 2004) will be able to remain in the UK indefinitely. The Government has made clear its intention to detect, detain and deport as many irregular migrants who do not have permission to live or work in the UK. Similarly, while the Government may issue some form of leave to remain for some of the 450,000 persons that it terms 'asylum legacy cases'[3], it is also unlikely that many of his group will be granted rights of settlement in the immediate future. Taken together, this situation means that there is a large pool of irregular migrants with few or no social, political or economic rights. Despite many having been in the UK for long periods, **large numbers of irregular migrants are likely to be removed (or face the threat of removal) from the UK in the near future**.

In addition to this international mobility, it is worth noting that there are also increasing levels of *internal* mobility across among some groups of migrants. There is evidence that many labour migrants from the new EU member states are highly mobile across the UK, often moving to areas in which demand for labour is greatest, especially where seasonal work is involved (Pillai *et al* 2007; Spencer *et al* 2007). There is also anecdotal evidence that some of this group may move first to rural parts of the UK (often to do jobs in agriculture) when they arrive in the UK but then later move to more urban

2. The small numbers of programme refugees admitted from abroad under the Gateway Protection Programme, the Ten or More Plan and Mandate Refugee Programme still receive indefinite leave to remain in the UK when granted refugee status. Some 335 persons were admitted under these programmes in 2006.

3. 'A legacy case is any case where all of the following apply: there has been a claim for asylum; the Home Office records indicate that the case has not been concluded; the case is not being dealt with by the New Asylum Model….' (ILPA 2007:1)

areas (often to do relatively more attractive service sector jobs). While this sort of internal mobility may not have a direct impact on questions of naturalisation, it does present challenges for integration and the promotion of a sense of belonging.

Given the above factors, **we believe that the UK is experiencing a rapid rise in what might best be described as 'super mobility'. It is clear that these patterns have resulted in a dramatic increase in the numbers of people in the UK who are unlikely to be entitled to or be eager to take up British citizenship.** When we include the approximately 2 million foreign-born people currently resident in the UK who have been here for less than five years and therefore unlikely to be British citizens, and those who have been in the UK longer than five years but who have not applied for British citizenship (see next section), we have a substantial population for whom naturalisation policies are not relevant.

Furthermore, the increasing diversity of groups of migrants with different sets of entitlements means that the boundaries between citizens and non-citizens are blurred. Contemporary migration patterns, and particularly the growth of super mobility, appear to be creating a large pool of 'denizens' (Hammar 1990), people located 'halfway' with some rights, but not the full rights that citizenship confers. The challenge for policymakers interested in facilitating the integration and active citizenship of this group is to work out what measures will be most effective. Before turning to some of these challenges, in the next section we examine trends in the uptake of naturalisation.

# 2. The uptake of British citizenship among migrant groups

Until legislation was passed in 1914, the law relating to British citizenship and the process of naturalisation was largely uncodified. The British Nationality Act 1948 established the status of 'Citizen of the UK and Colonies'. It also gave all Commonwealth citizens the right of abode in the UK and to take up British citizenship. This right was revoked in 1962 with the passage of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act. Modern law in relation to naturalisation and citizenship is still largely based on the British Nationality Act 1981. That Act established the following categories of British citizenship, most of which do not give the right of abode in the UK: British citizens, British Overseas Territories Citizens, British Overseas Citizens, British Subjects, British Nationals (Overseas) and British Protected Persons. Since 1981, seven pieces of legislation in relation to nationality law have been passed in the UK, plus numerous policy changes.

Nationality law outlines the following pathways to British citizenship:

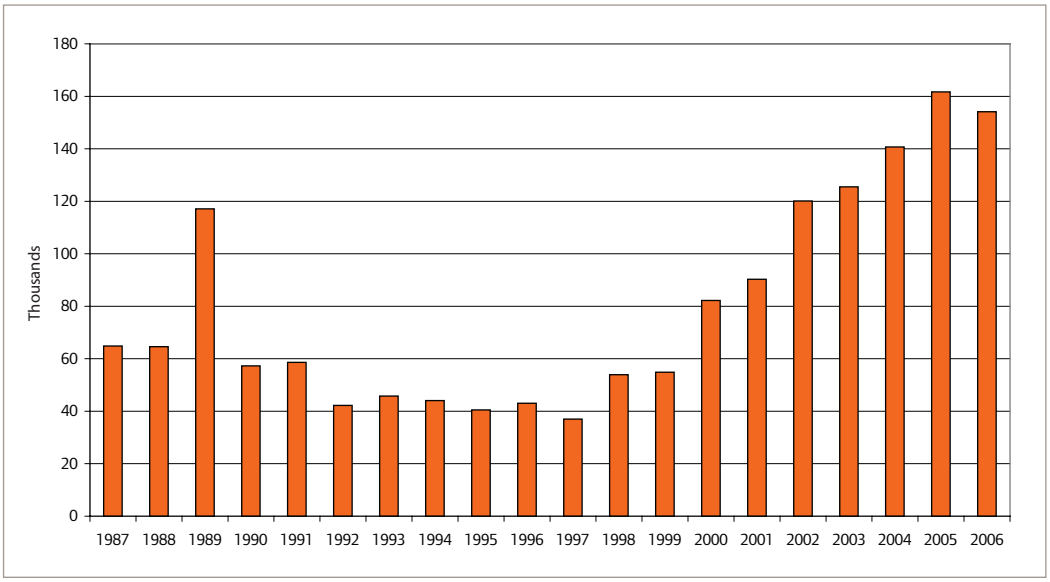
- By birth or adoption to a parent who is a British citizen at the time of birth
- By descent of one parent who is British
- By naturalisation (see below)
- By registration.

The requirements that need to be fulfilled in relation to **naturalisation** vary according to a person's immigration status. For example, someone who is being naturalised as a spouse or civil partner needs to have lived legally in the UK for three years. Those applying for citizenship as a result of residency need to have had five years' legal residency in the UK (recently increased from four years) and have had indefinite leave to remain for at least 12 months.

Nationality law is complex and there are many compelling arguments for making it, and the categories of British citizenship, less so. Nevertheless, every year many thousands of people become British citizens. An analysis of applications for citizenship highlights some clear trends. Figure 6 shows applications granted for British citizenship in the period 1987 to 2006. The peak in 1989 was caused by increased applications in 1987. In that year there were 295,447 applications for British citizenship, as the transitional arrangements introduced by the British Nationality Act 1981 ended in December 1987. The 1981 Act removed the right of abode in the UK from British Overseas citizens, with Hong Kong Chinese being the largest group affected. The 1981 Act also modified the application of *jus soli* (birthright citizenship conferred to those born in a particular territory). Prior to the implementation of legislation, anyone born in the UK was entitled to British citizenship; afterwards, they also had to have at least one parent with British citizenship. Consequently, in 1987 British Overseas citizens, as well

**Figure 6. Applications granted for British citizenship, 1987–2006**

Source: Home Office



many persons born in the UK to non-British parents, rushed to submit an application for naturalisation.

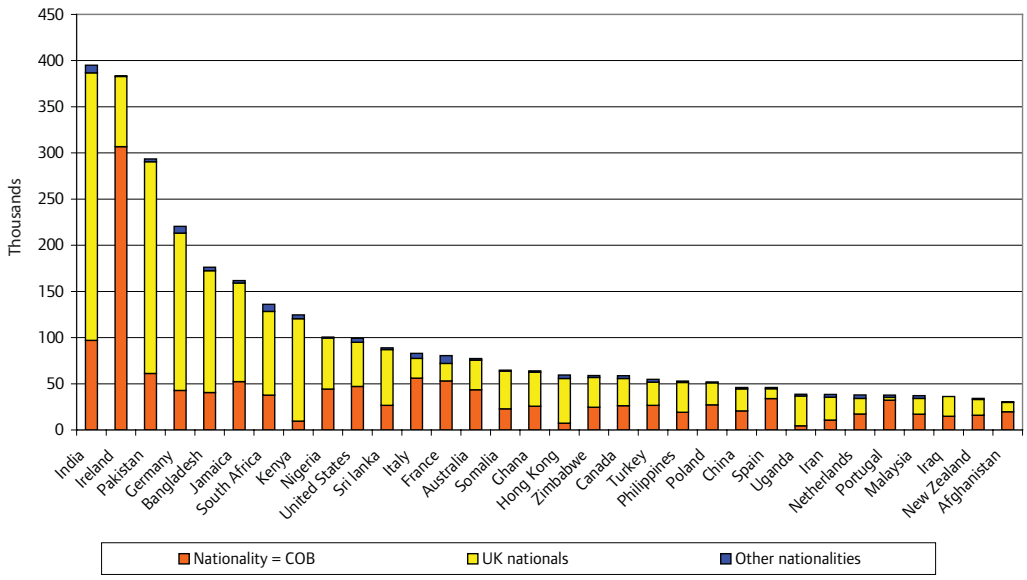
From the mid-1990s the trend in granting British citizenship was an upward one. This trend reflected increased international migration during that period, particularly for asylum purposes, but also increased work visa and student migration from around 1988. There was a further increase in grants of citizenship in 2005, caused by increased citizenship applications in 2003 and 2004. At that time many people who were eligible for citizenship but had not previously applied made an application in order to avoid the citizenship test and language requirements that were being introduced at the end of 2005.

In this section we look at those who spend a relatively long period in the UK but who do not apply for citizenship despite being eligible for it. According to Home Office estimates for 2006, some 60 per cent of overseas-born people who had been in the UK for six years or more were British citizens, a rate of uptake that has remained largely unchanged since 2002 (Home Office 2007b. In other words, **two out of five foreign-born residents of the UK who are likely to be eligible for British citizenship are not British citizens.**

Digging a little deeper into the data on those granted citizenship reveals some interesting trends. We examined Home Office data on the uptake of citizenship as well as data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) in relation to country of birth and nationality. Figure 7 presents an analysis drawn from the LFS of the nationality held by the larger migrant groups in the UK. It only includes people who have been in the UK since before 2002, thereby excluding newer arrivals who in most cases will not be eligible yet for naturalisation.

**Figure 7. Foreign-born population resident in the UK for longer than five years, by nationality**

Source: Labour Force Survey 2007 Q2 and ippr calculations




Note: The graph shows total population arrived in the UK before 2002 for given countries of birth, broken down by nationality – either the nationality of their country of birth, British nationality or other nationality. The LFS data does not account for dual nationality and therefore this graph shows the nationality that the interviewees give during the survey's data collection.

Figure 7 shows that those from South Asia (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) and Africa were the groups most likely to hold British citizenship after five or more years of residence in the UK. Those born in Ireland were the least likely to have applied for British citizenship after five or more years of residence in the UK. It is also interesting to note that quite a few people born in countries including India, South Africa and France have nationalities that are neither of their country of birth nor of Britain, further complicating the picture on citizenship uptake.

Within Europe, those born outside the European Economic Area (EEA) were most likely to apply for

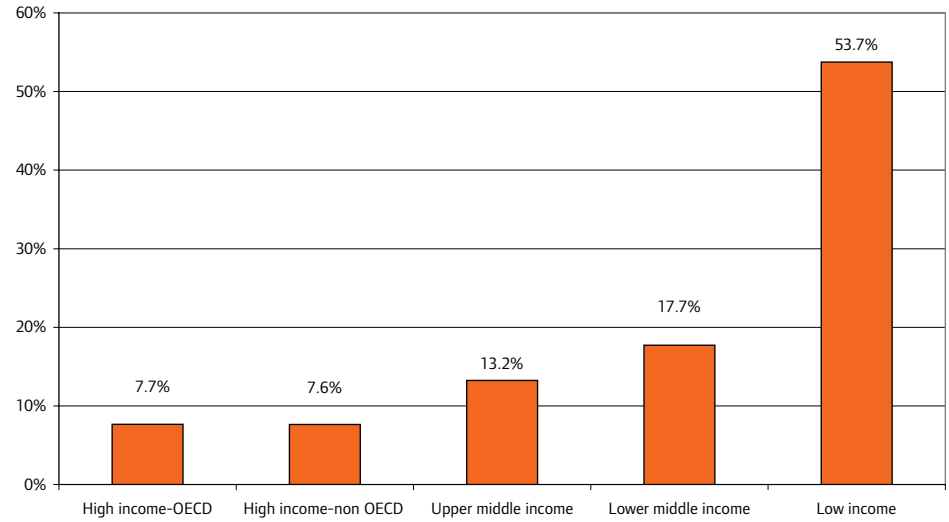
British citizenship. Some 13 per cent of applications for citizenship in 2006 were from non-EEA European countries, with the largest number from a single country (7,550) coming from the then union of Serbia and Montenegro. Viewed as a proportion of the population of this group resident in the UK, this represents a very high uptake of citizenship.

Migrants from poor countries are also much more likely to apply for British citizenship than were migrants from rich countries (see Figure 8).

**Figure 8. British citizenship, by income level of country of birth**

(OECD= Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development)

Source: Labour Force Survey 2007 Q2 and ippr calculations




The rate of applications for citizenship from different national groups changes over time. A notable recent change is that applications for British citizenship from the 2004 EU accession countries have fallen since the period before accession. Some 750 applications for citizenship were lodged by Polish nationals in 2003 compared with 580 in 2006, perhaps suggesting that as Poland has become a full EU member its citizens have become less interested in naturalisation. In other words, their behaviour has changed in line with that of other EEA nationals.

Of those likely to be eligible for naturalisation (that is, regular, long-term migrants), there are some groups that are less likely to apply for and possess British citizenship than others:

1. EEA nationals. This, we conclude, is because this group has the fewest restrictions in the UK on their rights of movement and abode and on their social rights, thus the least 'need' to apply for citizenship.
2. Chinese, Japanese, American, Canadian and Australian nationals. Based on data on overseas students and qualitative research on their migration pathways (see Balar and Williams 2004), we suggest that high proportions of nationals from these countries are overseas students or short-term labour migrants who will eventually return home or go elsewhere.
3. Migrants whose country of origin forbids dual nationality (examples include Kenya and Malaysia).

The evidence surveyed in this and the previous section suggests two seemingly contradictory trends: a growth in the uptake of naturalisation but a simultaneous growth in the numbers of people who are either not eligible or not interested in taking up naturalisation. It appears that naturalisation will continue to be important (especially for some groups) and the numbers of people taking up citizenship may indeed grow in the short term (especially as the relatively large cohort of recently-arrived immigrants becomes eligible), but there will also be an increase in the numbers of people for whom naturalisation will not be relevant; it is this observation that is likely to be relevant for the Lord Goldsmith Review. Indeed, we might expect the numbers undergoing naturalisation to go up but the proportion of migrants living in the UK who do not undergo naturalisation to do so also.

# 3. Migrants' views on naturalisation, integration and citizenship

Of course, in exploring and attempting to explain some of the trends discussed above it is important to consider the views and experiences of migrants themselves. Unfortunately many debates about integration and citizenship fail to do so and in the little research that exists about migrant integration, migrants are presented as rather passive recipients of advice and other interventions designed to integrate 'them'. Indeed, most research on migrant integration focuses on the institutions used to foster integration and seldom analyses the voices of migrant populations (Korac 2003).

This section draws on qualitative research carried out by ippr in 2007, including:

- In-depth interviews with 10 Polish migrants, most of whom had migrated to the UK after Poland's accession to the EU in May 2004
- In-depth interviews with 30 refugees from 15 different countries who have migrated to the UK over the last 50 years
- Focus groups of Nigerian migrants who had arrived in the UK at different times during the last 40 years.

We set out to answer the following questions relating to the integration and 'Britishness' of these individuals:

- How did the interviewed migrants understand their own integration?
- What factors, pre- and post-arrival in the UK, aided or hindered their integration?
- How did the interviewees define Britishness and what factors influenced their understanding of Britishness?
- Did interviewees intend to undergo naturalisation as British citizens?

Below we present our findings on naturalisation and citizenship, as well as in relation to integration, social interaction, active citizenship, belonging, identity and Britishness.

All the quotes in this section came from ippr's focus groups.

## Naturalisation and citizenship

> 'What is the point of getting the passport? It is just a piece of paper. I thought of it before 2004, but now there is no need…The situation when we joined the EU is that we don't need to become British. We can travel freely without the passport. I think it is just a piece of paper. It does not make people feel any different. You don't feel different just because your papers are red, not blue or black.' (Polish migrant, South East England)

> 'At first when I came, I thought 'why bother?'; I don't need to be British now Poland is in the EU. But this year I registered for residence and I think I may get a passport now. It makes it easier if you want a business… it's also easier if you want to go to Canada or the States.' (Polish migrant, London)

> 'I applied for the passport for freedom and security. When you are a refugee you cannot go anywhere, but when I have my passport, I can see my family. When we were refugees we were scared they might send us back, so we decided to apply for a British passport.' (Afghan refugee, London)

> 'I am proud when I pass through the airport that I have a British passport, that it is a security, but not an identity.' (Somali refugee, London)

Of the groups we interviewed, refugees were the group most likely to apply for British citizenship and Polish labour migrants were the least likely to apply. Nevertheless, some of the Polish migrants we talked to were in the process of applying for British citizenship. Other Polish interviewees had applied for residency status.

Interviewees from Poland told us that their low uptake of British citizenship was because it did not confer them additional advantages. As EU citizens they had all the rights of abode and work that they needed. Poles who *were* applying for British citizenship cited ease of travel to Canada and Australia as prime reasons for doing so (Polish nationals face greater visa restrictions in many countries around the world than do British nationals). Additionally, some interviewees felt that it was easier to start a business and secure bank loans with a British passport.

Among refugees, fear about being returned to their home country, as well as ease of travel, and the right to abode in the UK caused them to apply for British citizenship at the earliest opportunity. Among Nigerian labour migrants, the right of abode in the UK and ease of travel were again factors that promoted their application for citizenship. The prime motivating factor among Nigerian interviewees that prompted the uptake of British citizenship appeared to be a negative one – fear of removal from the UK – rather than a positive one.

The small number of interviewees that had participated in citizenship ceremonies since their introduction in 2004 appeared to enjoy those events.

## Integration

> '[When I first came to the UK] there was a language barrier. I could not understand people. I felt quite alienated, then I went back [to Poland]. It's quite different when you live by yourself. But when I came again, I learned English, I had a few friends here and it was easier.' (Polish migrant, South East England)

> 'One of the crucial things that helped me find my feet was a home, somewhere to stay and the second was having the language.' (Somali refugee, London)

> 'I suppose some people are doing well. But most of us are not doing exceptionally well. We are not doing everything that normal British people are doing. It's hard. To be honest, life is not easy. People are doing three or four jobs. They don't see their families.' (Nigerian migrant, Manchester)

Both refugees and labour migrants defined their integration in terms of their labour market experiences, whether they felt they were treated equally to British workers, as well as their social interaction within their neighbourhood.

Interviewees from all the nationalities taking part felt that a secure immigration status, tolerance from the resident population, secure housing, fluency in the English language, having social networks, and long-term support of an adviser  teacher or other professional helped them integrate. Opportunities to take on volunteering roles also promoted integration among refugees.

While fluency in English emerged as a very significant factor in promoting the integration of refugees and labour migrants, many recent arrivals to the UK have found it difficult to find English language courses. Exceptionally long waiting lists for courses, frequently moving residential address and therefore not being able to see a course through, not being able to access courses during working hours, and being employed in isolated rural areas where courses are lacking, were the usual reasons for preventing their attendance.

Refugees and migrants often told us that work increased their integration and sense of belonging. It aided their English language development, cultural knowledge and enabled them to make friends. But many of those we interviewed recounted experiences of discrimination in job-seeking and in the workplace itself. They felt that employers discriminated against them because of their ethnicity, accent or for having qualifications from overseas. Many of those who had managed to start successful careers in the UK had previously spent long periods of time in low-skilled jobs in which their qualifications were not utilised.

The state of migrants' housing conditions affected their integration and a sense of belonging. Our research showed that secure housing promoted early integration, while protracted homelessness or moving from place to place limited integration. Many Polish labour migrants recounted experiences of

'sofa surfing' – sleeping on the beds and sofas of their friends – and this limited their ability to form social relationships in their neighbourhoods.

Many interviewees held strong views about current debates about integration, which they saw as apportioning blame to their communities and failing to acknowledge that everyone had a responsibility to be welcoming.

## Social interaction

> 'It's us who's trying, it's not them [the resident British population] who are trying, it's us, we continually try, we say hi to them, we send them Christmas cards, but we're not very close. We just say hi and bye when we see each other, but it's them who are just kind of keeping themselves quite distant from us.' (Afghan refugee, London)

> 'My old friends from Poland, from university, are my family here. I mix with them the most.' (Polish migrant, South East England)

Almost all of those we interviewed had made friends outside their own community, with other migrants resident in the UK and with those whom they considered to be British. But most of our interviewees felt the biggest barrier to interacting socially outside their communities was the unfriendliness of their neighbours, which in some instances amounted to overt hostility.

Work commitments, the desire to earn as much money as possible before returning to their countries of origin, poor English and poverty limited their social interaction with the resident community. Households surviving on low incomes, as a result of unemployment or low pay, also had less social interaction. The interviewees said they often could not afford to use leisure facilities and other amenities where people meet each other.

A significant number of Polish interviewees did not speak fluent English and expressed no desire to improve their language fluency, and this limited their social interaction. They were content with a level of English that was sufficient for getting by in everyday life, but insufficient for complex conversation.

The Polish and Nigerian migrants who aspired to return to their home country within five years had the least social interaction with the resident majority community.

Overseas students and refugees who were studying at university also had little social interaction in their neighbourhoods. Many overseas students are working part-time in the UK and have little spare time. The vast majority live in rented accommodation in areas of high population transience.

Many of those we interviewed forged friendships through their leisure-time activities, such as volunteering and political activities, sport or by visiting bars and restaurants. Interviewees' leisure-time activities were very similar to those of the UK-born population, although they were more religiously active than the UK population. Pubs, sports clubs, churches and colleges were the most common environments in which migrants met people from outside their communities.

A sentiment expressed in many interviews was that media and government placed the responsibility for social integration on migrants, but that in fact the problem lay with the resident majority community, with the British not seeing integration as a two-way process.

## Active citizenship: political and community participation

> 'I did volunteer when I fist came to London; I worked at a project with young offenders. It helped me get my first [job]. But now with my job and studies I don't have time for volunteering. Maybe in the future I will go back to it.' (Polish migrant, London)

> 'Volunteering at the British Heart Foundation I got experience, so that's good for my CV and I made friends as well. So nowadays I have got a lot of friends, that's good for me. The more people you know, if you need help… they help you…' (Somali refugee, London)

High proportions of refugees who had gained British citizenship or had the right to vote as

Commonwealth citizens had exercised this right, with some respondents feeling they were privileged to be able to vote. None of the Polish interviewees had voted either in European, local elections or in the recent Polish general election, although some 35,000 Poles in the UK are thought to have cast a vote in the October 2007 elections (up from 2,500 in the September 2005 elections) (Reeves 2007). Many of the Poles we interviewed expressed a strong distrust of politicians and parliamentary politics, caused by their experiences of politics at home in Poland. On the other hand, there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that UK-based Poles who did vote were generally pro-European and may have influenced the overall outcome directly by voting for pro-European parties or indirectly by encouraging contacts at home to do so.

Some Nigerian and Polish migrants did not know about their rights to vote as Commonwealth or EU citizens. Community leaders that we interviewed confirmed this trend, also noting high proportions of Commonwealth citizens who are not on the electoral register.

Our research showed differential levels of volunteering among different migrant groups. Very high proportions of refugees were volunteers in a wide range of organisations. A need to gain skills and experience relevant to the UK labour market was one reason for volunteering cited by a number of those we interviewed. Political commitment, altruism and the desire to repay a country that has given sanctuary were other reasons given, as was the desire to occupy their time and make new friends.

Lower proportions of Nigerian migrants we interviewed were volunteers (compared with the refugee group) and none of the Polish migrants were. Among labour migrants, volunteering activity was strongly correlated with level of education and length of time in the UK. Only the most highly educated and longest established were engaged in volunteering activity. Work commitments also stopped many newly-arrived labour migrants from volunteering.

## Home and belonging

> 'Where is home? There is no straight answer, but I would say the place where I was studying. [Poland] is where I studied, where I began to think for myself and had my education.' (Polish migrant, London)
>
> 'I think I will go back at the end of the day. I like Manchester, but I don't like the whole stress you get with it. You don't get this stress at home. There you might be working hard, you might not have electricity, but at the end of the day it is your home. Here you are working three jobs in a day. You should get good money but you don't. For all the ethnic minority people it is not fair, not fair pay, not fair on us.' (Nigerian female, Manchester)
>
> 'Home? It's London, not Eritrea. It's where I grew up, got educated and work. My house, my work, my children, I'm comfortable and I am adapted to the British system – British food, clothes and everything. My husband is opposite; he wants to go [back] and live there, that's what he calls 'home'. He's trying to build a house there and he doesn't mind going to live there but I don't think I have any intention.' (Eritrean refugee, London)

Ideas about home and belonging have been debated by those concerned with migrant integration and social cohesion. Narratives of home and belonging influence career choices in the country of destination and the decision to participate in education, training and community life. The idea that home is 'back there' coupled with the perception that life in the UK is seen as a temporary sojourn, may mean, it is argued, that a migrant does not invest in social networks in the UK.

We asked our interviewees what home meant to them, where it was located and how ideas about home related to their integration in the UK. Many refugees considered the UK to be their primary home. Significant numbers of refugees and some Nigerian migrants had notions of home as being both 'here' *and* 'there'. Almost all Polish migrants considered that Poland was their primary home.

The majority of Nigerian interviewees saw themselves returning to their home country at some point in the future, in contrast to many refugees who saw themselves living permanently in the UK. Many

Polish interviewees were uncertain about whether to return to Poland or remain in the UK. It was the most recent migrants from Nigeria and Poland who most wanted to return. Some Polish and Nigerian interviewees had engaged in circular migration: they returned to their home country for a protracted period before coming back to the UK.

Length of residence in the UK, owning property in the UK and having children were factors that promoted a primary attachment to the UK.

Most refugee interviewees and non-refugee Nigerian interviewees felt that they 'belonged' in the UK, although not in their neighbourhoods. Few interviewees professed local identities, although some did articulate regional identities, such as being a 'Londoner'. We concluded that this absence of local identity was evidence of a lack of local social integration.

Very few Polish interviewees felt that they belonged in the UK – the small number who did had all purchased property here and all had children attending UK schools.

## Identity and Britishness

> 'You never know if you will feel British, maybe in one month. I'll feel British maybe in a year's time, maybe never. Maybe if I have a family here I will feel British. A few [Polish] people who have a family here, they feel British. They feel more stabilised here. Maybe then, I will feel British or at least a Londoner.' (Polish migrant, London)

> 'My identity? It depends on what mood I am in. I refer to myself as an Anglo-Nigerian. I have dual nationality. I am proud of both the British and Nigerian side[s] of me. I am proud to be a Londoner as well.' (Nigerian migrant, London)

> 'I like the peace, your rights, your right to say anything you want, and no one can tell you to do things you don't want to do. There is peace and you always feel you have freedom. That is Britishness.' (Refugee, Somalia)

Out of our interviewees, refugees, and longer established labour migrants from Nigeria, felt the most British. Polish labour migrants felt the least British. Many refugee and Nigerian interviewees felt they had dual identities that related to their diaspora but that also incorporated Britishness.

Interviewees' ideas about Britishness were personal and often idiosyncratic. Most interviewees also noted that a feeling of Britishness emerged slowly and not necessarily in a linear way: it was not always the case that one felt more British over time. Also, when we posed questions about Britishness it sometimes provoked a sense of not belonging among interviewees.

Some refugees said they felt British because they appreciated the freedom and security afforded to them in the UK. But it appeared to us that they were experiencing what we term a 'discongruity of belonging': they did not have a sense of *local* belonging, but did feel they belonged in a national sense, through their appreciation of freedom and peace that they associated with being in the UK.

Only Polish labour migrants and refugees from European countries stated that they felt 'European', which indicates that the opportunity to harness any common European identity in order to engage new migrants from the EU is currently limited.

# 4. Policy approaches to naturalisation, integration and citizenship

It is interesting to compare migrants' views to naturalisation, integration and citizenship with the ways in which UK policymakers have approached these issues in recent years. In particular, while many migrants may see naturalisation as a process that is distinct from broader integration issues, many policymakers see it as part of a wider attempt to promote integration. This is motivated by concerns that:

- Increased diversity as a result of migration has weakened the ties that bind communities together
- There is an apparent crisis in English and British identity, particularly among the white, working-class English
- Anxieties exist about religious extremism
- There is residential, educational and employment segregation of migrant and minority populations in some parts of the UK.

The Government has responded to these concerns in a number of different ways.

First, it has initiated policy to aid the ***integration of new migrants***. For example, the Government has published two refugee integration strategies for England (Home Office 2000; 2005), redirecting its funding for integration services to refugees through the Sunrise programme (see Border and Immigration Agency 2008), and has also tasked Regional Strategic Migration Partnerships (formerly asylum consortia) to develop strategies to promote integration among all migrants. These latter bodies are usually led by the regional local government associations and comprise members co-opted from local authorities, the police, health authorities and non-governmental organisations. Much of their work focuses on the institutional and functional aspects of integration, in particular their ability to access services such as healthcare and English language classes.

Second, central government has also initiated work to promote ***social cohesion***. This concept was first discussed by the French sociologist Durkheim, in relation to the inter-dependence of people in newly industrialised cities in Europe (Durkheim, 1893). In the early 1990s anxieties about urban decay and weakening social ties fuelled research into social cohesion in North America (Elster, 1989; Putnam, 1993). Analyses of the process of social cohesion draw on theories of social capital, as elaborated by Putnam, who sees social capital as '…features of social life – networks, norms and trust – that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives…' (Putnam 2000: 664-5)[4].

Although a complex and contested term, cohesive communities are usually defined as those in which there is:

- Progress towards equality
- Integration of community members in economic activity
- A sense of belonging to a locality and nation
- Trust and reciprocity between members of the community
- Social integration of community members facilitated by social networks, and thus the development of social capital
- Shared values. (Griffiths *et al* 2005)

In the UK, notions of social cohesion influenced the urban regeneration policies of the 1997-2001 Labour government, with focus given to removing income inequalities and social exclusion in deprived

4. Putnam suggests distinguishes between different kinds of social capital, namely: **bonding capital** – strong ties within kinship networks or among friends who see themselves as alike; **bridging capital** – weaker ties outside kinship networks or among people who do not have close affiliations; and **linking capital** – ties between those in power within organisations and the clients they serve (Putnam 1995).

communities. But since 2001, social cohesion has taken on new meanings that emphasise race, religion and immigration. In May 2006, responding to the need to create more coherent social cohesion policies, the Government amalgamated parts of the Home Office dealing with race, faith and cohesion within the new Department for Communities and Local Government (now referred to as 'CLG'). Since then, CLG has initiated an Independent Commission on Integration and Cohesion, as well as publishing a wide range of guidance for public sector and non-governmental organisations.

The third way in which government has responded is in attempts to revitalise ***civic and political participation***, which it also terms ***active citizenship***. All English schools have been obliged to deliver citizenship education to 11- to 16-years-olds since 2002. Government policy has also given greater importance to volunteering, with a number of initiatives aiming to promote youth volunteering (Russell 2005). It is planned that in the future citizenship education in schools will also place greater emphasis on volunteering (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority 2007). Baroness Neuberger, a ministerial volunteering champion, was appointed in June 2007 to develop volunteering activity.

There are also debates about the role of volunteering in building cohesive communities, as well as in refugee integration (Home Office 2005; Commission on Integration and Cohesion 2007). The Home Office wants volunteering to form part of refugee integration programmes and refugee integration case workers are meant to direct refugees towards volunteering activities. Since 2005, some political leaders, including Gordon Brown, have suggested that all applicants for British naturalisation should be encouraged to undertake a period of volunteering, including Ruth Kelly MP and Liam Byrne MP who propose that British citizenship should be awarded after the accumulation of a certain number of points, with volunteering attracting points (Kelly and Byrne 2007).

All of these policy priorities need to be seen in the context of contemporary debates about Britishness. While a rich literature plots the relatively recent emergence of a 'British' national identity (see Colley, 1992a, b; McCrone, 1997), the last ten years have seen growing calls for a renewal of British identity. From the mid-1990s, concerns about the threat posed by the far Right were expressed by a number of politicians, partly prompted by a growth in the far Right vote in continental Europe. An alleged crisis in Britishness among white working-class men was cited as a risk factor in the growth of right-wing extremism (Blunkett, 2005). The call for a renewal of national identity also grew as a result of concerns about religious extremism among Muslim communities, as well as increased international migration. Many commentators across the political spectrum have argued that a shared sense of Britishness and attachments to the UK would act to prevent the growth of religious extremism and to bind diverse communities (Khan 2007).

Much of the debate around the renewal of Britishness distinguishes between two very different forms of national allegiance: ethnic and civic.

*Ethnic* nationalism promotes an idea of biological ancestry that links an individual to the nation and its customs and traditions. Obviously immigration threatens a model of Britishness based on ethnicity and common ancestry.

*Civic* nationalism stresses a belonging to the nation on the basis of citizenship rights, shared political values, common civic institutions and a shared language (Fenton 2007). Gordon Brown, among others, has called for a civic Britishness, not based on 'blood, race and territory' but on specific values such as individual liberty anchored in a sense of duty and an intrinsic commitment to tolerance and social justice, stating:

> '…the question is essentially whether our national identity is defined by values we share in common or just by race and ethnicity – a definition that would leave our country at risk of relapsing into a wrongheaded "cricket test" of loyalty.' (Brown 2006)

Other political figures have supported the call for a values-based national identity. For example, Michael Wills MP has argued that Britishness should be seen as creativity built on tolerance, openness and adaptability, work and self-improvement, strong communities and an outward-looking approach (Wills, 2002).

More recently, a number of political commentators have adopted the rhetoric of 'contractual citizenship', which establishes citizenship based not only on individual rights but also on mutual obligations to the nation and community. The Government has brought in regulations whereby those applying for British naturalisation are obliged to learn English and to show knowledge of life in the UK. Goodhart (2006) also writes about contractual citizenship. He argues that a sense of shared British identity should be underpinned by a contract of national citizenship formed both by 'horizontal' solidarity between citizens (social contract) and a 'vertical' relationship between the citizen and the state (political contract). Liam Byrne MP has suggested that applicants for British naturalisation should undertake a period of community service (Kelly and Byrne, 2007).

Others have called for the debate around Britishness to move away from abstract notions of identity and focus more on its practical application – active citizenship. They have referred to Britishness as an active, participatory identity, rather than simply an emotional bond. Trevor Phillips has also spoken of a form of Britishness rooted in the practical application of shared values, which should act as a guide to our behaviour, enabling us to develop the civic skills we need for living in an increasingly diverse society (interview on Jonathan Dimbleby Programme, ITV, 1 March 2006).

It is important to note that many debates about Britishness have been lively and not without dissent. Cohen (2000), among others, argues that there is no 'essential Britishness' and that any attempt to define it in terms of characteristics or values resorts to irrelevant mythologies and imagined communities. Despite statements stressing inclusive interpretations of Britishness, the reality of everyday life presents a different picture – the widespread belief that Britishness is the prerogative of white English people, with the 'subtle and everyday "policing" of the boundaries of Britishness by white people' (ETHNOS 2006: 5).

It is in the context of concerns about integration, social cohesion, civic participation, Britishness and active citizenship that recent attempts to tweak the naturalisation process should be seen. The Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 introduced the legal basis for a compulsory citizenship ceremony involving an oath of allegiance and pledge to the UK, as well as a citizenship test, to be taken by applicants for naturalisation in the UK. The first ceremonies were held in 2004. From 2005, all applicants for naturalisation have had to sit and pass a 'Life in the UK' citizenship test set in English or Welsh, or pass a language course with a citizenship component in the teaching. In 2007, this requirement was extended to those applying for permanent residency in the UK. The Government argued that the requirement to show an understanding of the English language and of life in the UK as a condition of naturalisation would aid the integration of new migrants.

While these attempts to make the naturalisation process more meaningful and more closely related to broader objectives are certainly welcome, our research raises some important questions about how much of a role naturalisation can be expected to play in promoting integration. It is to these questions, and some suggested ways forward, that we now turn.

# 5. Towards progressive citizenship in an age of super mobility

There is no denying that naturalisation has to be an important part of wider strategies around promoting integration and citizenship. For a start, the fact that some 150,000 people on average have applied for citizenship each year for the last three years means that the process of naturalisation cannot be disregarded. Using the process to ensure and/or embed a better appreciation and acceptance of what citizenship means is a sensible way forward, and one that countries such as Australia and Canada seem to have pursued successfully for several decades now.

Yet, as we have found through our quantitative and qualitative work, the orthodox assumption that integration is promoted through naturalisation is being challenged by the increase in short-term migration, as opposed to permanent settlement, as well as low uptake of citizenship among some migrants. There will no doubt be many who are concerned that two out of five people eligible to become British choose not to and that many people will live in the UK for long periods without having the right and responsibilities associated with being a full citizen; viewed another way, perhaps this also indicates a lack of interest in integration and even hinders it.

Moreover, the numbers of short- and long-term residents without British citizenship living in the UK are likely to increase. Some of the key drivers of super mobility – labour market demand, demographic factors, intra-EU mobility, expansion of the international student market, and global economic integration – are likely to grow stronger in the future. This in turn will limit the Government's scope for managing integration through naturalisation alone. The challenge, then, will be to devise ways of facilitating the integration of new migrants, promoting active citizenship, and developing local and national attachments through policies that go beyond naturalisation. This is what we mean by a **'progressive' citizenship policy**.

So how should Government aid the integration and the development of local attachments of those who are not eligible or eager to become British? There are two broad areas of policy intervention that are worth pursuing: ways to ensure that the naturalisation process itself facilitates integration more meaningfully, and ways to promote integration among those unwilling or unable to undergo naturalisation. We deal with each option in turn.

## Naturalisation

Our focus group discussions and interviews about integration and citizenship conducted with new migrants revealed a tension between a narrow understanding of citizenship (focused on the formal membership of a community through possession of a passport, for example) and a broad one (including all aspects of civic and political life in a community). Many of the migrants we talked to understood citizenship to be about the former while policymakers, especially those interested in promoting a more progressive and inclusive sense of citizenship, tend to focus on the latter, or at least on using the former as a means to promoting the latter. This tension not only highlights the limits of naturalisation policies but also raises some important challenges for those thinking about citizenship (in both senses). We discuss these below.

### Being clear about the aims of naturalisation policy

Naturalisation policy in the UK and elsewhere has sometimes been criticised for being unclear in its aims and objectives. It is presently unclear what policy is aiming to achieve: does the Government want:

- to make attaining British citizenship more meaningful, affording it greater significance?
- the process of naturalisation to assist in the integration of migrants?
- to progress the notion of contractual citizenship, and perhaps contractual integration, adopting a model along the French lines, whereby state and new migrant sign an integration contract (OECD 2007)?
- to simply raise the bar to achieving naturalisation, making the achievement of British citizenship a more selective process?

Being clear about whether naturalisation is an end in itself or a means to some other end is essential. The Lord Goldsmith Review is an opportunity to debate and clarify the aims of naturalisation policy.

### Setting the bar at the right level

One of the most important challenges is to work out how difficult or accessible the naturalisation process should be. Government needs to consider how to balance the aim of keeping naturalisation requirements simple enough to promote the integration of new migrants with the aim of making it a significant bar to those who do not understand or share common values and bonds. Our research suggests that striking this balance will be made more difficult by the presence of many, and indeed perhaps increasing numbers, of people who need to be given meaningful incentives to become British and of many others (for example, irregular migrants) who will almost certainly remain ineligible for British citizenship despite long residence in the UK.

At a mundane level, one consideration is the cost to the migrant of naturalisation. Some low-income migrant households may be excluded on the basis of cost. At the time of writing it could cost a family of two adults and two children £1,348 to undergo naturalisation, exclusive of any legal fees. There is an inherent risk that such costs will serve as a serious impediment or even disincentive to some groups.

Similarly, the integration of two groups of new migrants may well be undermined by current approaches to naturalisation. First, the granting of time-limited leave to remain to those who have gained refugee status since 2005 can impact adversely on socio-economic integration and may actually serve as a disincentive for the active participation of refugees, who are otherwise among the most active members of our community (Rutter *et al* 2007). Second, there are likely to be large numbers of irregular migrants who have yet to be removed but who have little or no recourse to citizenship. Some irregular migrants are likely to have been in the UK for a substantial period already. At the current rate of removal of irregular migrants and based on the most recent estimates of the total population of irregular migrants, some of the current cohort may still be in the UK for another two decades.

We believe that government needs to consider all practical options to dealing with irregular migration, avoiding the implicit promotion of the long-term presence of irregular migrants in our community without offering them the rights and obligations of citizens. Offering some irregular migrants legal leave to remain in the UK, contingent on a clean criminal record, is one option that government might consider (see ippr 2006).

### Promoting positive reasons for naturalisation

We also need to consider how the acquisition of citizenship becomes a more positive choice, rather than being prompted by negative factors. In our research, migrants gave us reasons for why citizenship mattered that were very different from those that policymakers often discuss. In our interviews the most frequently cited reasons for rapid uptake of British citizenship included fears of being returned to the home country, fears of being refused entry to the UK, and the inconvenience of long queues at ports of entry if they did not, and the ease of travel overseas if they did. We heard less often about citizenship signalling a substantially greater sense of belonging or a more definite understanding of what being a citizen involved. Any attempts by Government to make naturalisation more meaningful and citizenship more encompassing will have to keep in mind such feelings and perceptions among new migrants.

These opinions have implications for how much compulsion might be built into the naturalisation process. While tests and ceremonies can play an effective role, adding yet more requirements can serve as too much of a deterrent and/or make the naturalisation process a less positive experience. For example, proposals to make compulsory volunteering a component of naturalisation (Kelly and Byrne 2007) may sit uneasily with a move to create positive reasons for naturalisation, not to mention that migrant groups and volunteering organisations argue that there is presently insufficient capacity among non-governmental organisations, private and statutory sector organisations to work with all of those who undergo naturalisation every year.

### Changing the public discourse around naturalisation

The question of compulsion also feeds into a wider discussion about what the wider public expects of the naturalisation process. There is a risk that naturalisation is seen increasingly as a process of forcing reluctant people to become more like 'us'. The reality, as this and other research shows, is that most migrants feel positive about being or becoming British (even if they do not undergo naturalisation) and, further, that integration is an interactive process. For example, in talking about *British* values and promoting these among newcomers, it is often implied that only the British hold these values (Winder, 2007). Many of our interviewees talked about concerns that current public debates about integration end up apportioning blame to their community, while failing to acknowledge that everyone in the UK has a responsibility to be welcoming (see also Refugee Council 2007; Rutter *et al* 2007). Government and other opinion formers may need to better communicate the two-way nature of integration and be sensitive about minority communities' perceptions of integration debates.

## Beyond naturalisation

This report has largely focused on the fact that naturalisation is less relevant than ever before given emerging patterns of super mobility. This begs the question of what more can be done other than naturalisation to promote integration and citizenship, especially in the context of few people being eligible or wanting to take up British citizenship. Below we present some ideas of what might be done.

### Encouraging greater political participation

The fact that many EU and Commonwealth citizens can vote in some British elections despite not having British citizenship should be seen as an opportunity to promote political participation in the UK. Promoting voting and wider political engagement may be one way of promoting integration while side-stepping interest in or entitlement to naturalisation. Many of those we interviewed from EU and Commonwealth countries were not aware of their voting rights in the UK, despite high levels of interest in current affairs. Government, as well as non-government organisations, might consider public information campaigns to encourage greater voter registration among migrant groups.

A more ambitious strategy might be to extend local voting rights to all migrants who are registered in a particular locality, recognising that migrants pay taxes, which fund local services. Giving migrants the right to vote in local elections gives them greater say over these local services. Given there are growing numbers of migrants who may not take up British citizenship, an extension of voting rights for this group may encourage greater political participation.

### Encouraging volunteering

Volunteering helps integration as it helped develop language skills, as well as knowledge of UK society. Our research showed high levels of volunteering among refugees, but much less participation in volunteering among labour migrants. Our interviews showed that the acquisition of language skills was a very strong incentive for volunteering among refugees. Governmental and non-governmental organisations need to consider how they might encourage volunteering among groups that are less likely to be volunteers. Relevant organisations could develop a national volunteering strategy for migrants and refugees. Such a strategy should promote a wider range of organisations that could include migrants as volunteers, as well as disseminating good practice in relation to migrant volunteering. Agreeing an appropriate set of incentives to encourage volunteering and the support on offer to would-be volunteers (for example, help with childcare or travel costs) would also be a critical first step.

### Re-energising European citizenship

Almost all of the Polish nationals we interviewed stated that they felt European, as did refugees from European countries. This suggests that a re-energised vision of what it means to be a European citizen may offer the opportunity to engage many new migrants from EU countries and develop a sense of belonging. European citizenship and 'Europeanness' need to be seen as progressive and inclusive concepts. Politicians could provide leadership and debate European citizenship in its broadest sense (though not confusing it with the provision of some form of European passport). Members of the European Parliament might consider greater outreach to the new communities. And organisations

working with migrant communities, as well as local authorities, might consider public information campaigns to encourage registration and voter turnout in European elections. European institutions could also consider outreach among migrant communities – the European Community has a public information role and each EU member state hosts an EU information office. Arts organisations, and schools through the national curriculum's citizenship classes, might encourage examination of what it means to be European.

### Fostering local belonging

Among our interviewees the new Polish migrants and many newly-arrived Nigerian migrants felt few attachments to their *local* area. Our research also suggested that refugees experienced what we term a *discongruity of belonging*. For them, Britishness was not fostered by local integration in the workplace or immediate neighbourhood, but was experienced nationally, through refugees' appreciation of freedom and peace, and therefore in one sense they felt they did not belong but in another they felt they did. Yet interactions in our local areas are critical for developing a sense of belonging and Britishness. Furthermore, it is relationships made at the local level that bind diverse communities together. If British citizenship is to be a meaningful and 'progressive' condition, it needs to be fostered both at the grass roots and at the national level.

Government needs to consider a range of public policy interventions that could promote integration and nurture a sense of local belonging among refugees in the UK. Central and local government should give greater consideration to the role of public space in promoting social cohesion. Our research showed that much social interaction between communities took place in public spaces: neighbourhood parks, courtyards, playgrounds, leisure centres, allotments, museums and galleries, youth centres, restaurants and bars – the 'soft' infrastructure of places. While there has been much broad debate about social cohesion, the role of public space in its promotion has received less consideration, particularly at a local level. Local authorities' duties to promote social cohesion are very broad and do not specify that housing and planning departments should be involved in strategies to promote social cohesion. Today, large housing developments are being planned in South East England with very little consideration given to the soft infrastructure. There is a need a draw in a broader range of actors into debates about social cohesion.

Funding of the arts, culture and sports, such as monies administered by the Arts Council, could be better directed towards initiatives that bring communities together. Government might also consider providing small amounts of funding for churches and trade unions – institutions that are widely used by new migrants – in a bid to promote social integration.

### Involving universities and colleges

Overseas students comprise a significant proportion of short-term migrants to the UK and their numbers are likely increase in future years given greater numbers of universities are setting up overseas offices. They almost all live in rented accommodation in areas of high population transience and, those who also work part time often have little spare time. Perhaps as a result, overseas students comprise one of the groups with the least social interaction in their neighbourhoods. Some universities have excellent programmes to help overseas students integrate into the UK. These include volunteering and befriending schemes. However, many universities and colleges do not have such programmes and, unlike schools in England, they have no duty to promote social cohesion. Universities and colleges and the bodies that represent them need to consider how they might better encourage the integration of overseas students, as well as how to disseminate existing good practice. Government might consider encouraging universities and college to apply for grants that aim to build cohesive communities.

### Reviewing entitlement to integration support

Only those with refugee status are entitled to integration support, which is provided through the Sunrise programme (Border and Immigration Agency 2008). Our research indicated that some other migrant groups may benefit from the type of advice that this programme offers. Based on lessons learned from the programme, government may wish to extend advice and casework services beyond

refugees to other groups of migrants admitted for permanent settlement. In so doing, it may wish to target more vulnerable migrants, for example spouses with limited education who are admitted to the UK.

### Supporting English language teaching

Competency in the English language is essential for the successful integration of new migrants and is a requirement for naturalisation. It enables confident and unmediated access to public services and facilitates social interaction between newcomers and the receiving community, thus contributing to the development of cohesive communities. However, newly-arrived refugees and migrants have found it difficult to enrol on English language courses, a finding from our interviews that is supported in other research. We recommend that there is a cross-departmental government review of current provision of adult courses in ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) and future ESOL needs. This review should consider levels of funding for ESOL, as well as funding mechanisms to enable those who arrive outside funding allocation cycles to access English language support at the earliest opportunity. The review should also consider how better to deliver ESOL classes to migrant workers in rural areas.

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