

# **Review of Recent Bristol Economic Migrants: needs and strategies**

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## **Contents**

**A Introduction**

**B Methodology**

**C Executive Summary**

**D Research Findings: migrants' experiences**

**E Different support needs of specific migrant communities: accessing information, gender and ethnicity**

**F Welcome Pack Plus: the value of a new migrant information or 'Welcome' pack, the 'costs of not knowing' and different ways of knowing**

**G Assisting migrant communities to play a greater role in their local communities**

**H Resident Questionnaire Survey on attitudes to and experience of economic migrants**

**I Conclusion**

**J Recommendations**

## **A. Introduction**

The UN estimates that 3.2% of the World's population, some 232 million people, are international migrants, an increase from 150 million in 1990, reflecting processes of globalization (Castles and Miller 2009; Chalabi 2013). Europe is the most popular destination hosting 72 million migrants in 2013 (United Nations, 2013). Economic migration is the 'movement of people from one country to another primarily for employment related reasons' (IPPR 2004, p1). Economic migrants are also often referred to as labour migrants or migrant workers (IPPR 2004) and are considered essential to the functioning of economies within the global economy (Samers 2010). People migrate when it is in their economic interest and will go to a place that maximises their long term earning potential (Gregory et al. 2009). However, the term 'economic migrants' encompasses varied groups, motivations and timescales e.g. short term migration motivated by low wages or unemployment in their country of origin (push factors) versus that of a long term 'elite' professional migrant recruited to join an international centre of excellence. Migrants may have more than one driver including kith and kinship networks and cultural factors.

Migration within Europe has historically been driven by labour migration (Menz and Caviedes 2010: p.1); e.g. post war New Commonwealth migrants who were invited by major organisations such as the National Health Service and London Transport at a time of labour shortages and expanding economy (Castles and Miller, 2009). By 1972 legislation curtailed Commonwealth citizens' access to in the UK, but EU freedom of movement has since played an important role in migration to the UK, especially with the accession of A8 countries in 2004, which allowed Eastern European EU member state nationals to move to and work in the UK (Somerville and Sumption, 2009). It is estimated that around 1.5 million A8 workers came to the UK between 2004 and 2009, half of all migrants entering the UK in this period (Somerville and Sumption 2009). NiNo data for Bristol highlights Poland, Spain, India, France, Italy and Somalia as the six countries of origin with the highest number of migrants registering for National Insurance in Bristol 2002-15.

Immigration and related demand for jobs and services are a central issue in current UK political debate, a growing number of countries view labour migration as an integral part of their development and employment strategies and it is argued that migration can have great benefits if properly managed (IOM 2011). Furthermore, the UN (2001) has suggested that migration is one potential solution to workforce needs in countries, such as the UK, with ageing populations. In a recent study by the IPPR (2014) the majority of focus group expressed concerns about the relative costs versus benefits of migrants to the UK, but 64% of participants stated: *'If migrants work hard, pay in to the system, and uphold British values, we should welcome them to the UK.'* This research aims to provide data and insight to i) the strengths and weaknesses of migrant employment, unemployment and under-employment in Bristol (e.g. flexibility, deskilling and 'springboard' strategies), and how these vary for sub-groups and individuals; ii) the support needs of specific migrant communities, genders, age and skill cohorts relative to employment commensurate with their skills and wider participation in Bristol life (including information needed on or prior to arrival, improved design of advice and information services); and iii) how the social equilibrium of 'living well together' might be better achieved in Bristol through community-enhancing networks, events and processes.

## **B. Methodology**

Over the course of this project (November 2015 – May 2016) we have consulted almost 400 Bristol residents, including engaging with 33 migrants of different ages and different countries and ethnic groups (including the EU, various parts of Africa and Pakistan) through focus groups and interviews. The largest migrant communities in Bristol were targeted for focus groups and interviewees (e.g. Polish, Spanish, Somali, South East Asian) as well as a migrants from a wider range of countries of origin; balance was sought between EU and Non EU migrants (Third Country Nationals (TCNs)) by gender and age, as well as occupation, including highly qualified professional migrants. Nineteen of these participants were women, fourteen were men; fourteen were from the EU, nineteen from beyond the EU (TCNs); fourteen were White and nineteen were BEM. Overall, the participating migrants have a range of educational and professional backgrounds, countries of origin, ethnicities and experiences of migration, as well as varying expectations, aspirations and intentions in relation to living and working in Bristol. In addition to these migrants, we also consulted several migrant support groups in Bristol and an established Italian migrant, Dr Susanna Giullari, who

recently set up a job coaching agency for migrants, called EasyBristol (<http://www.easybristol.org.uk/ita/>).

This qualitative research sought to explore the participants' life and migration histories, as well as their broad experiences in Bristol and feedback on the level of support needed and the sources of information currently on offer. We strived to recruit recent migrants who have lived in Bristol for no more than 5-6 years, but the use of varied recruitment strategies, including via key informants, resulted in the inclusion of a handful of more established migrants. This has allowed us to identify some longer term impacts of migrants' experience of work including under-employment versus career progression. In some cases interviews and focus groups were completed in the migrants' native language (Urdu, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and Polish), enabling a more direct and nuanced conversation. These were transcribed and subsequently translated into English by the researchers, enabled by the multi-lingual researchers in the team.

The data also includes 'tips' for migrants regarding finding work and establishing businesses from 150 migrants of varying duration, collected via 'postcards' from migrants originating in 15 EU countries (Portugal, Italy, Spain, Poland, Hungary, Germany, France, Lithuania, Latvia, Romania, Malta, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland and Greece) and 15 non EU countries (Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Somalia, Sudan, Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Zambia, Malaysia, Australia, China, Jamaica and Guyana). The views of established Bristol residents (i.e. those with more than five years residency in the city) on migrants, work and social integration were surveyed through 207 'on street' questionnaires in central Bristol; these were collected across age, gender and ethnic groups, in order to consider established residents' views and migrants' experience in relation to one another.

### **C. Executive Summary**

#### **Migrant workers motivations, experience, planned length of stay, and support needs for effective employment**

##### **1. Motivations, experience and length of stay**

The term 'economic migrant' encompasses a wide range of people, motivations and experiences. Some migrants experience multi-staged 'chain' migration between countries and within the UK. A high proportion of couples and families with young children migrating from the EU described their migration as short term and motivated by a combination of cultural and economic factors. Many young migrants (notably those from the EU, Australia and New Zealand) expressed the intention to live and work in the UK for only a short period (six months to two years). Non-EU economic migrants, especially those with partners and families, were more likely see their move as long term.

Highly educated migrants often (though not universally) cut through constraining factors e.g. visa requirements, securing well paid permanent employment. However, gaining recognition for qualifications gained outside the UK was identified as an issue for highly skilled and graduate workers. If qualifications were 'undervalued' or not recognised, or the recognition processes unknown, migrants experienced deskilling, including long term underemployment relative to their skills/ training/ education and potential contribution to the economy. Migrants who were economically secure were sometimes prepared to take 'deskilled'/ low pay work in the short term in order to gain from the 'cultural experience' of living in the UK, and/or to improve their English and familiarise themselves with British systems.

## **2. English language**

English language proficiency is central to migrant worker experience. English language proficiency impacts on finding work, matching employment to skills/ qualifications, attaining secure work, career progression and social integration, as well as accessing information, advice and appropriate benefits when needed. Migrants with no/little English struggle to find official sources of information and with making applications; they fear making mistakes at official bodies such as Job Centres without the assistance of translators. Migrants who are unemployed, homemakers or work in non-verbal/unskilled 'back room' work frequently fall in to a 'language deficit trap'; this is compounded by basic literacy issues for some migrants.

## **3. Finding work**

Many migrants use the internet to seek work including employers webpages, Facebook, Gumtree. The majority of migrants rely on expensive smartphones for access to information and social networks via the internet. There are low levels of awareness of the range of easy access services that public libraries offer e.g. free internet. There is a highly differentiated use of web-based resources, job sites and social media networks according to country of origin, age, level of literacy and English language proficiency. More new migrants seek work through job agencies than job centres. Migrants with access to strong networks rely on 'word of mouth' within these social networks or community-based online fora to find work and information e.g. Espanoles en Bristol and the Somali Forum. Those with limited literacy/ English language proficiency have to rely on word of mouth to find work. English language is crucial to optimising the benefits of migrant workers to the Bristol economy; it also enhances social participation and integration. Some migrant workers access existing English language classes in Bristol, but some have been hampered by changing venues, the lack of crèche facilities and fees incurred by those in part time/ low income work. Those working unsociable hours and/or having childcare responsibilities have particular need of flexible modes of English teaching.

A significant number of migrants resist claiming unemployment benefits, preferring to take low paid jobs but easily fall into a poverty trap/ debt spiral – especially given the relatively high cost of living (especially rent) in Bristol. Those migrants who rely on precarious work including zero hour contracts frequently fall in to a 'poverty trap' and/or 'debt trap', experiencing high levels of stress because of insecure work. A significant minority of migrants (both TCN and EU) have entrepreneurial instincts and ambitions and can become job creators, but some need small business guidance.

#### **4. Migrant worker information and support needs for effective employment**

It is important to understand how cross-cutting intersectional factors (e.g. EU/Non EU, gender, ethnicity, qualifications) affect economic migrants' opportunities and experiences (e.g. English language proficiency *and* qualifications *and* EU citizenship; TCN *and* gender *and* Islamophobia; EU citizenship *and* limited English language proficiency; TCN *and* graduate qualifications *and* English language proficiency).



For those economic migrants who can speak English, are familiar with European culture, and have access to the internet, seeking work can be straightforward and may even be arranged prior to arrival. Highly qualified/ skilled economic migrants are recruited to jobs in Bristol e.g. aerospace and universities. By contrast economic migrants who speak little or no English and are unfamiliar with British systems and culture need English language teaching, information on how to find work and access services e.g. public transport and GPs, as well as wider social participation and integration. A Newcomers' Information Pack with additional online resources and links could address some of these needs, especially if translated into key migrant group languages e.g. Somali, Polish, Urdu and Mandarin. Some migrant communities favour oral rather than textual communication; this has implications for communicating information and support to new migrants via face to face meetings and podcasts. This also underscores the key message of this report, namely that English language training is crucial to maximise the potential benefits of all migrant workers to Bristol's economy and community life.

### **Key Advice from established migrants to new economic migrants**

Established migrants made the following recommendations to new migrants:

- i) Learn English before arrival in the UK or sign up for English classes on arrival
- ii) Practice conversational English on a daily basis
- iii) Invest some time getting to know the British-Bristol culture
- iv) Lots of UK businesses have websites and jobs pages, use the internet to seek work and make contacts before arrival in Bristol
- v) Use Job Centres, agencies, local newspapers and radio, Facebook, Gumtree, employer websites, kin, national and religious networks to seek job opportunities
- vi) If possible get UK recognition for qualifications (through NARIC) prior to arrival
- vii) If possible bring references as well as cv; find a respected person in Bristol to provide a reference if you are not able to bring one with you
- viii) Undertake voluntary work to gain work experience and references/ improve your English/ get to know British culture
- ix) Be proactive contacting/ visiting potential employers and circulate your cv
- x) Contact potential employers directly through webpages before/ after arrival in Bristol

- xi) Use community advice services such as Citizen Advice Bureau to full benefit e.g. regarding job seeking, financial advice, housing and legal services

### **Bristol residents' experience of and attitudes to migrants**

Over 50% of Bristol residents surveyed overestimated the % of foreign born population living in the UK. Despite this, 84% of Bristol established residents surveyed believe migrants make a positive contribution to the city's economy. Bristol residents identified six main reasons for migrants' contribution to Bristol's economy: migrant workers 1. work hard; 2. are willing to undertake jobs locals don't want; 3. add 'diversity'; 4. do important jobs; 5. bring skills; 6. pay taxes. Residents particularly acknowledged the role of migrants in the delivery of public services such as the NHS and transport; they also welcomed the cultural diversity migrants bring to the city. Residents identified the following concerns about migrant workers in Bristol (in descending order): migrant workers 1. filled jobs locals could do; 2. increased demand for housing; 3. might be exploited; 4. increased social tensions; 5. could claim benefits; and 6. did not integrate socially.

Residents were slightly less confident that migrant workers participated fully in Bristol's community life relative to their confidence in migrants' contribution to the economy. However, local community events, city festivals and places of worship were seen as sites of maximum community participation by migrants; gyms/ exercise classes and community centres were also identified as places of migrant-resident interaction

45% of Bristol resident respondents have little or no interaction with migrants. This is particularly significant because residents' attitudes to migrants' economic contribution and social integration were both influenced by their degree of interaction with migrants (and vice versa). Higher levels of resident-migrant interaction were associated with being more likely to identify migrants as making an economic or social contribution to the city, and lower levels of interaction were associated with residents being less likely to identify migrants as making an economic or social contribution to Bristol. The over 35s and the unemployed were most likely to view economic migrants negatively; the under 25s and those with university degrees were most likely to express positive attitudes to migrant workers.

## **D. Research Findings: migrants' experiences, aspirations and contribution**

In this section findings are explored under the following headings: motivations and duration of stay; employment and underemployment; qualifications, CVs and references; self-employment and businesses.

### **Motivations and duration of stay**

Migrant experience is influenced firstly by wider contextual factors such as differential migration status reflecting country of origin and the economic cycle e.g. levels of unemployment, as well as by the intersection of a number of cross cutting personal attributes e.g. level of education and proficiency in English. Drawing on the concept of intersectional difference (see Kofman et al 2000), migrant experience of both work and feeling 'settled' in Bristol was commonly shaped by multiple intersecting factors such as EU/Non EU citizenship, gender, age, ethnicity, and level of education.

Overall, the experiences of the participating migrants explored in depth within this research project highlights the need to recognise the term '**economic migrant**' as encompassing a wide range of migrants with varied motives, skills and experiences.

Economic need, which prompted some of the participating migrants to leave their home country, is only one of the reasons why people come to work in the UK. Other **drivers of international labour mobility** identified in this research include seeking to add value to one's CV (by improving English in situ and getting international work experience), 'family ties' (when a partner or member of the family has a job or other development opportunity abroad so the whole family unit migrates), personal and professional aspirations for themselves, their family members and children, as well as those motivated by a desire to travel, explore the world, and try new experiences in life which is funded through employment while living abroad. Many migrants experience multi-staged migration. For example, the Chilean couple who moved to Bristol after studying and working in the USA; the Somali migrant who arrived in London, but found it too busy and expensive, then moved to a smaller town in the North West of England where he could learn English, before settling

to live and work in Bristol in order to be closer to people from his home region; the Spanish family who have previously lived and worked in the USA, UK and Germany; and the Portuguese couple who originally migrated from Central Africa to Portugal and now, as EU citizens and parents themselves, have left Portugal in favour of Bristol in response to the European economic recession after the 2008 banking crisis. In a few cases, the migrants identify themselves as having an almost 'nomadic' disposition to life whereby they are happy to move internationally to follow opportunities.

"[on multi-staged migration] you are already away, the risk associated to subsequent migrations is much less, particularly emotionally, but also financially; we had a permanent job, there wasn't a monetary risk involved in the decision" (Amelia, F, 30s, Chile, former teacher).

"[on the economic crisis] In 2009 things started getting bad. We both had good salaries, it was enough to pay for the house, for the cars. But it came to a point when the mortgage rate went up so much that my salary, which in the past would cover the mortgage and the car payments, would only cover the mortgage. We had to cut back on outgoings, couldn't afford anything, we had a child and we couldn't go out and say, sorry I cannot buy you an ice-cream, I cannot buy you anything. So we got to a point when I told my wife, this is not a life, this is not a life. Let's go away. So I came here and after 3-6 months they came here too." (Tiago, M, 30s, Portugal, driver)

"We moved over here because of the financial reasons most of all. My husband got a job, I gave birth to the third child and the world in Poland started slowly to shake, we lived on loans and we came here with carte blanche and that was the only reason of moving from Poland to England. Such was great belief that we will be successful in so called quiet life, we only came here to get normality" (Ania, F, 40s, Poland, sport instructor).

"[on cultural pull factors] There wasn't a precise reason to move here, we didn't come here to find work [because of unemployment] as we both had a job in Italy, people often ask us, have you come here for work, but no, we had our jobs there. It was more about trying something new, a new life experience. I had always been attracted to British culture. We didn't have to come here; we could have gone somewhere else. We also had other

opportunities but we chose to come here.” (Anna, F, 40s, Italy, medical professional, whose husband got his job through a recruitment fair in Italy).

Similarly, international students who come to the UK to study may choose to stay because they like the culture or form relationships, changing migrant status (and visa requirements) in the process.

“I came to study for my degree at [a Welsh university], then came to Bristol to be with family, then I got married [to a UK resident] ...” (Mai, F, 20s, China, Third Sector).

“[on cultural push factors] I don’t consider myself an economic migrant because I didn’t need to work, my husband was earning really well and we didn’t need that; but in 2014 I couldn’t take it anymore; I wasn’t content with just going to the gym and looking after my kids and house; I would have been happy with any work, but once we moved here I wouldn’t be happy with [just] anything; I had invested on my education and wanted to find a good job commensurate with my qualifications; I actually think of myself more of a political migrant than an economic one; the level of corruption in the government, things arranged under the table, nothing was straightforward, people worked on a different level and I had enough, particularly having previously lived in other countries where things worked!” (Valeria, F, 40s Spain, medical professional).

Social factors such as joining a partner or family reunification, or migration motivated by a more informal desire to be near ‘family’ or part of a wider fellow-nationals community can have implications for work too. Geedi fled conflict in Somalia, was given refugee status in the Netherlands where he completed a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subject degree and held a well-paid professional job. He and his family then migrated to the UK, not because of unemployment or economic hardship, but to be near family and the wider Somali community. Geedi and his wife also thought ‘English is the language, maybe there will be more chances there ...’ (Geedi, M, 55, Somalia/ Netherlands, contract worker).

Other important concepts in understanding and interpreting the conditions of migrants in relation to their employment (and more broadly, their lives) in Bristol are:

- **Cultural, social, economic and symbolic forms of capital** (Bourdieu 1986) that migrants possess. Social capital refers to the social networks and contacts, economic capital

represents wealth and material resources, whilst cultural capital is about education and skills. Symbolic capital manifests through individual qualities, such as charisma and authority. These forms of capital however need to be considered not only in terms of the individual migrant, but also at the level of the migrant's family unit (as migration involves couples and families as well as individuals) and in relation to the migrant's country of origin and related national/ regional/cultural networks in Bristol.

- The **wider context**, such as the condition of the **labour market** and the economy (and related political uncertainties in the country of origin) and the **rights and entitlements** to employment (and citizenship) in the destination country.
- How **social capital changes value** (or is perceived to have changed value) in the process of migration. This may involve a de-valuing of certain forms of cultural and/or symbolic capital for example, as exemplified by migrants reporting difficulties in having their educational qualifications properly recognised in the UK, or in having more difficulties in developing and advancing their careers (through promotion for example) than their British counterparts.
- The ways in which patterns of movement and motivations for migration **vary over the life course**. Younger migrants without dependents seek to improve their English and try new personal and any work experiences abroad (including very low skilled jobs that nonetheless allow them to improve their English) not necessarily with the intention to remain in the UK, but with a view to enhancing their cultural capital and use it to find better employment in their countries of origin (see the experience of Daniel and Pablo,

#### **Top Tips:**

- **'Get documents correct, up to date, e.g. CV, in order to get job' (M, <35, Ghana)**
- **'Do proper research regards qualification requirements in the UK (I have seen many people moving back as a result of not accepted qualifications in the UK (even some Bachelor's degrees/ medicine degree))' (F, <35, EU)**
- **Prepare paperwork for NARIC recognition of qualifications before migrating: "Before I even applied for the job I was finding out how to use my qualifications in England if they would be accepted, so I could get all that information online, so I sent my papers with some forms and documents and I got them converted into British ones ..." (Kasia, F, 40s, Poland)**

and their circle of Spanish friends). Older migrants with families and dependents can still display a desire for adventure and exploration (see the experience of highly educated Italian and Spanish professionals) but their choices are more strategic. They are extremely resourceful in searching and applying for jobs in their sectors of expertise and are able to leverage maximum opportunities based on their qualifications.

### **Migrant employment, unemployment and under-employment in Bristol.**

The majority of migrants we have engaged with in the course of this research project are in some form of employment. However there are variations in the level of job security (temporary, permanent, casual etc.), pay, roles etc. across the migrant sample, in the way these employment conditions are perceived by the affected migrants, and what consequences they entail, for the migrants, their families and wider society.

The different conditions of employment, under-employment and unemployment experienced by migrants need to be analysed in the light of multiple intersecting factors such as age, life stage, ethnic origin, nationality, gender. Hence it is important to acknowledge the concept of ‘intersectionality’ and to consider how patterns and motivations of migration change over the migrant’s/ migrant family’s life course. For example, younger migrants with no dependants can afford to be flexible about their employment choices and strategies, especially if they can rely on financial support from parents.

The findings evidenced here show that ‘**under-employment**’ of migrants is both common and complex. Numerous migrants in this study, from both EU and non-EU countries of origin, could be classified as being in a condition of *under-employment*, because their current jobs do not match their skills and qualifications, or because their pay levels and/or roles do not fully account for the extent of their studies and/or professional experience, or both. Two of the most striking examples were offered by Robert from Poland and Geedi from Somalia. Robert (M, 40s, Poland, job) has two university degrees obtained in Poland and moved to Bristol to live with his partner who was already employed in the UK. He would not consider himself an ‘economic migrant’, is currently employed in manual labour, and

feels that, although he does some occasional teaching support, he has “lost out in terms of my position and remuneration”. Geedi (M, 50s, Netherlands/ Somalia, contract worker) gained a BSc in a STEM subject in the Netherlands and had a secure well paid professional job in his field before moving to Bristol to be near extended family; he thought finding professional work in the UK would be straightforward with a European degree and work experience, however, he has not been able to secure graduate level work despite years of trying and has to rely on his wife’s permanent job combined with his own intermittent zero hour contract work. Other migrants have experienced deskilling as a result of cuts due to the economic recession in the UK, e.g. Anwar (M, 30s, Somalia, security guard) who was made redundant from his ‘white collar’ job when his company lost a major contract in 2014; despite numerous interviews and after living off his savings for six months, he felt compelled to retrain as a security guard and now holds a part time zero hour contract job, which is insecure and inadequate to cover his living expenses.

The latter highlights a particular problem for those for whom underemployment is characterised not only by **deskilling** but also by **insecure part time work**. Seeking work via agencies was the most common strategy for finding work used by migrants encountered in this research. Many migrants found approaching agencies easier than navigating the Job Centre and the perceived complex benefit system. For some, agency work offered a quick fix, providing immediate work and income and was used as a ‘spring board’ to more secure/ better paid work e.g. postcard respondents advised new migrants: ‘Start in catering - is always easy’ (F, <35, EU); ‘Use agencies to get a job first, then work towards dream job.’ (M, < 35, W Africa). However, a number of respondents reported what is, in effect, a low pay contract work ‘trap’.

Whilst some participants reported fellow migrants being drawn into the benefits trap, thereby being dis-incentivized to seek work which was low paid, they themselves reported the importance of being in paid work rather than claiming benefits. “ ... no one likes saying ‘I’m [on] income support’, ‘I don’t work’, it’s just really hard ... its particularly hard for migrants, listen to the media, listen to what they say, they’re coming for the benefits ...” (Amal, F, 40s, Somalia, small business owner). As one Sudanese man stressed:

“4 years I didn’t take £1 from the job centre – why? Because always I’m trying to find job, if I went to the job centre that means I have to stay relaxed [waiting] ... since I received my



national insurance number I haven't received any fund from any office .... I started a job the day I got the National Insurance number' (Basel, M, 28, Sudan, job).

However, his insistence on taking what paid work he could find had simultaneously hindered his access to English language courses (being in even part time work meant he had to pay for English language classes) and precarious zero hour contract work failed to provide him with sufficient income to cover his living expenses, despite holding 12 different agency jobs over a period of four years:

“anyone can work casual - warehouse, security, cleaner – the wage is only £7 per hour, so £70 is not enough to pay your bills, that is why you are not happy at all because you are working hard but [don't have enough money]”.

After taking a number of healthcare courses in Bristol (alongside contract work) and passing the IELTS examination, he has got a job with the NHS, but while this professional job is permanent, it is also part time, which means he is still without adequate income to support his young family:

“The big problem is when you compare the [income] with bills you have to pay, so I have to pay rent £600 and bills (water plus electric £200) and car insurance £120 and road tax £15 ...’ (Basel, M, 20s, Sudan).

One interviewee did report getting sufficient hours through agency work: Hasan (M, 20s, Senegal) has been in the UK for less than five years and moved to Bristol from London five months ago, after visiting friends and liking Bristol's 'vibe'. He gave up a job in property in London and has taken a production line job in manufacturing as an agency worker in Bristol; working on a zero hours contract, he has no security of employment but commented: 'If you are hard-working they give us [regular] hours like the permanent workers' (Hasan, M, 20s, Senegal). With good spoken English he has been able to gain consistent work and income through contract work, but others expressed fear of dismissal for any minor mistake or misunderstanding while working on a zero hours contract.

In contrast to those struggling to make ends meet, for those migrants in more financially secure positions, under-employment is not always perceived negatively by the migrants themselves and in some cases this is a part of a strategy employed to improve their English

and get some work experience in order to improve their employability prospects in their country of origin, or elsewhere. This was particularly the case for those who migrated with a partner who had a secure (typically professional) job and younger people (e.g. recent university graduates) who had family support or who were prepared to live on a 'shoestring' in the interests of broadening their horizons and/or improving their English.

Two young Spanish men in their twenties exemplify this typology of young migrants, typically well-educated, with no dependents, and with a family 'safety net' at home. Pablo is 24 and had been living in Bristol for 6 months at the time of the interview. Pablo's intention is to stay in Bristol working for another year or so, to save up some money and go traveling before returning to Spain and starting to study for a permanent position as a civil servant. Before settling to this conventional middle class career, he thought he needed to experience other things in life through what might be described as 'postgraduate enrichment Gap Years.' He talked about many of his friends being in a similar situation, all with university degrees, varying competency in English and planning to stay in the UK only temporarily in order to improve their English, aiming to get a better job attuned to their qualifications on their return to Spain. These young Spanish migrants all described their stay in Bristol as an 'investment' in their future careers, based on the fact that getting a good job in Spain required a good knowledge of English and some experience of working abroad. None of these young migrants had any intention of staying in the UK for more than 12-18 months and they all had the financial and emotional support of their families in Spain.

Daniel is 28 and had a short spell as an intern in Spain, earning very little and working long hours in a very precarious position that never led to a better employment. He could have worked in his father's company but decided to come to the UK to improve his English and therefore job prospects in his own field. He also felt a need for a bit of 'adventure'; he had previously travelled around Europe and was attracted to the idea of living abroad for a while. He's now employed in a café and volunteers in his spare time.

"People like me who come to learn English normally spend an academic year here and then go back; many don't have any intention of staying in the UK long term; it is an investment they are making in order to be able to find work attuned with their qualifications in Spain; ... [they] come to find work low skilled, which is very easy to find, and enough to get by and

be able to do English language courses; many need the English certificate in order to do a Masters in Spain or they need it in order to find work on their field. Or they have been working in organizations that then require English knowledge .... Many friends have left after a year or year and a half; although some have returned to the UK because they haven't found anything there either" (Daniel, M, 28, Spain, waiter).

### **Validation of qualifications, references and CVs**

While one migrant's key advice to new migrants was: 'Documents correct up to date, e.g. CV, in order to get job' (M, <35, Ghana), another highlighted the difficulties: "Sometimes they [employers] don't believe when you describe your [professional] work history, 'I have been working here, doing this ...' " (Basel, 20s, Sudan); another stated pessimistically: 'Would advise new migrants to take work mainly at the warehouse as UK doesn't really recognise qualifications or degree holders from my country [Nigeria] (M, 35+, Nigeria).

Many migrants have the forethought to bring copies of their curriculum vitae and certificates, but some don't realise the requirement to revalidate certain qualifications in the UK or the value of supporting references. Hence a German woman's advice: "Do proper research regards qualification requirements in the UK (I have seen many people moving back as a result of not accepted qualifications in the UK (even some Bachelor degrees/ medicine degree))" (F, <35, Germany, EU). The quotes here illustrate that these issues can be experienced by both EU and Non EU migrants, but these issues are even more acute for those migrants who feel intimidated by the validation process or those who have arrived without documents or have lost documents on precarious migration journeys. For those fleeing conflict, extreme corruption, intimidation or similar issues in failing or failed states there may not be any means of attaining copies of qualifications or references. "It's very hard to get a job in Bristol when you are new. I used to go agency, it's very difficult because they ask you 'where have you worked, have you got references?" (Anwar, M, 30s, Somalia).

In some cases, under-employment is associated with a de-valuing in the migrant's cultural capital, for example employers' scepticism regarding previous work experience/ employment history, and/ or the failure to recognise foreign qualifications and/or the complex and prolonged process of validating foreign educational qualifications in the UK. The role of these attitudes and processes in **de-valuing migrants' cultural capital** has a

knock-on effect on social, economic and symbolic capital and is apparent from the following quotes:

“My level of education certainly helped (in getting employment) although I wasn’t impressed with NARIC<sup>1</sup> when they compared it to Bachelor of Honours. I spent 5 year studying and I don’t think it should be compared lower but, you know, it’s not me deciding about it.” (Zosia, F, 40s, Lithuania, education)

“When I was working as a casual worker it was OK but getting a contract type job as a Teaching Assistant is quite difficult because it is thought here that education system in Poland is totally different from the one here ..... I don’t know whether it was caused by the fact that my qualifications were obtained in Poland or that my language was not at the advanced level, but I don’t know many people with Polish qualifications (who) work as teachers in England. More often we start as TAs [Teaching Assistants], in the meantime we do some cover teaching or supply teaching via agencies, but to get to immediate interview stage and get a job as a teacher I think it is very difficult to achieve.” (Ania, F, 40s, Poland, education).

The process of **validation of foreign titles** has been a problem for Anna, a medical professional from Italy. Despite her perception that such a problem is not the UK’s responsibility, the practices involved in sorting out the paperwork are based on British cultural norms (e.g. requesting a reference from a university tutor) that are commonplace in the UK yet very unusual and difficult to achieve in her country of origin.

“Mostly we didn’t have any issues [migrating to Bristol], the only thing I had, and I am still having trouble with, is having my medical qualification recognised and validated in the UK. But this problem is not something the UK is responsible for. It is about the laws governing the process and the documents I need to get from my university in Italy, which I will never get because of cultural differences. Engaging in communication with public authorities, like higher education institutions, is challenging in Italy. You don’t get responses, it’s difficult, very hard, almost impossible to get something done. So I am annoyed I cannot get my

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<sup>1</sup> UK **NARIC** is the designated United Kingdom national agency for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills.

qualification validated, and without it I cannot apply for jobs in this field, although I can use my Italian professional job title and operate as a self-employed therapist” (Anna, F, 45, Italy, medical professional).

More subtly, one female Spanish migrant discussed her experience as an employee in the health sector, explaining that although she feels that her employment fully matches her qualifications and professional experience, she believes she has had **fewer opportunities for career progression and job security** as a consequence of having a foreign degree/being a foreigner. This was also a problem for other types of migrants (for example from Somalia, Nigeria, Poland and Portugal) and levels of qualifications and backgrounds. Lidia left Spain to work in the UK as a medical professional when austerity measures resulted in short term contracts and reduced her income by one third:

“ .... barriers to employment? Perhaps in terms of promotion; the fact that I didn’t study in the UK does not help; publications and further training make things a bit difficult; there is no much communication with line managers etc. I feel a bit in limbo sometimes; they like me but that might not be enough to stay in that hospital and I have been told that it is very unlikely that I will get a permanent position here, locum is fine but permanent not! Not having been brought up here makes understanding the system more difficult .... they have many criteria to make you permanent; for the good jobs I think they prefer British people or those who have done their study/training with them; but it might be only my impression .... If I had studied/trained here I believe I would have been able to access better jobs in the UK, better paid, more permanent jobs. It might be my perception; they don’t discriminate necessarily but create policies that make it difficult to access those jobs in you are not British or have not had British based training/degrees.” (Lidia, F, 40s, Spain, medical professional).

Other migrants reported feel they are *devalued and discriminated against* because of their personal attributes:

“The company has to look not at the person themselves, but look at their qualifications and what work experience he has ... when you fill in the form you have to fill in your name, your

colour, your religion, they look at all of that ... what's important is 'can this person do the job?'" (Geedi, M, 55, Netherlands/ Somalia).

Furthermore, some TCN migrants feel displaced by the growing number of A8 EU migrants:

"If you are a Black immigrant it's very difficult, you can't get any job you [actually] want, nowadays there are also East Europeans who came here, they are white people and they [employers] prefer more than you, because they think they are more near to them, so some places like Royal Mail, before there were a lot of Muslims and Somalis, but the number is going down and the East Europeans going up ... " (Anwar, M, 30s, Somalia)

It is also important to consider the value that migrants place on the *process* of migration and how this may be seen as balancing out any 'losses' in other areas of their lives. Here a consideration of intersecting cultural, economic and social capital is useful. Several highly skilled migrants claimed that they are losing out financially (hence some elements of their economic capital have reduced as a consequence of migration) but they still value and enjoy their experience here in the UK, and Bristol in particular, because they believe their social and cultural capital have increased as a result of having an international life experience.

" .... I wasn't happy with the education of my children either, I was a bit disappointed and fed up with the situation and wanted to take my own destiny in my hands, make my own decisions; and we did, we decided to come here, better pay, but much more expensive cost of living so we are not really better off from that point of view, but my kids are learning English; I wanted them to live somewhere else, to know about a different culture, I made an investment for my kids, the experience of living abroad, learning English, a sense of adventure...many factors, economic and education-related ones ...." (Lidia, F, 40s, Spain, medical professional).

However, Lidia also reported that "... My salary allows us to live here comfortably, but we are not making money! Everything, especially housing costs, renting, is much more expensive." For migrants in low income employment living costs in Bristol are a serious issue (see Basel's comments above).

Migrants with time, knowledge and both IT and English language competency can prepare for migration, facilitating a smooth transition to employment in the UK.

“Before I even applied for the job I was finding out how to use my qualifications in England if they would be accepted, so I could get all that information online, so I sent my papers with some forms and documents and I got them converted into British ones .... but obviously that helped because the current head teacher wanted to have the best people at school, best educated, so I think that was one of the reason I might have gotten that job but that wasn’t in the job description, I didn’t really have to have [all my qualifications].” (Kasia, F, 30s, Poland, Educational Assistant).

“[I] Found job while still in Cyprus by contacting the main guys in the business, contacting architectural practice directors from details available on the internet. Don't be shy about contacting people directly, even if no job is advertised ... Online- google companies, find directors, find information about directors, write to them about something of interest to get foot in the door. Need to know the industry well to do this” (F, EU, Cyprus, 35+, Architect).

Some migrants, in particular highly educated migrants (from both EU and TNC) countries, have been able to navigate the work and business systems effectively or have had the resilience and resources (both economic and cultural capital) necessary to overcome any barriers. For example, those who came over with no existing contacts in Bristol have been able to develop a good social network and reported feeling integrated and at ease in British society. A highly educated Lithuanian woman who started off as a manual worker ten years ago is now self-employed in her area of expertise and found helpful support on the HMRC’s website, in particular a video tutorial and webinars on how to set up a business. Clearly this depends upon the ability to search for and utilise these types of free information services. Others in paid employment have sought to upgrade their jobs once in Bristol, e.g. Lidia (F, 40s, Spain, medical professional) from temporary to permanent post, or a Danish woman who initially worked as an au pair and within less than a year got a job as a hotel reservations agent:

“Go on Gumtree. I came here as an au pair and that's what I did” (F, <35, EU, Denmark)

## Self-employment and businesses

Some migrants move easily from higher education study with international student visas to qualification-appropriate employment or business establishment, typically combining the social capital of their qualifications with marshalling financial capital from family networks in the UK or their country of origin e.g. Pasha from Pakistan who, after both he and another family member studied for qualifications in financial services, applied this knowledge to setting up their own Bristol business in catering, funded by family capital, with an ambition to expand and create a chain of takeaway outlets, conditional on their visa renewal. Due to the current UK 'curry chef crisis' created by minimum income thresholds for Tier 2 Shortage Occupation visas which requires a sponsoring employer to guarantee a salary of £29,570 per year for a TNC chef, they are focusing on pizza takeaways rather than curry houses:

"We can open any curry place but we don't have enough staff. If we place an ad in the Job Centre or on Gumtree its easy to get staff for pizza. Our plan is to open two or three pizza shops in Bristol – what we make is better than Dominos ...." (Pasha, M, 20s, Pakistan, small

business owner)

### Top Tips for business:

**"Have experience in your field for the business you want to start, get funds ...."**

**Welcome advice from wherever you can find it – you need to learn every day"**

**(Pasha, M, 20s, Pakistan)**

**"Liaise with local competitors to find gap in the market" (M, 35+, S Asia)**

**"if you are starting your own business get a lot of information about the paperwork and taxes as it will be different to those in your own country." (F, 35+, EU)**

**"Learn English, respect others, try to visit local communities to try to get to know the locals. It will help in adjusting to the way of life and in setting up business" (F, 35+, EU)**

**"[Get a] Mentor" (M, 35+, E Africa)**



Respondents reported that Bristol was a good place to start a business: “Bristol is a business friendly place. It is a hub for start-up” (M, <35, S Asia), but other entrepreneurs counselled to prepare start-ups carefully by finding a market gap and building on expertise: “For businesses it's best to put their expertise into use. For example, chef etc.. Must consider good location, how to promote their business” (F, 35+, S Asia); “Liaise with local competitors to find gap in the market” (M, 35+, S Asia). One migrant with business experience stressed the importance of being familiar with UK business and social culture, as well as being proficient in English: “First get to know the culture and protocol; do not try to set up a business until you have lived and worked in the country for at least 3-5 years; start work and work your way up as you learn; master the language and [the] way to interact socially in a correct way” (F, 35+, Spain).

The two key sources for start-up funding were identified as i) extended family networks, including initial investments from the migrant’s country of origin, or ii) small loans: “Get access to small loans” (M, < 35, W Africa). Another strategy evidenced was partnership between established and more recent migrants, who pooled knowledge, expertise and capital from savings and/or ongoing paid work. This was seen in operation in the case of a Somali start-up enterprise where the owner-managers, who had been in the UK for between 5 and 27 years multi-tasked between external paid work and running their business which employs nine other Somalis (six women and three men): “it’s very new, it’s a bit scary, it’s out of my comfort zone, I’m learning, in life we have to learn something new nearly every day, I challenge myself” (Amal, F, 40s, Somalia, small business owner). The owner-managers do not as yet take any salary or profit, but “... at least now we can pay our bills” (Amal, F, 40s, Somalia, small business owner).

Migrants seeking to set up small or medium enterprises (SMEs) varied in their view of existing support for entrepreneurs in Bristol: “we don't have information and support about work and business in Bristol” (F, 35+, EU (A8)); “There is information and support on setting up a business in the UK by EU-funded organisations and many organisations offer advice to migrants” (F, 35+, EU).

Websites were seen as vital sources of information for migrants wishing to establish businesses, particularly for understanding tax and legal issues: “HMRC website for setting up a business” (M, <35, Aus/NZ); “websites on how to set up a business e.g. Business legal” (F, 35+, EU (A8)); “if you are starting your own business get a lot of information about the paperwork and taxes as it will be different to those in your own country.” (F, 35+, EU). The internet was also recommended as a search tool for enterprises being sold: “Look online for businesses for sale” (M, <35, S Asia). Established entrepreneurs considered business networking was vital (M, 35+, E Africa), although another pointed out “remember that here most networking happens in the pub!” (M, <35, Aus/NZ), which is clearly an issue for those whose health, culture or religion prohibits proximity to alcohol.

Based on her experience of starting a small business and of the wider Somali community Amal stressed Somali’s preference for self-employment and entrepreneurial capacity: “..... they are business entrepreneurs, they like to do business, they like to be their own bosses, they don’t like bosses to be honest with you ... they want to do their own thing, so give them things that they can do and we can gain from them, we can have a better Bristol” (Amal, F, 40s, Somalia, small business owner). In terms of support, migrants seeking to set up businesses would welcome start-up briefings or ‘toolkit’ events and other business networking opportunities. Mentoring was also suggested, either informally through existing networks or through a city-wide scheme: “[Get a] Mentor” (M, 35+, E Africa). When asked if women who were potential entrepreneurs might prefer a female business advisor, Amal thought not: “No, no matter, as long as they give good information and can see the action out of here [way forward], they’ll probably keep going back for more information”.

#### **E. Different support needs of specific migrant communities: accessing information, English language, gender and ethnicity**

The participating migrants display a wide range of needs in relation to support in finding suitable employment commensurate with their skills and professional experience. Some migrants were recruited directly from their country of origin to posts in Bristol, notably those working in aerospace, health care and the university sector e.g. Giovanni (M, 40s, Italy) who got his job in aerospace engineering through a recruitment fair in Italy; likewise

Soledad (F, 20s, Spain) who applied for a post as a medical professional from Spain, so had a qualification-appropriate job on arrival. This was also the case for migrants from TNCs travelling on Tier 1 'high value' visas or Tier 2 'skilled workers' from outside the European Economic Area e.g. Akash (M, 20s, Bangladesh) who has been a curry chef in the UK for six years.

Very few of the EU migrants participating in this study seem to have used Job Centres, most of the Polish participants found jobs through agencies and other migrants approached employers directly. Less than 30 of the 150 postcard respondents advised new migrants to go to the local Job Centre to find work, and of those thirty, only nine were from TNCs, five being from Pakistan, indicating differing perceptions and use patterns of job centres. For comparison, 35 postcard respondents recommended finding work through agencies, e.g. Basel who registered with the Job Centre for one month but then switched to getting contract work through agencies. As noted above, for him it was a matter of pride to be in work, but he was also wary of miscommunication causing problems due to limited knowledge of English on arrival. "Sometimes you can use the wrong word, but they put it on the record and use it against you, you have to be careful when you talk seriously in the [Job Centre] office and when you send email as well ...." (Basel, M, 20s, Sudan)). A significant proportion of Chinese migrants lack adequate English language proficiency on arrival, which limits employment information and opportunities as well as access to public services such as healthcare (Bristol and Avon Chinese Women's Group).

### **The role of the internet in finding work, accessing services and social integration**

The availability of online job portals, including online job application procedures offered by large employers, and countless networks enabled by social media (e.g. Facebook groups and similar) combine to enable access to a huge variety of opportunities to many migrants, prior to and on arrival in Bristol. Internet access is therefore key in these developments.

"There are websites where you can upload your CV, head hunters will phone when you are still in Poland, they interview you via phone. If they are happy then they pass your details onto companies that are looking for such people, then you are contacted by such company, you are interviewed by them and if they are happy, they invite you to here and then if they

are happy after this face to face interview, they will offer you a job.” (Ania, F, 40s, Poland, sport instructor)

Young people tended to favour generic local websites when searching for jobs e.g. by searching for Bristol-based opportunities via Gumtree or Indeed, although this was no guarantee of a job (F, <35, Somali, unemployed). Polish participants in a focus group highlighted how opportunities for migration have changed with the rise of internet based networks in the last five years and how this is helping new generations of migrants. They mention several social networks (e.g. Moja Wyspa - My Island, Polemi UK) and observe that “the awareness is much higher.... Polemi UK, there was nothing like that when I came here. Now, we have it, so a lot of information for a person who wants to change a country and wants to come here, is accessible now....” (Jola, F, 40s, Poland, Financial Services).

Similarly, the Somali Forum now has a website with 200-300 views per week, 1,500 Facebook ‘Friends’ and 2,000 Twitter followers (Geedi, M, 50s, Netherlands/ Somalia), and this is seen as a good network and a way for others to reach the Somali community: “We use the community as a channel. This community [Somali Forum Facebook] is more easy to trust than the [wider] internet; they can tell there are 2 jobs in NHS, you must do this and this, for this date’ (Basel, M, 20s, Sudan).

Social networks, as opposed to more institutionalised forms of support, are frequently identified as important meeting places where migrants can find support and advice, not just about work but housing, schools and life abroad in general. However, Dr Giullari of EasyBristol indicated that social networks of fellow nationals may not be the best default strategy for new migrants to seek support. In some cases, especially in relation to Italian migrants, she found frustration, almost desperation, in migrants’ accounts of the corrupt employment culture in their country of origin, which compelled them to leave and created mistrust of people of the same nationality, which can act as a barrier to seeking support from groups of fellow nationals. Therefore not all migrants necessarily trust or want to socialise with other migrants of the same nationality.

Participants in this study indicate that the majority of new migrants arriving without employment already in place relied on personal networks or **web-based information** as

sources of information about jobs. Many migrants, especially those with limited resources, rely on smart phones for internet access, but not all have immediate access to smart phones e.g. Li (F, 20s, Vietnam) had to get paid work in order to afford a new sim card, and Mai (F, 20s, China) reported that “it takes some [Chinese] migrants months before they can get a mobile phone [and in the meantime] they can’t find accommodation, don’t know which area is good in Bristol” etc.. This underscores that fact that **not all migrants have equal access to the internet** for 5 key reasons: 1. the expense of connection via mobile phones; 2. lack of knowledge of access to internet via libraries; 3. lack of confidence in knowledge of and evaluating the trustworthiness of online and social media sites; 4. insufficient proficiency in English; 5. literacy issues.

Both inadequate proficiency in English and underlying literacy issues were noted by the project team during data collection. For example, a significant proportion of migrants invited to complete the postcard survey could not read the short questions and/or record their responses. Language proficiency proved a barrier to data collection in three ways, firstly **lack of proficiency in spoken English**, which prevented a number of those approached to participate in this study from participating at all (notably those of Chinese ethnicity); secondly, lack of proficiency in *written* English (specifically for those approached to complete the research postcards). This in turn relates to the wider issues of literacy rates exemplified by two men who had been in the UK for more than 10 years, one, a verbally articulate Jamaican man who was very willing to participate, but had very limited scope in written English, the second, a Pakistani man who described himself as being dyslexic and therefore unable to complete the postcard provided responses which were transcribed on his behalf. Other variations on this theme included young male and female Spanish interviewees who found it easier to be interviewed in Spanish than English; a Somali woman who when completing a ‘Top Tips’ postcard recognised the words in the demographic section (age, gender etc.) and could circle these, but was unable to write the free text responses required by the questions and had to be helped by a friend; a Caribbean woman who pleaded a headache when initially approached by the researcher, but was happy to offer answers that were written down on her behalf. A Romanian woman approached in her work place completed the demographic section of the postcard but then returned the card to the researcher, fearful that her manager would return and sack her for not working, indicative

of her insecurity at work. The combination of migrants who have limited proficiency in English language and/or those who have **limited literacy skills** in their first language highlight that text-based information in English will not be accessible to a significant number of new migrants e.g. those Chinese migrants who are literate in Mandarin but have minimal knowledge of English on arrival (Bristol and Avon Chinese Women's Group). Interviewees also reported a perception that even low skilled jobs required higher levels of English and interview skills than five years ago (Anwar, M, 30s, Somalia).

Some migrant communities, notably Somalis, have a strong cultural preference for oral rather than written communication: 'We are [an] oral community' (Anwar, M, 30s, Somalia, part time security guard). When asked about the value of written information, Amal responded: 'that would be really helpful, but sometimes you can see a paper running around and no one will read it ... the Somali community is a very oral community, they don't [like to] read, they talk a lot, they are loud, talking a lot, but you can get a lot from that, what they need, and you can ask what you need from them too, it has to be a two way relationship, it cannot be one way.' (Amal, 40s, Somalia, co-owner small business).

Amal stressed the benefits of direct face to face advice for the Somali community which has great entrepreneurial instincts but centres on oral rather than written communication:

"If you think about it most of the Somali men, their work is taxi driver, bus driver or business dealer or shop owner, they want the freedom, they want the feeling that they are their own boss; sometimes, because they can't speak English properly they can't go to the office and work, or he feels a 9-5 job won't make any gain [profit] and he needs to gain big, so this is their mentality ....come out and meet them, and they will tell you what they need, they're really good at telling you what they need, then put them in action, challenge them, give them something to do, they may not be academic, but they have really good skills ..... the city council need to let them know, you go there, you can get a business loan there ..... but that's just not there .... I've never seen someone form the city council coming and saying 'I can help you with this', so they do by themselves .... there is barrier because we don't know where to go [to get advice/ support]. If they contact Bristol Somali Forum they will arrange it, and then they can come and ask, the leaders can get all the business minded people there and the people can ask questions, this is what they need, they don't want a handout, they

want support and if you can give them that support they will bring back to the city a lot, and they will feel good themselves, they will say to themselves ‘I did this’” (Amal, F, 40s, Somalia, Small business owner).

### **Rights, responsibilities and resilience**

Migrants need to know about their **entitlements and rights**, as well as **responsibilities and duties**, as both employees and residents. This was evident from the top tips for migrants collected with the research postcards as well as from interview and focus group participants. Some of the participating migrants talked about their adaptability and resilience as useful qualities in succeeding in the process of migration, settling and finding employment. This is akin to the concept of ‘emotional capital’. However, being too adaptable and accommodating can cause migrants to be underpaid, exploited or to overlook their rights at work, as evidenced by both interviewees and postcard respondents. The following excerpts illustrate how migrants can find themselves in unfavourable employment contracts:

“My ideal job would be working in hospitality. So when I started working in the hotel they sent me to housekeeping. We are migrants, we are not here to be fussy, because we need to earn money.” (Mariana, F, 40s, Portugal, cleaner)

“The level of skills was the same, the position offered was at the same level as in Pakistan. But the pay level was lower. They said, we are offering you the work permit and stuff like that, that’s why they offered a little less pay. So you have to sacrifice on that stuff.” (Safeena, F, 30s, Pakistan, homemaker – former IT Sector).

These two examples illustrate assumptions based on unconscious bias in the former case for an EU non-graduate worker and explicit exploitation through deliberate underpayment of a graduate woman from a TNC who was reliant on an employer-sponsored visa. Furthermore, Tier 2 TNC employees can be prevented from changing jobs because of the uncertainties relating to the need to renew their visa or because employers have retained their passports, which occurs when migrants have been trafficked but can also occur in cases of unscrupulous employers (Bristol and Avon Chinese Women’s Group (BACWG)). In such cases

of exploitative power relations, which are often compounded by the migrants' limited English, "they have to please their employer and it is difficult to move" (BACWG). In this scenario, support services provided in the migrants' native language are vital to ensure communication occurs, information and support are accessed and trust established.

### **Intersectional difference: age, gender, ethnicity**

This research sheds some light on how migrants with different forms and levels of economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital manage the process of seeking, finding and maintaining employment. Language, gender, ethnicity and recognition of experience and qualifications were identified by migrants as key factors facilitating, or preventing, finding suitable employment. Age also shaped their experience and employment strategies, although this was not necessarily mentioned by respondents.

Dr Susanna Giullari is an Italian migrant who recently set up a job coaching agency for migrants, called EasyBristol (<http://www.easybristol.org.uk/ita/>) and has provided support to over 300 migrants, predominantly from Italy, Spain and Portugal. In her experience, more men than women tend to seek professional advice. About 40% of those who contact her are relatively young migrants (in their 20s-30s) with low or no qualifications, another 40% are migrants with high qualifications (university degrees) and in some cases extensive professional experience at managerial level, and the remaining 20% are families.

Out of more 300 migrants, only a couple of them explicitly asked about benefits when requesting advice. Among the barriers encountered by the migrants who have sought Dr Giullari's help are: 1. The language: some migrants come to the UK, and Bristol in particular, with poor English, or thinking that the English they have learnt at school will be enough. In her opinion, this is one of the key barriers preventing migrants to secure employment commensurate to their qualifications, skills and professional experience. 2. Not being aware of the cultural differences and other variations in the job market between the country of origin and the UK. This includes not knowing how posts are advertised, how to fully understand the wording of job advertisements, how to apply for a job and structure a CV that a British employer would understand, how to write a covering letter and so on. 3. Lack of awareness about key differences in other important areas of life (e.g. housing, health,



schooling, childcare, transport, social customs etc.) that will affect the overall experience as a migrant in the UK. Many people Dr Giullari spoke to were simply not aware of all these socio-cultural differences and focused their attention primarily on looking for work.

**Women** in particular experience barriers not just in finding employment and but also maintaining employment at their skill level, especially when they become mothers and see themselves as the primary caregiver. For example, Ania, a Polish graduate, came with her family to the UK when her husband got a job in Bristol to in order to address their debts; she then took courses to learn English and train as a sports instructor, but does not work full time because of her **children's care needs**:

“I don't work full-time now, it's part-time because I need to care for my home life. This was the only reason of my unemployment” (Ania, F, 40s, Poland, part time sport instructor).

Safeena, who has high level qualifications, is now unemployed due to the **difficulty of getting a part-time job** in the IT sector, something that is experienced by many women of all nationalities in similar circumstances (as traditional gender norms within and beyond the EU still expect mothers to be the primary care givers). In addition to receiving a reduced salary noted above, Safeena felt under pressure from line managers when she needed to take time of work when her children were ill:

“My kids were really small at that time, I was in a full-time job and **could not take a day off even when my children were ill**, they [the employer] didn't offer me to work from home and stuff like that. So there are problems. So there is less flexibility over here because we don't have any family over here, and we don't have any support for our kids. That was one of the reasons why I left the job. My kids obviously were too young and from nursery they got the viruses, they were sick. So there were some problems” (Safeena, F, 30s, Pakistan, homemaker – former IT Sector).

This highlights the challenge for migrants managing paid work and childcare without having extended family or friendship networks to draw on. However, for other migrants who live in close proximity to extended kith and kin networks, childcare was not a barrier to women working because they could call on their friends and family when needed. However, Somali

migrant women reported being able to access government funded nursery places for their children, and having kith and kin networks to call upon for back up, but were nonetheless struggling to find employment which matched their capabilities:

“... the Mums they find it hard to find a job, they can only do the cleaning jobs, they are struggling ... it’s the actual work they are struggling to find the work itself, but they want to ...” (Amal, F, 40s, Somalia, co-owner small business).

In relation to gender differences in the experience of migrants, Dr Susanna Giullari identified the following issues (mostly based on European migrants): 1. the women who have requested her advice tend to be more qualified than the men, and to be more aware of the process involved in career development and planning. 2. Those who are migrating with their partners tend to be the ‘followers’ and are reluctant to take jobs away from their partners or families. This can be partly explained by the traditional gender roles that characterise society in their countries of origin (typically Southern Europe), whereby the men are considered to be the breadwinners (even in a dual-earner couple/family). 3. Lack of awareness about the ‘rules of engagement’ to build social relationships, such as friendships, through school and other potential meeting points in a community. In Italy for example, women with children would meet up with other members of their family, as they tend to live nearby. By contrast, the UK cultural practices of using after school clubs and both parents and children socialising through ‘playdates’ or playgroups, were unfamiliar to those from Italy or other Southern European countries, where grandparents (or other close family members) usually provide informal childcare and support. Migrant families were also often shocked about the costs of childcare provision, and sometimes about the difficulties of finding appropriate childcare, as in most Southern European countries there is a strong public sector (hence cheaper) childcare provision. 4. Self-confidence: Dr Giullari said that the women she spoke to over the past years tend to be less self-confident than men and to be reluctant to apply to more senior or challenging jobs, or to set up their own business, even if they have the necessary skills.

Gender issues are not limited to women migrants seeking work and managing family responsibilities. Certain **constructions of masculinity** and what is understood to be a ‘successful man’ also shapes some migrants’ expectations and experiences. This was

particularly notable in interviews and Focus Group discussion with East African migrants, especially around issues of the intersection of class and gender e.g. differential experiences of life and work in Bristol being shaped by social class in the country of origin relative to life in Bristol. This was identified in the different attitudes and experiences of formerly socioeconomically differentiated rich and poor Somali migrants who find themselves on similar financial footings in Bristol:

“The one who is poor, was poor there [Somalia] is feeling ok, because he can see he is [now] similar to the guy who was pretty rich over there, the one who was rich over there is feeling pretty low, saying “Oh my God, is this the life I’m having?”. No one likes living on income support, but they have to, so what happens is they’re traumatised, and they can’t really talk about it, so they say ‘We’re going back, we’re going back to Somali land, yeah, we’re going back’ but no one’s going back. So time pass by, there’s a little family break going on because he’s not bread winner any more, he hasn’t go the status he had ... so there’s a lot of mental torture for them because they’re going through that and they can’t explain to nobody, so it’s just silent, they stay with their own, but there is skill there I believe.” (Amal, F, 40s, Somalia, small business owner)

This loss of status and self-respect experienced by some men is compounded by i) trauma in their country of origin; ii) being part of a close knit community where everyone’s status is public knowledge; and iii) that women tend to be more flexible in taking on low status paid work, but then become the ‘breadwinners’. Together these factors can cause shifts in gendered roles and associated family power relations, incidence of depression and marital break-up, and uncertainty about staying in Bristol which can be passed on to the next generation reducing their sense of being rooted in Bristol:

“Women more accept the situation than men, he doesn’t want to live in denial but he does – ‘one day I’ll go back’ but he never does ..... Women are more appreciative, they say ‘I’m here, I haven’t got a bump on the head, I’ve got my kids, I’ve got a home, we can feed them, so we’re ok; whereas men will say ‘I should have this, I used to do this ...’ living in the [past], not moving on, women are more accepting” (Amal, F, 40s, Somalia, small business owner).

These examples reinforce wider research which shows that gender differences in the workplace can in part be explained by the socialised cultural gender norms, in the case of migrants this includes the gender norms in the migrants' countries of origin as well as negotiating and capitalising on equal opportunities in the UK.

Women who migrate for marriage may only be expected only to find temporary work before starting their own family; and their husband's attitude to their socialising outside the home is crucial to accessing work, classes and social interaction beyond kin (Pakistani Focus Group). In a focus group of five Pakistani women, one had a BA and MA, had previously worked as a teacher and is currently retraining; two had no qualifications but were attending English language classes; and two were unable to read or write in any language and spoke little English. Three were currently looking for paid work and two would look for jobs when their children started school (one was able to undertake occasional beauty therapy work in her home) (Pakistani Focus Group). Only one woman was learning to drive a car and also had a smart phone. These women highlighted the importance of access to sustained English language classes with a free crèche facility within walking distance of their home: 'The big problem is to speak English. The problem is for women staying at home – there are not so many activities for women outside the home. When they come here the [biggest] problem is to speak English; they need small activities, learn English in their own areas nearby' (Bina, F, 30s, Pakistan, education sector). As Laila articulated through a translator: 'I am sure I would get a job if I could speak English' (30s, F, housewife); Parveen (30s, F, Pakistan, housewife) is looking for part time work since her children went to school, but relies on her children to read job adverts in local shops or the community centre. The two women who need basic literacy and numeracy skills expressed willingness to try classes or online teaching tools in their local library with the help of their children, as they currently take their children to the library but do not use themselves: 'my children are very clever [with reading and computers]' (Laila, F, 30s, Pakistan, housewife).

Migrants seeking work in Bristol also reported experiencing employer's '**unconscious bias**', **explicit racism or failure to accommodate religious conscience** when applying for jobs, as reported by other studies e.g. double-blinded applications with ethnic- and gender-neutral names: "Even the younger generation say 'I know if I fill in the application form I know I

won't get asked, because when they read my name they say Stephen will have it , not Abdul will have it' " (Amal, F, 40s, Somalia, small business owner).

"... We are Muslim, Black, Somali we have a lot of barriers, language, culture, religion ... Islamophobia" (Anwar, M, 30s, Somalia, security guard; also see Gaede's comments above)

Soledad (F, 20s, Spain, medical professional) recounted how she had applied to do a course at the hospital where she worked but there were limited places and she was turned down on the basis of her not being English; she has taken the matter to the union and is being investigated, exemplifying her ability to counter discrimination as a highly qualified EU citizen who is aware of her rights and methods to mobilise collective support. Anwar (Anwar, M, 30s, Somalia, security guard) likewise reported Muslim men utilising union support to challenge employer's (changed) expectations that Muslim employees should be prepared to handle alcohol, pork etc.. However, both of these scenarios are dependent upon a **unionised place of work**.

In addition to collective action through unions and professional bodies, **resilience, self-motivation, strength of character** and other individual qualities are mentioned by several migrants as crucial to being successful in finding and maintaining employment. The quote below exemplifies this belief and also reflects another perception (perhaps developed over the stay in Bristol/ UK):

"I think that in this country anybody can have a job. Everybody who shouts that there is no job for them, these are the people who put little effort or none at all in terms of finding a job. .... I think that most of us [Poles] have that inner need of work and doing something for ourselves. As I said, sitting at home is, in my view, a slow dying and lack of development. Indeed, in this country you need to be self-motivated to develop because you can sit and do nothing and you will also function. Here everybody is supported and rescued and people count on it .... Many people don't work because it's not worth it, they don't want to and they still have money. This is what I learned about work in this country. You need to be self-motivated, if you wait of external motivation then good luck." (Ania, F, 40s, Poland, sport instructor). "They have to work. If they're coming here to work, they can come, if they don't

work then they shouldn't come. This is the land of opportunities" (Tiago, M, 30s, Portugal, driver).

One woman spoke in admiration of her mother-in-law who had no English on arrival in Bristol UK established friendships with neighbouring women and learnt English through regular social interaction. 'I really appreciate her, she is speaking English very much, she lives here 40 years, she interacts with ladies, her neighbour, an old English lady used to interact with her over tea, speaking English. Now she speaks English very well, even though she can't read or write' (Bina, F, 30s, Pakistan, education).

**Top Tips on resilience:**

**“Learn English before you come to the UK. If you don’t have a chance to do it at home, sign up for a course over here. You’ll increase your chances of getting a job and you’ll make plenty of friends” (F, <35, EU (A8))**

**“There are opportunities for everyone. And the other thing is, don’t give up hope. You need to believe in yourself and be strong.” (Mariana, F, 40s, Portugal, cleaner)**

**“Everyone should keep in mind the job market. They should research the job market. Because over here, you’re on your own, nobody realises that it is an expensive place to live, living is expensive here. So they should research that, if the job market is good and they think they’ll get a job, they’ll find a job easily. And that in that job they can afford their living (expenses). They think, I’ll go, then find a job, but it’s not that easy. Everything is not straightforward.” (Safeena, F, 30s, Pakistan, (graduate) homemaker)**

**‘Try and improve your English as much as possible. Being able to communicate clearly makes integration much easier. Learning about the English culture is also key to understand how people behave in their workplace. Bristol is a very friendly city and people are generally willing to help so don’t be afraid to ask when you don’t know.’ (Female, 35+, EU)**

**‘Form a support network amongst fellow nationals or other recent migrants with experience. Improve your English if necessary’ (Male, 46-55, Spain)**

**‘Send applications to several places, don’t give up. If you’re offered an interview, commit to it and prepare well. Read job applications very carefully and don’t be afraid to phone to ask for more information. Don’t send generic applications’ (Female, 30+, Asia)**

## **F. Welcome Pack Plus: the value of a new migrant information or 'Welcome' pack, the 'costs of not knowing' and different ways of knowing**

Migrants are heterogeneous, including highly motivated entrepreneurs, highly qualified multilingual professionals who are head-hunted to work in UK firms and services e.g. universities, media and aerospace industries, as well as other graduates and skilled workers and those who may have little or no English language proficiency and need guidance on finding work. Each migrant/ migrant cohort will have a different relation to local services and community. Thus there is no 'one size fits all' approach to meeting migrants' differing needs (Integration Up North, (IUN) 2015). The IUN Yorkshire study showed that at least one third of recent migrants had experienced problems accessing/ understanding public services in their first year; challenges primarily related to: i) lack of knowledge (availability/ location/ processes), ii) lack of appropriate services, iii) Language and communication difficulties, iv) trust issues, and v) discrimination (IUN, 2015). This echoes the findings of this report.

Providing accessible key information is vital to migrants' personal wellbeing e.g. how to call the police, where to find A and E services, the requirement and processes involved with registering for a GP, where to find ESOL classes, where the Job Centre is located. Other, less tangible benefits include a sense of agency and empowerment for migrants who might otherwise be overly dependent upon others for guidance and/or be reliant upon ill-informed advice. As one migrant articulated: "In my opinion migrants need to have somewhere they can get advice, like a migrants resource centre" (M, 35+, E Africa). A Welcome Pack can provide FAQ information for migrants, supplemented by a physical resource centre, if feasible.

Orientation packs produced by other UK local authorities, UK universities for international students and various Canadian initiatives e.g. the global city of Vancouver, as well as smaller localities such as Leeds Grenville, Ontario, and the 'Canada Welcome Pack'. The latter has limited use as a model as it focuses primarily on introducing new migrants to Canadian branded goods through discount vouchers, but nonetheless includes some useful material e.g. a leaflet on how to establish credit rating which would be pertinent for migrants in Bristol.



The Vancouver migrant information pack, fittingly titled ‘Growing Roots’, focuses on creating an informed, settled, civically engaged and integrated population ([vancouver.ca/files/cov/Growing-Roots-Newcomers-Guide-Vancouver.pdf](http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/Growing-Roots-Newcomers-Guide-Vancouver.pdf)). It includes an introduction to the local area and people, followed by a chapter on ‘Neighbourhoods and getting involved’, including transport, volunteering, public libraries, community centres, parks and leisure and where to find out about current events; and a chapter on ‘Services and Resources’ which includes accommodation, dedicated services for new migrants, finding work, learning English, health services, childcare and schools, government services, health and safety, human rights and discrimination, as well as telephone information lines. The ‘information pack’ is supplemented by a ‘Newcomer’s Guide’ to Vancouver and other podcasts online accessed via web links to YouTube. The ‘Newcomer’s Guide’ video includes a brief history, an introduction to cultural norms, information on how to get around the city, accessing services (where to go, what to do, where to register/ apply), and an introduction to volunteering opportunities. It also features ‘talking head’ accounts or ‘stories’ by both ‘newcomers’ and long-term residents. This video welcome is replicated in other online migrant information ‘packs’ e.g. the locality of Leeds and Grenville (Ontario) which includes practical information on the region, ‘Doing Business’, ‘Living’, ‘Learning’ and ‘Working’ ([www.leedsgrenvilleimmigration.ca/](http://www.leedsgrenvilleimmigration.ca/)).

In the UK, using the heading of ‘The costs of not knowing’, the IUN (2015) study in Yorkshire highlights how investing in providing this basic information in accessible forms to migrants can reduce pressure on public services support teams as well as reducing stress and uncertainty for the migrants themselves. As the Bristol-based BACWG noted, “Many Chinese people don’t realise they have to register for a GP, in China they go straight to the specialist, so the system is different here and they may not be registered when they need to see a doctor urgently” (Interview, BACWG). Similarly, all migrants need to understand the UK tax regime and know how to find to migrant support groups, voluntary organisations such as Citizens Advice Bureau and legal support, should they need it e.g. Legal Aid.

“[semi or unskilled] Chinese migrants who come to BACWG need help with tax, especially when they change jobs, they don’t know they need a P45 and they overpay on an Emergency tax code or underpay because a new employer re-uses their tax allowance and they don’t know what to do”(Interview, BACWG).

Providing an online version of an Information Pack would facilitate the majority of economic migrants to prepare for arrival *in advance*, including what documents to bring with them and initiating qualification recognition, jobs and accommodation searches, making contact with online support groups etc.

Physical orientation to the city could be coupled with familiarisation with key service points and cultural sites through a **Newcomers' Introduction to Bristol Trail** (to include an illustrated city map, information and 48 hour bus pass) e.g. starting at Bristol City Council offices on Temple Street, ending at the Clifton Suspension Bridge, going via Job Centres, community centres, the M Shed and Bristol Museum and Gallery etc.. This could be included in any Welcome Pack, either as paper copy or as a downloadable PDF. If a free bus pass was included this would need a code to avoid repeat use.

### **Sources of information and support which could be included in a Bristol 'Welcome Pack'**

In addition to the **Growing Roots model** outlined above (including transport, volunteering, public libraries, community centres, parks and leisure and where to find out about current events; accommodation, dedicated services for new migrants, finding work, learning English, health services, childcare and schools, government services, health and safety, human rights and discrimination, as well as telephone information lines) the following could usefully be included:

- Bristol map and orientation walking/ bus trail
- gov.co.uk (including visa regulations)
- Bristol City Council offices and services
- Job Centres
- employment agencies
- guidance on validation of existing qualifications and link to NARIC
- newspapers e.g. Bristol Evening Post
- other sources of job advertisements e.g. shops and local radio stations
- Connections (Bristol City Centre)
- Social media sites with local feeds e.g. Facebook, Gumtree, Indeed
- Volunteer centres and opportunities
- migrant support networks e.g. Espanoles in Bristol, Somali Forum

- established BEM Community groups
- ACAS
- unions and professional bodies
- Law Centre
- Citizen Advice Bureau
- English language courses e.g. City of Bristol College; with crèche facilities
- training courses and evening classes
- local libraries and information services
- Social Services
- Housing (public and private sector)
- Free museums and galleries
- Public parks and play areas
- Nurseries and schools
- Sporting venues
- Links to events pages
- Links to key places of worship across faith groups
- Information on equal opportunities and workers' rights
- Introduction to Bristol colloquialisms and 'British humour'

A separate pack could be produced for those migrants seeking to start businesses. Such entrepreneurial migrants will need information relating to employment law, health and safety, business rate council tax etc. Many could be effective 'self-starters' with this information, others would benefit from business networking and briefing events, podcasts and access to business advisers and potential mentors.

### **Dissemination of Information Packs**

- Online versions will be accessible by the majority of economic migrants prior to and on arrival, including those who work unsocial hours, and can be readily updated
- Online versions should include podcasts with demonstrations e.g. on how to register for a National Insurance number, driving licence or doctor's practice.

- Paper copies are important for some migrant cohorts especially those identified as not having immediate access to the internet, these might be distributed via information points migrants might use e.g. Job Centres, bus stations, libraries, employers, community centres, migrant support groups, and friends and families.
- Non-text versions of key information can be communicated via You Tube or similar podcasts and face to face briefings and advice points/ events.

Both literacy issues and limited knowledge of English may limit some migrants' access to text-based information online or in paper copy, which requires additional modes of dissemination:

"UK.gov website - but people may not know about this or English may not be good enough to navigate through the website, it's pretty complicated" (M, <35, SE Asia).

"Internet - all can see, most can read (I have dyslexia, so internet not for me) ... I am not the best person to ask because of reading problems - better ask my son" (M, 35+, S Asia)

#### **Translation:**

While migrants should be expected to learn English, not all migrants will be proficient on arrival, and selective translation may speed up integration e.g. Chinese migrants who are semi-skilled Chinese migrants who are literate in Mandarin but have little English (BACWG). Other UK local authorities producing welcome packs have chosen to translate key information into 3-4 key languages, reflecting key migrant groups who would benefit from translated materials in their locality (Bristol could consider Polish, Spanish, Somali, Urdu and Simplified Mandarin).

Evidence collected for this report indicates that the Council would need to take a 'Welcome Pack Plus' approach in recognition that significant migrant groups in Bristol have an oral culture, especially Somali migrants (Somali Forum) which has implications for communicating information and support to new migrants. The authors of the report recommend co-design workshops with migrants and migrant support groups to establish effective content and delivery modes, e.g. workshops, podcasts, employment and business adviser meetings. Dr Giulliarì's experience with EasyBristol (<http://www.easybristol.org.uk/ita/>) would also provide insight to this process.

**Top tips on best sources of information:**

**“Local council, CAB, Business LINK, local parish council” (F, 35+, SE Asia)**

**‘Facebook groups of fellow nationals already resident here, community groups, employment agencies, but Facebook groups are much better’ (F, 35+, EU (A8))**

**‘Community groups of fellow nationals to share experience and advice’ (F, 35+, E Africa)**

**‘There is information and support on setting up a business in the UK by EU-funded organisations and many organisations offer advice to migrants [on the] internet’ (F, 35+, EU)**

**‘Internet, libraries, employment agencies, Bristol, City Council’ (M, 35+, EU).**

**‘Use social media (Twitter, Facebook) where companies advertise and where communities of foreigners are offering support. Actually LinkedIn is very useful’ (F, 35+, EU).**

**‘Government support services, internet, local religious and other community groups’ (M, 35+, SE Asia)**

**“Council, shopping centre information points, advice centres” (M, <35, W Africa)**

**‘HMRC website for setting up a business’ (M, <35, Asia Pacific).**

**“Job Centre, Government website to understand Visa requirements and permission to work here” (F, 35+, S Am)**

**G. Recommendations for assisting migrant communities to play a greater role in their local communities**

The questionnaire survey of Bristol’s residents highlighted greater concern over migrants’ social integration than employment and financial issues (see below). Likewise, some migrants expressed wariness with Bristol residents because of anti-migrant newspaper headlines. Questionnaire data showed a strong relationship between levels of interaction

between residents and migrants and residents attitudes to migrants. This highlights the benefits of positive interaction between long term residents and migrants.

**Lack of confidence in English language** is a real barrier to social integration, whether engaging with neighbours, accessing services or participating in wider Bristol community events. Participating in school trips with their children (e.g. Bristol zoo, Weston-Super-Mare, London and a local farm) and other activities organised by schools for parents (such as cupcake making) were identified as important opportunities for women with limited English to participate in wider social events and to learn about Bristol and the region (Pakistani Focus Group). Those women with little or no English and whose primary role is childcare, would welcome parent-toddler groups which include English language skills development. 'I feel shy trying to speak English with adults who laugh at me, I could speak small things with my children [at a toddler group]' (Laila, F, 30s, Pakistan, housewife).

Some migrants acknowledged feeling **culturally displaced** e.g. being socially challenged by UK gender equality, resulting in 'culture shock' and creating a perception for some that "The UK is ruled by women" (M, <35, E Africa). Issues relating to equality and discrimination are addressed in UK citizenship tests, but could also be usefully flagged in any Migrant Information pack and related podcasts.

Others reported failing to grasp **British humour and local terminology**: 'Really struggled with different sarcasm over here, found the colloquialisms really difficult. A lot of trouble understanding it. Joined a lot of social groups which made it easier to learn when people were joking etc.' (F, <35, EU). These issues could be effectively addressed via a podcast.

Canadian migrant 'Welcome Packs' clearly indicate an expectation that migrants should be active members of the community, engaging with community groups, events and/or opportunities to volunteer.

**Shared ground community activities** such as e.g. communal gardens, horticultural shows, cooking competitions, sewing bees, scrapheap challenges, voluntary projects, school fundraising events, community gyms and sporting activities are known to be effective in engaging *some* migrant groups e.g. the Kushinga Community Garden in Birmingham. One of the postcard respondents in this research advised new migrants:

“Try to attend more activities, social groups, integrate with the society” (F, <35, M East).

Many stressed the importance of learning/ improving English language skills to improve work and social opportunities. In Manchester, English language classes were central to the Romani Project, enhancing mutual understanding and levels of school attendance of Roma children ([romani.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/](http://romani.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/)).

Volunteering is an effective route to developing personal and communal social capital, i.e. by both helping others and gaining experience that can enhance employment opportunities and fluency in English, and was recommended by participants in this research, e.g. going to the Volunteer Centre in Queen’s Square; “... if possible work as a volunteer to get some experience .... ” (F, 35+, EU (A8)). This research indicates that those migrants currently actively volunteering are typically a) international students using their English language proficiency to support migrants from their country of origin through migrant support groups; b) young temporary migrants volunteering for a cause for which they have an interest/ passion; c) migrants involved in community and support groups once they feel ‘settled’; d) those using volunteering as work experience which acts as a ‘spring board’ to employed work in the same or a related sector. This range of volunteering motives and experiences could be extended.

However, many recent migrants are preoccupied with finding/ keeping work, housing, schooling for their children etc., as well as finding their feet socially and culturally; some also work long and/or unsociable hours, all of which are barriers to socially-motivated volunteering. For many migrants the simple fact of being employed, paying their taxes, contributing to the economy, going out to festivals, café pubs etc. was seen as ‘integration’.

“We never felt foreigners here, we have integrated fully here, we have adapted to the environment, to the people, perhaps also because we are surrounded by other Portuguese. But also with the English, we feel at ease. We always felt at ease since we arrived, we never felt uncomfortable.” (Mariana, F, 40s, Portugal, cleaner).

By contrast, as noted above, some migrants experienced and/or perceived discrimination in different forms, ranging from verbal abuse on public transport on racial/religious grounds, to the perception that their educational qualifications would be/ were de-valued by employers or when validated in the UK, to less opportunities for career progression

compared to other migrants or British nationals. Basic information which helps migrants understand their employment and personal rights, e.g. knowing how to contact the police or legal services if necessary, could help economic migrants negotiate these issues. Likewise, a more accurate view of migrant numbers and their contribution to Bristol economy, services and culture, as well as opportunities for social interaction with them could help residents be more aware of migrants' contribution to Bristol as a city. Interestingly, part of Amal's motivation in co-founding her own business was about providing employment for Somali women (and men), particularly work that wasn't cleaning, but also to show the wider Bristol community what Somali women can offer Bristol's community life, to show "there's a lot behind all the clothes [Somali women] wear" (Amal, F, 40s, Somalia, small business owner, small business owner). While work was not identified by resident questionnaire respondents, it is in effect a crucial aspect of migrant social integration.

Both volunteering and 'shared ground' activities can be perceived as middle class luxuries and/or paternalistic if imposed from the 'top-down'. Integration and interaction can be fostered, most notably by access to free/ affordable/ timely English language classes, but communal activities need to be co-created, based on mutual benefits and investment. As with Migrant Information needs, there is no 'silver bullet' solution, but residents' associations, migrant and established minority support groups, schools, colleges, universities, community centres, youth groups, places of worship and local businesses could usefully be brought into conversation to identify a suite of ideas for *social interaction* between residents and migrants in addition to those identified here.



**Top tips for social integration:**

**“Try to attend more activities, social groups, integrate with the society” (F, <35, M East)**

**“Learn English as quick as you can; try to integrate and learn how people operate at work and socially” (F, 35+, EU)**

**“Try to integrate within the community. Meet other people who has similar level of language and aren't from same country.” (F, 35+, EU)**

**“Don't be shy, speak in the English class – you need English everyday” (F, 35+, SE Asia)**

I.

Resid

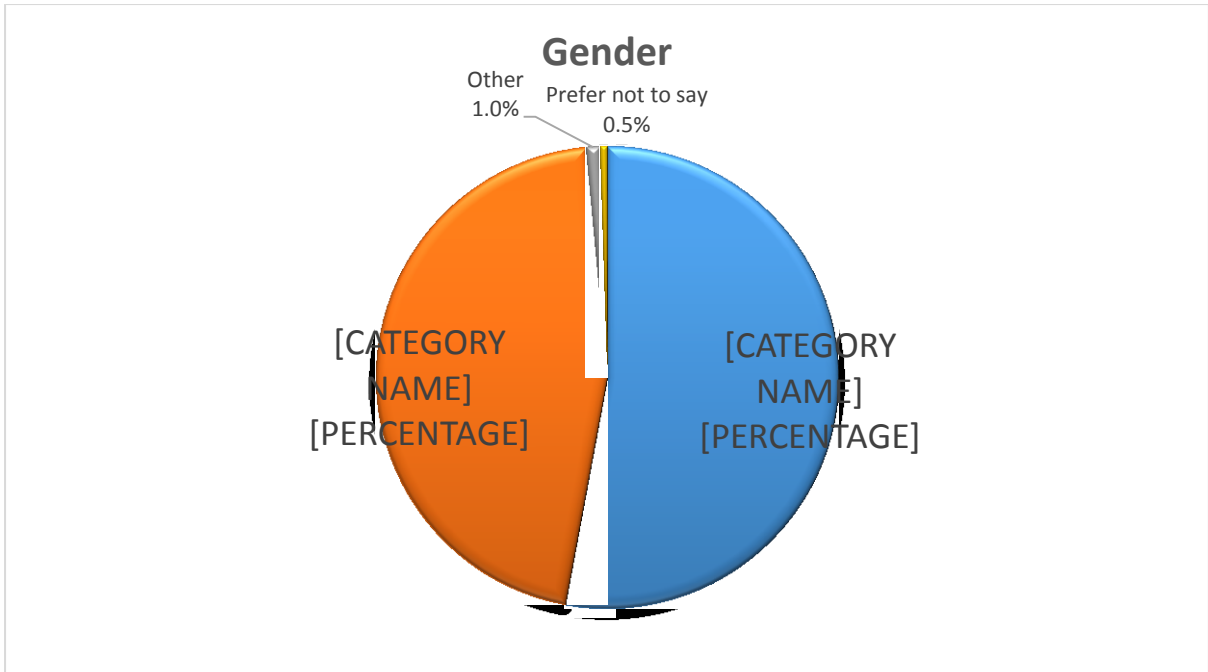
**ent Questionnaire Survey on attitudes to and experience of economic migrants**

A survey of Bristol residents was undertaken in order to place economic migrant experience in the context of established residents' views of economic migrants and their contribution to the city's economy and social life. 207 'established residents' (i.e. 10 or more years of residency) were surveyed via an 'on street' questionnaire. The questionnaire included 'closed' questions providing quantifiable data and 'open' questions allowing respondents to express their opinion freely.

**Demographics of sample**

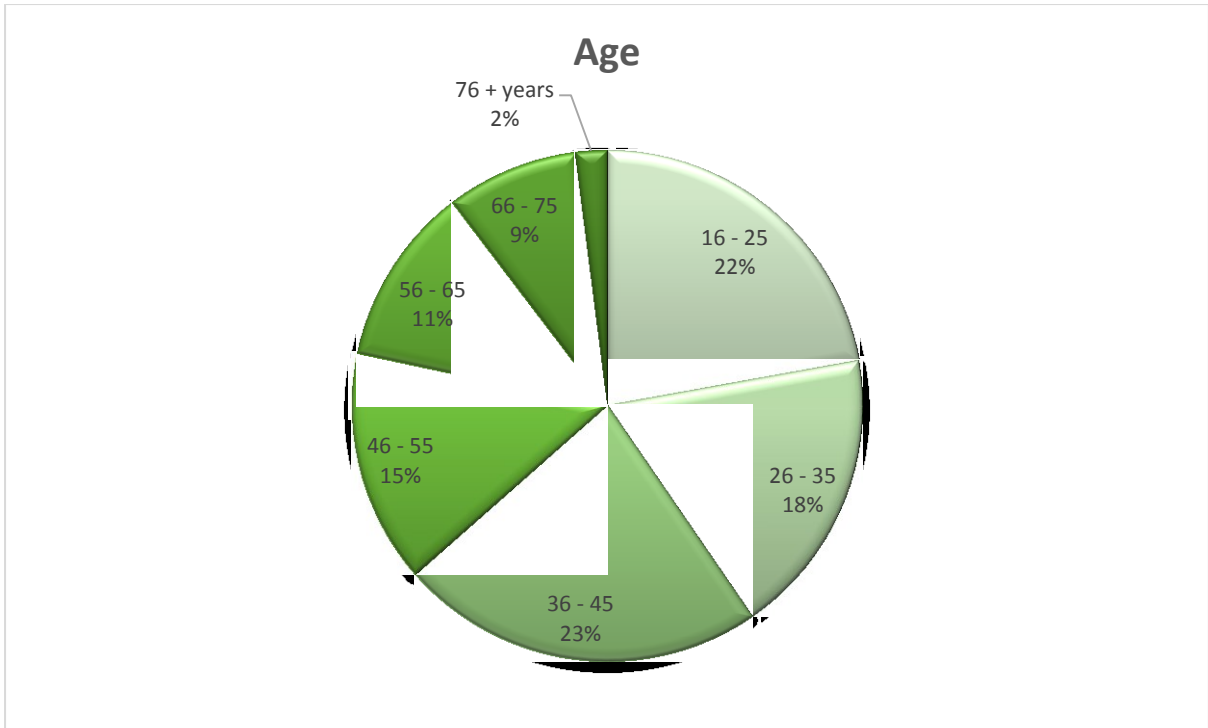
Gender: 53% of respondents were men and 46% were women; 1.5% identified as 'Other' or 'Prefer not to say'.

**Figure 1**



Age: the sample presents a good balance of age groups from 16-75 years, with an under representation of 75+ (see Figure 2).

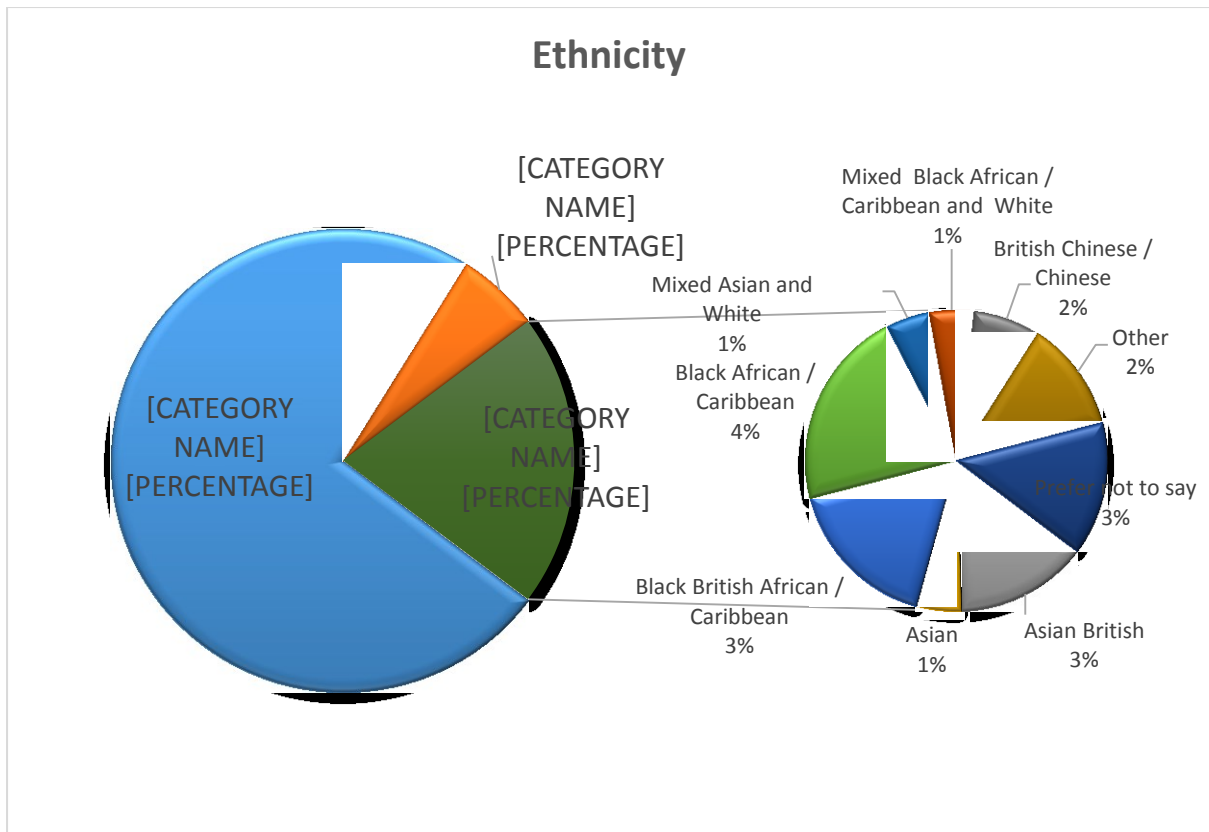
**Figure 2**



### **Ethnicity, country of origin and nationality**

As with age, there was a good balance between different ethnicities with Black and Minority Ethnic groups (and those who preferred not to say) composing 20% of the sample (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3**



Whilst the majority of resident respondents were born in the UK, over 10% were born overseas (with an additional 8% of respondents not providing country of origin information) (see Figure 4). Excluding the UK, 16 different countries were listed as country of origin, reflecting the diversity of Bristol’s resident population. Information on nationality showed that many of the respondents born abroad have since taken British or dual nationality (see Figure 5). Excluding British and British-dual nationality, eight different nationalities were recorded in the sample.

**Figure 4**

## Country of origin

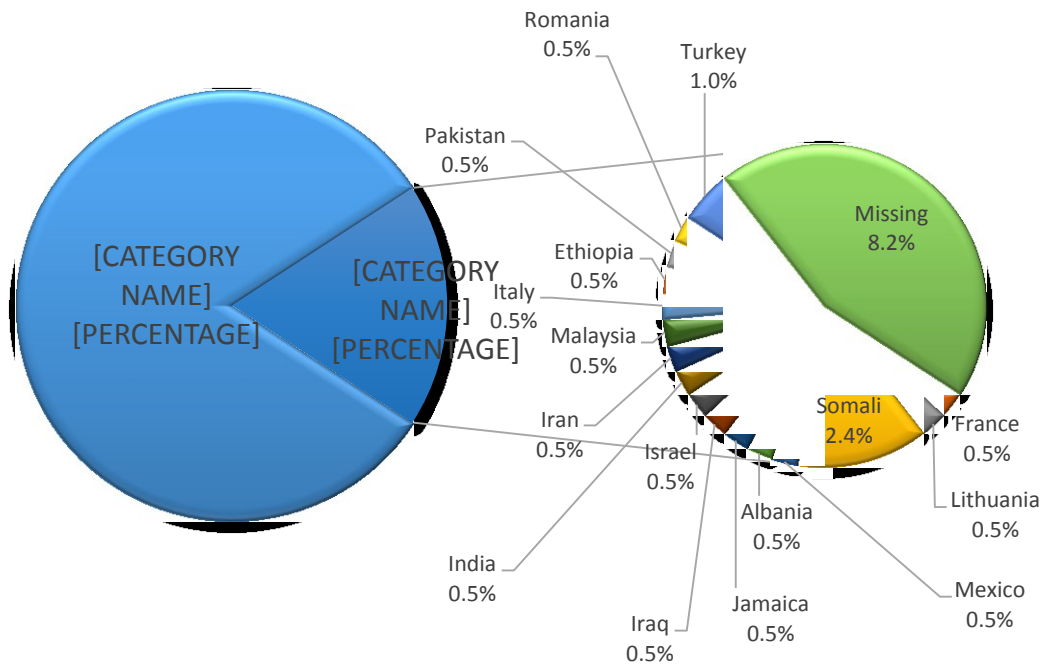
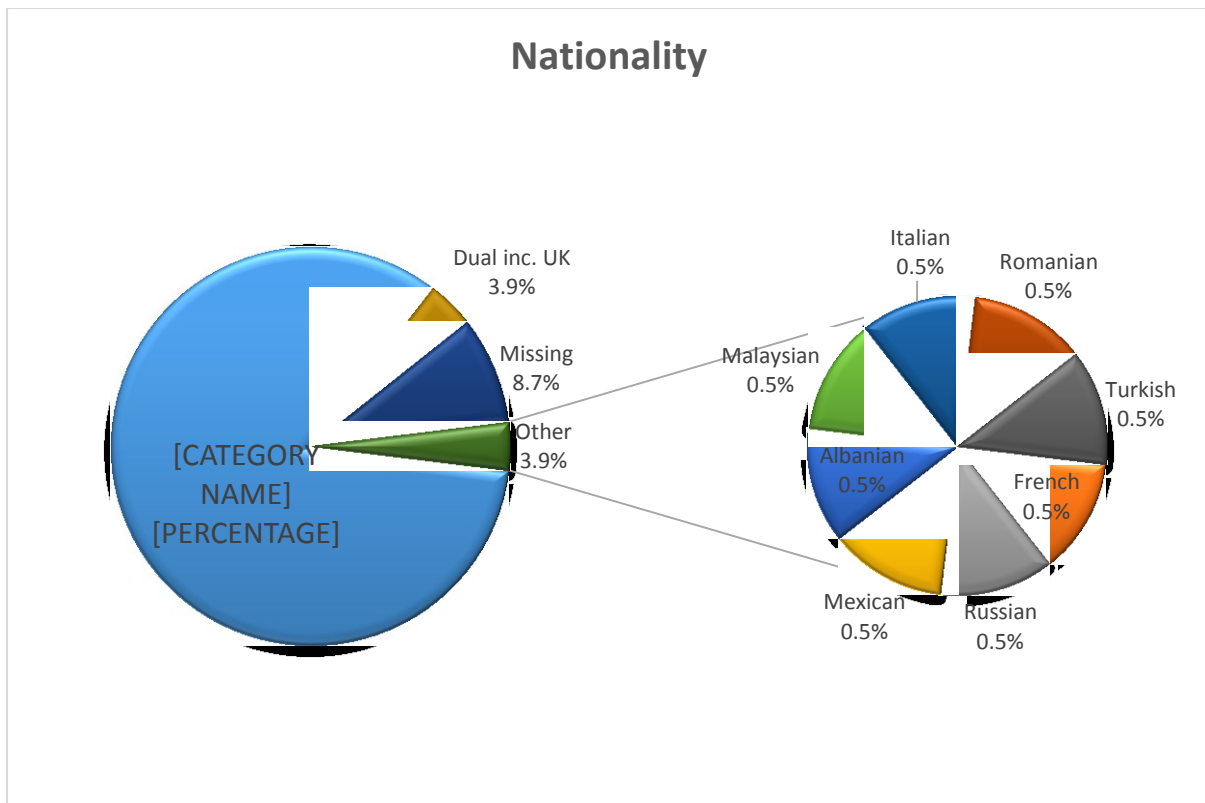
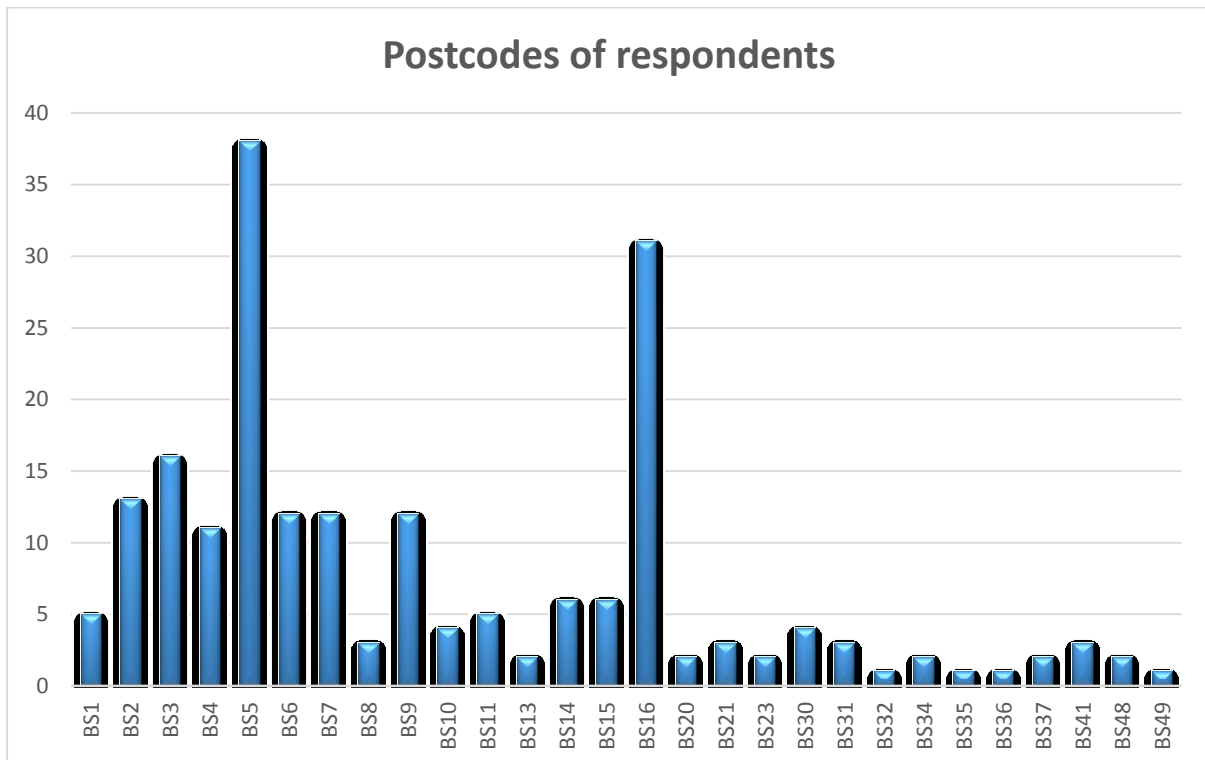


Figure 5



### Residential postcode

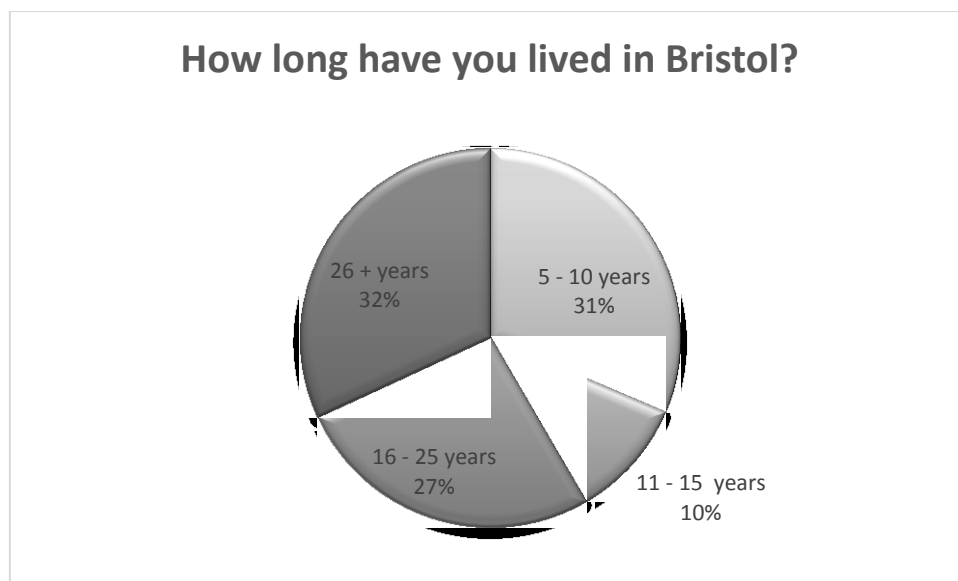
Figure 6



### Length of time lived in Bristol

Living in Bristol for at least five years was prerequisite for completing the questionnaire. Overall a good balance between relatively new Bristolians and people who had lived in Bristol all their lives was achieved in the sample, although there is an apparent anomaly with the group living in Bristol for between 11 to 15 years being underrepresented in the sample (see Figure 7).

**Figure 7**



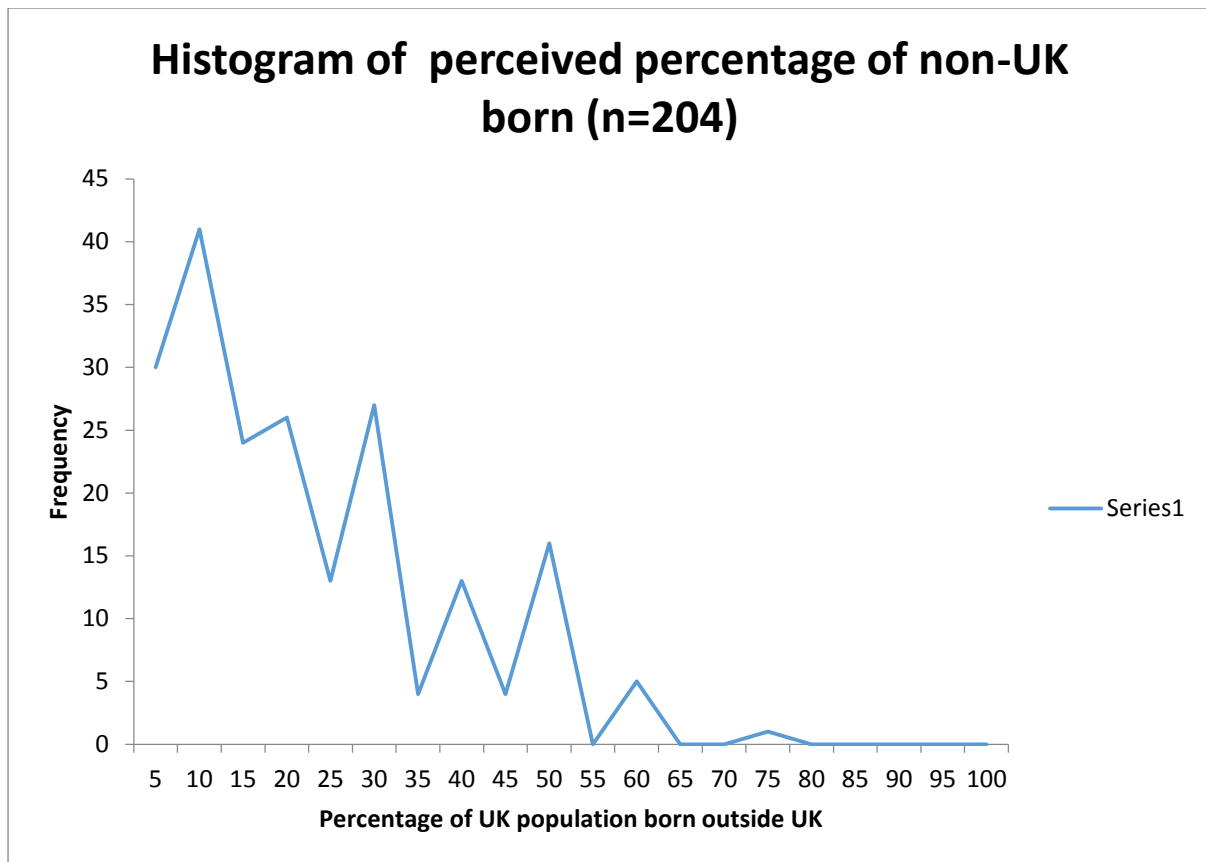
### Education

A variety of educational statuses were recorded, just over a quarter of respondents reported holding an undergraduate degree (or equivalent).

### Perceptions of immigration

The first substantive question asked the respondent what percentage of the current UK population were born outside of the UK. A wide variety of guesses were provided by respondents from 1% through to 75%. The mean percentage was 21.85% however this does not tell the whole story as the standard deviation of this was 15.5%. As Figure 8 suggests, the highest number of responses ranged from 10-15% - similar to the actual percentage of foreign born residents (13%). The next highest peaks were in 25-30% range and at 45-50%.

Figure 8

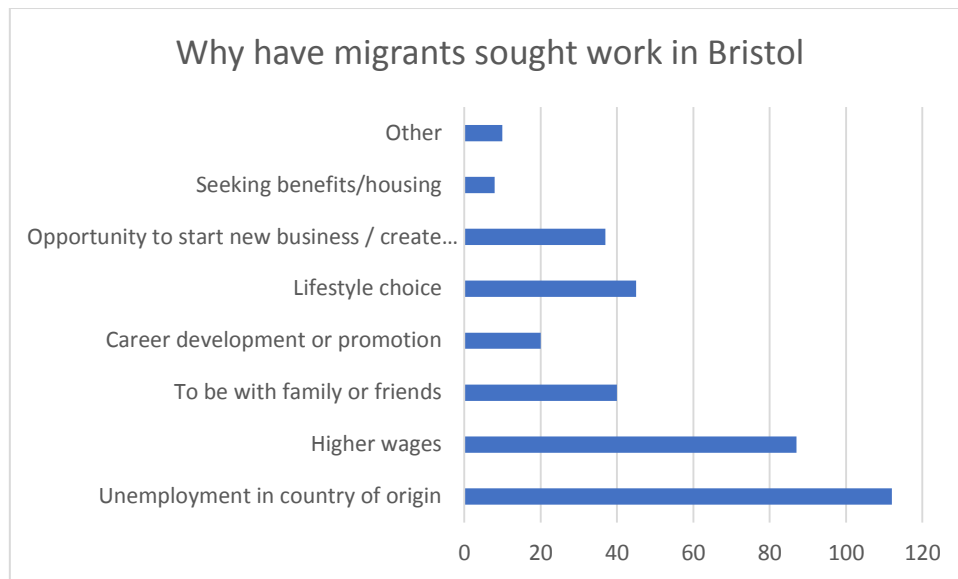


### Reasons for migration to Bristol

Respondents were asked to identify the two main reasons that international economic migrants may have chosen to live in Bristol. Figure 9 therefore reports more responses (n = 358) than the number of respondents (n = 207). As might be expected, the 'economic' reasons were largely selected, more specifically these related to finding employment and higher wages. Social factors such as lifestyle and proximity to family and friends were the next most commonly reported categories after work-related motivations, illustrating an understanding of these intersecting factors. 'Seeking benefits/housing' was not offered as an option but was mentioned by 4% of respondents who offered this under the 'Other' category.



**Figure 9**



#### Resident's attitudes towards the economic contribution of migrants

Question 4 was the first question to ask for a value to be placed on recent migrants – in this case, the contribution made by migrants to Bristol's economy. The question asked:

**On a scale of 1 to 10 how much do you agree with the following statement:**

"Migrant workers make a positive contribution to Bristol's economy."

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

Strongly

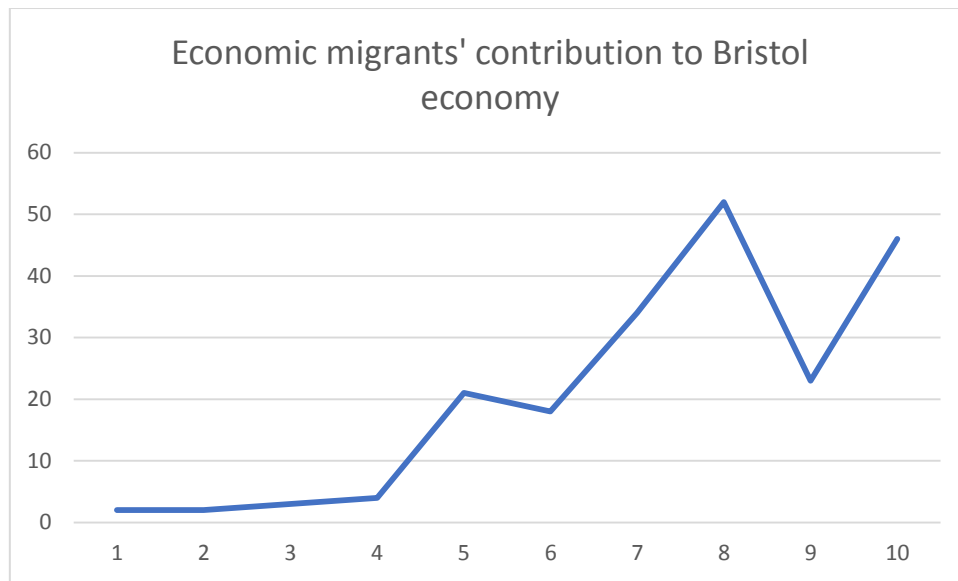
Strongly

DISAGREE

AGREE

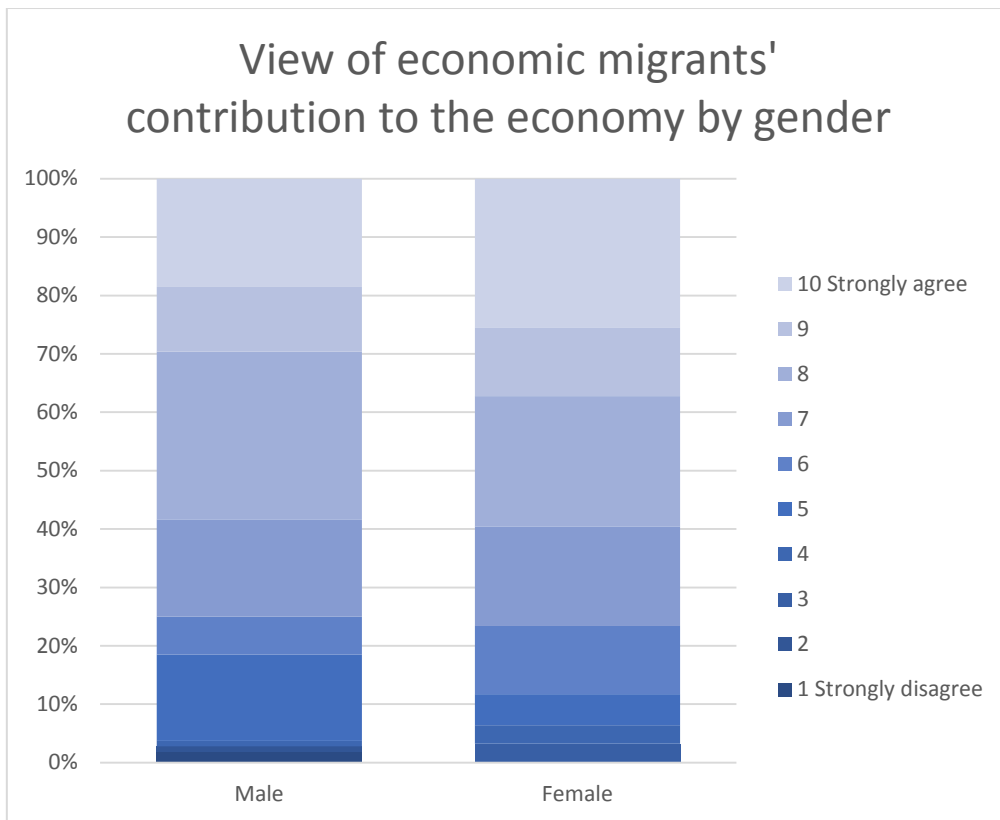
The mean number stated by respondents was 7.63, reflecting strong agreement with this statement as illustrated in Figure 10.

**Figure 10**



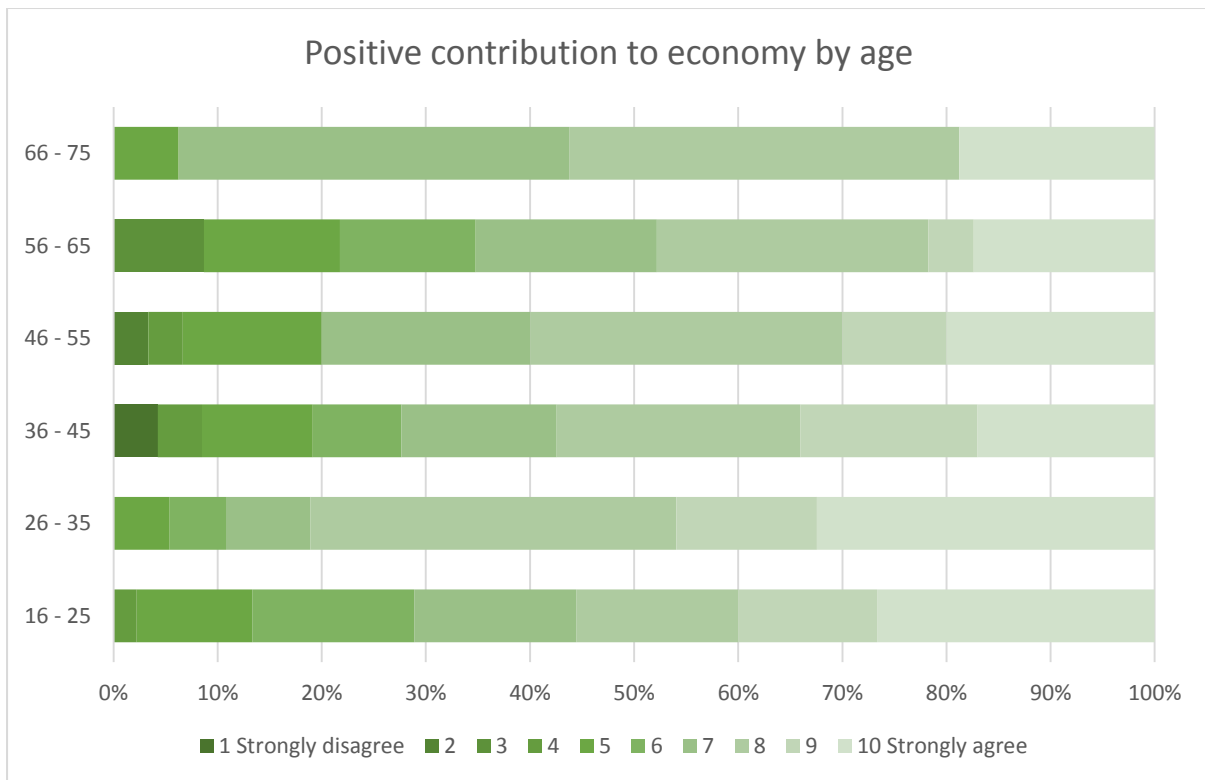
There was some minor differences by respondent gender, with women being more likely to agree with the statement than men as illustrated in Figure 11. Due to the low numbers, respondents who answered 'Other' or 'Prefer not to say' to gender were not included in this analysis.

**Figure 11**



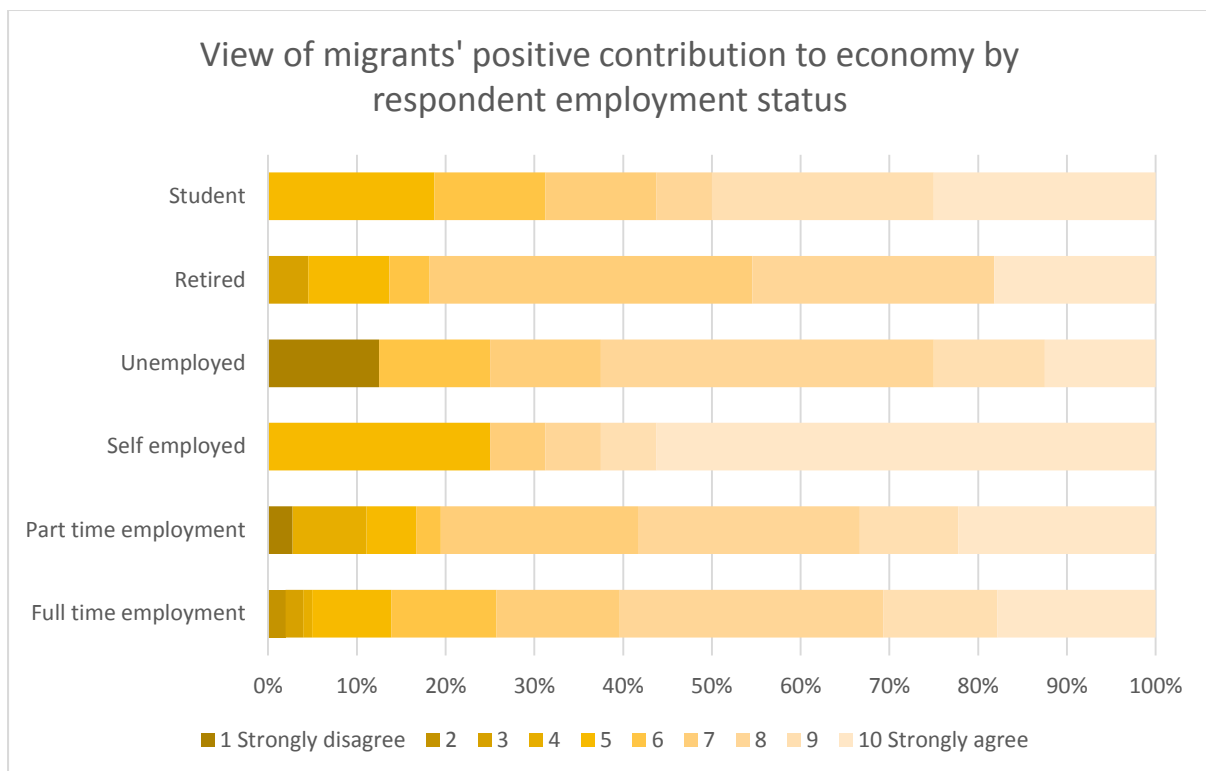
The contribution of migrants was viewed positively by most respondents across all groups: 84.4% of respondents gave at least a '6' to this statement, indicating some level of agreement. However, age and unemployment were significant factors in differing responses to this question. Younger people were more likely to agree with this statement than older people (see Figure 12). 35 years is a watershed with groups on either side of this age group representing the most positive and negative views on this issue. Negative views of the economic contribution of migrants were found mostly amongst those aged between 36 and 65 years. Due to a low number of respondents over the age of 76 years, this group has been excluded from analysis. It should also be noted that respondents aged between 66 and 75 years were significantly fewer in number (n = 16) than other age groups.

**Figure 12**



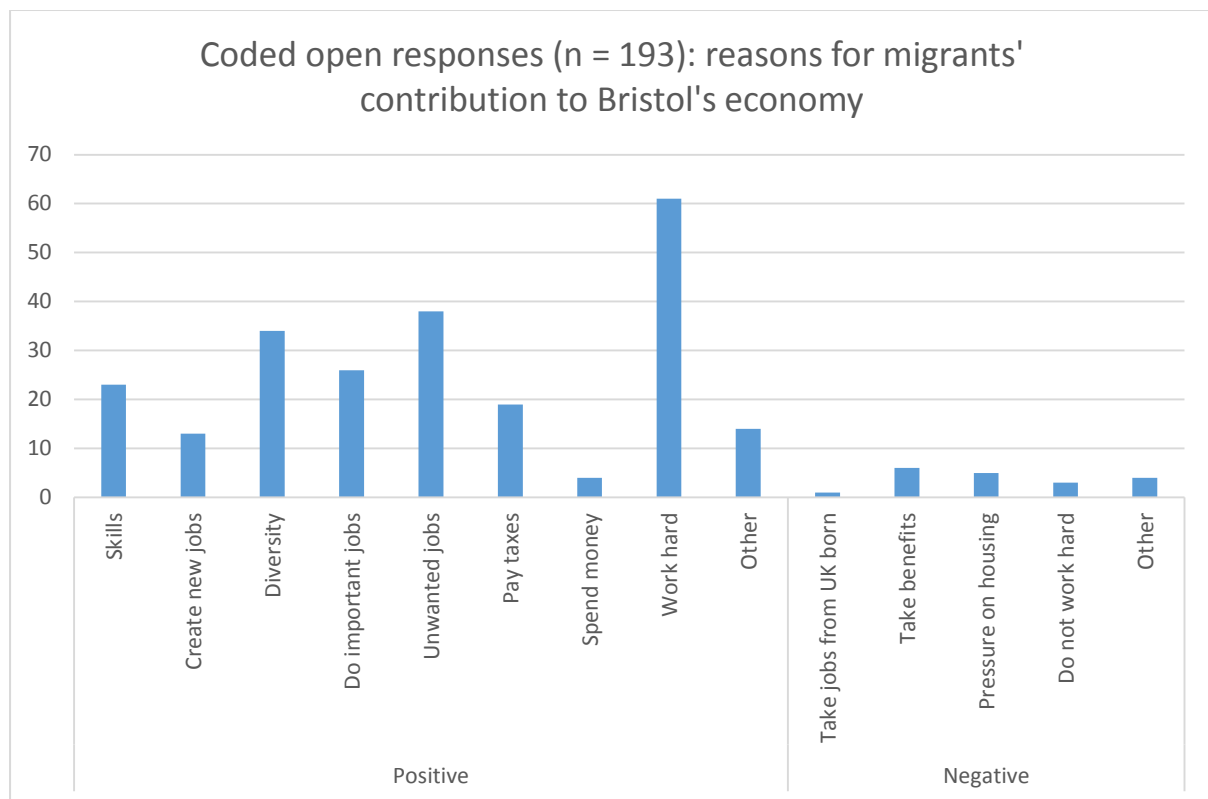
When analysing this data by employment mode, it is noticeable that Students and Self-employed respondents tended to agree with the statement (see Figure 13), although these were smaller sub-groups within the sample (n = 16 in both subgroups). Unemployed respondents were most likely to disagree, however once again this is a very small subgroup (< 4%).

**Figure 13**



Respondents were asked for the reasons why they agreed or disagreed with the statement and their responses were then coded using NVivo qualitative data analysis software. Figure 14 presents the number of responses for each code. Negative responses tended to be attributed to a single factor whilst positive respondents typically provided more than one reason why migrants benefitted the economy. Hence more positive reasons were recorded to reflect the number and range of answers. Reflecting the relatively high mean score for question 4 which indicated that most respondents agreed that migrants made a positive contribution to Bristol’s economy, many more positive reasons were provided – even if the respondent was not strongly in agreement with the initial statement.

**Figure 14**



Most strikingly, 61 respondents stated that migrants were hard working (see Figure 15) – and this was often linked to the perception that migrants are prepared to undertake low paid and low skilled jobs, including jobs that existing Bristol residents do not want.

‘Diversity’ was often cited as a benefit to the economy but the reasons why this was beneficial was not always clear, although some did associate cultural diversity with creativity that can catalyse new businesses.

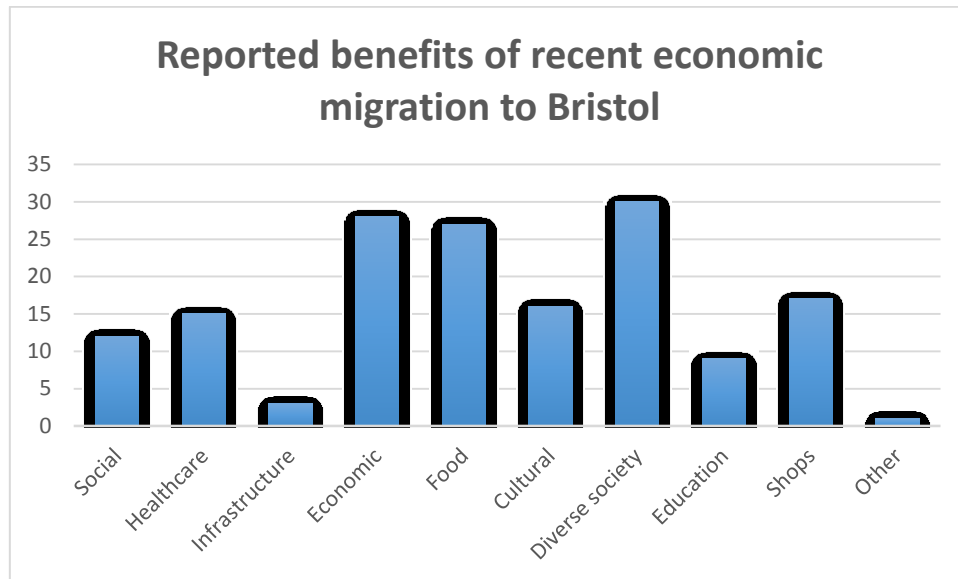
### **Residents’ concerns regarding recent migrants**

Respondents to question 5 concerning the benefits they has observed as a result of recent migration overlapped with answers to question 4, hence the economic benefits of migrant workers (such as taking low paid and otherwise unwanted jobs) feature strongly in this data. However it is notable that cultural diversity was valued highly by many respondents; this category often included references to new foods, restaurants and shops that were now available. Social benefits – e.g. having migrants as friends or enjoying meeting new people from different backgrounds were also identified.

‘Empty shops now open - vibrant high streets. Change culture - including food.’ (Female, 46-55, resident 26+, Part time employed)

‘Diversity - friends from across world. Bristol interesting place - cosmopolitan city. Love hearing different languages in streets.’ (Female, 56-65, resident 16-25, Part time employed)

**Figure 15**



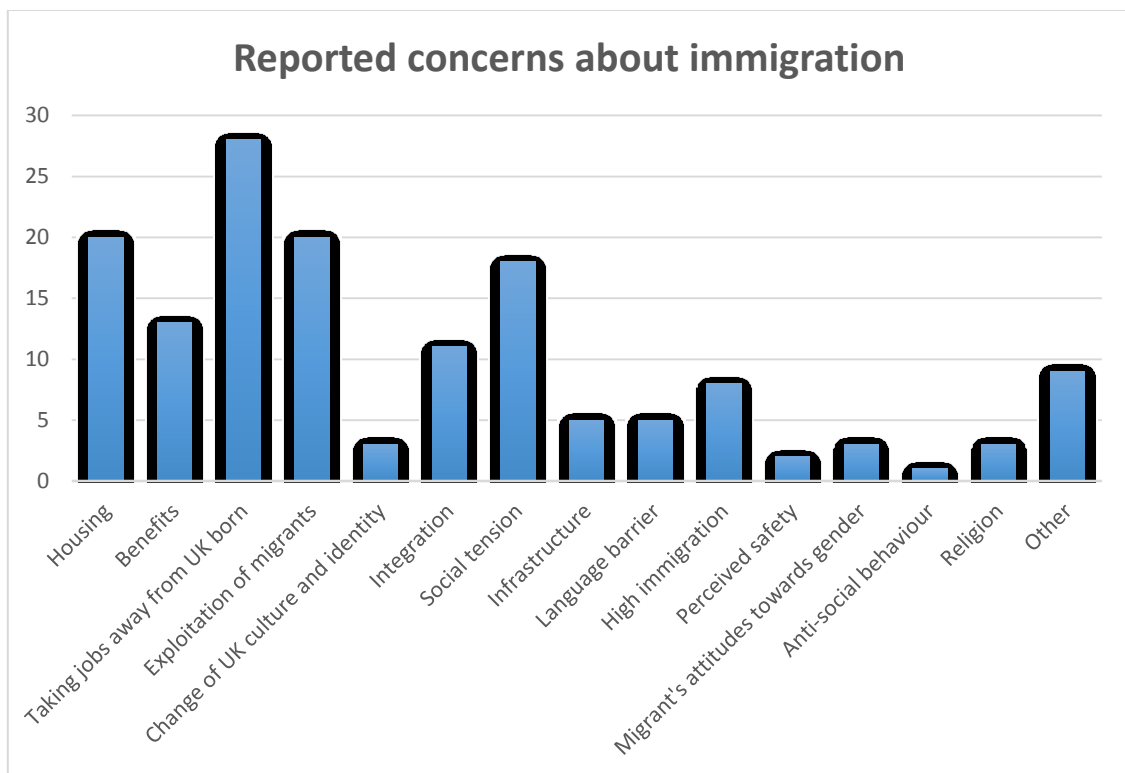
Many respondents also noted the reliance of much of the public infrastructure and healthcare systems on migrant workers. In response to question 5, one woman simply stated:

‘One of the doctors saved my daughter's life.’ (Female, 36-35, resident 26+, Carer)

In addition to doctors and nurses, engineers and public transport workers were noted as valuable migrant contributors to public services.

Responses to the open question asking respondents if they had any concerns regarding recent migrants in Bristol were coded and are summarised in Figure 16.

Figure 16



Most significantly was the concern that migrants may lessen job opportunities for locally born residents. There were also some concerns that an increased pool of workers would lower rates of pay for everyone. Pressure on housing, welfare benefits and infrastructure was also a concern, e.g.:

‘The benefits system being ripped off by migrants who haven't contributed.’ (Female, 56-65, resident 26+, Part time employed)

‘Sending benefits home without putting back into economy.’ (Male, 26-35, resident 16-25, Part time employed)

‘Reduce job opportunities. Drive down pay. Reduce social housing for UK born. Drain on economy because they qualify for benefits.’ (Female, 56-65, resident 16-25, Full time employed)

Interestingly, many respondents reported a concern for the *wellbeing* of migrants – notably that they should not be exploited by employers or in some cases, other migrants:



‘Had experience on building site where one migrant worker who dealt with management because he knew English was ripping off other migrant workers who didn't speak English (from £150 to £30 a day).’ Need to speak English to avoid exploitation. (Male, 36-45, resident 26+, Self-employed)

‘I fear for their exploitation in unofficial work (Female, 56-65, resident 26+, Retired)

That migrants are not exploited and that their talents are properly used.’  
(Male, 66-75, resident 26+, Retired)

‘Some come here without working visa. Don't have working rights or protection and [are] exploited by employers. Government not doing enough.’ (Female, 26-35, resident 5-10, Full time employed)

Another concern for migrants is that they may be the victim of increasing social tension or negative attitudes towards them from UK born residents.

‘The way migrant workers are portrayed in the media.’ (Female, 16-25, resident 5-10, Full time employed)

‘The perception that people come and take jobs away from UK born. Concerned about the talk around migration.’ (Female, 26-35, resident 11-15, Part time employed)

‘Right wing government blames migrants increasing tension in communities.’ (Female, 46-55, resident 26+, Part time employed)

‘Can be subject to EDF / Britain First rallies targeting recent migrants.’  
(Male, 16-25, resident 11-15, Full time employed)

Concerns regarding migration were therefore not solely concerns for longer term Bristol residents but also regarding wider social issues that may negatively affect migrants.

## Resident-migrant interactions

Respondents were asked how often they interacted with recent migrant workers.

‘Interaction’ was broadly interpreted, as Table 1 shows, from simply being aware of other people on the street, migrants as neighbours, or respondents were colleagues/friends with recent migrants.

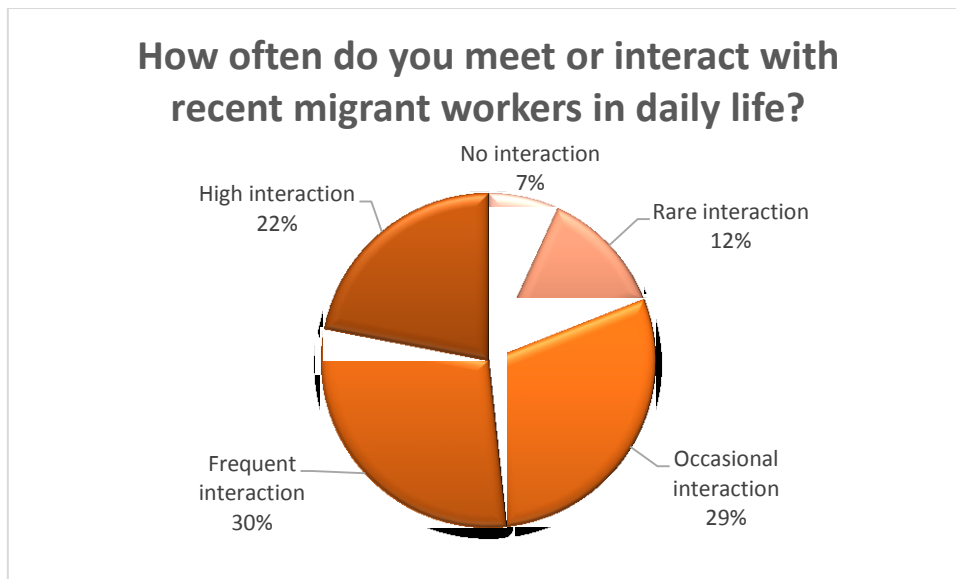
**Table 1**

Response choice provided	Example provided
No interaction	-
Rare interaction	Notice them in the street
Occasional interaction	Nodding to acquaintance
Frequent Interaction	Work alongside migrant workers
High interaction	Socialise with migrant workers

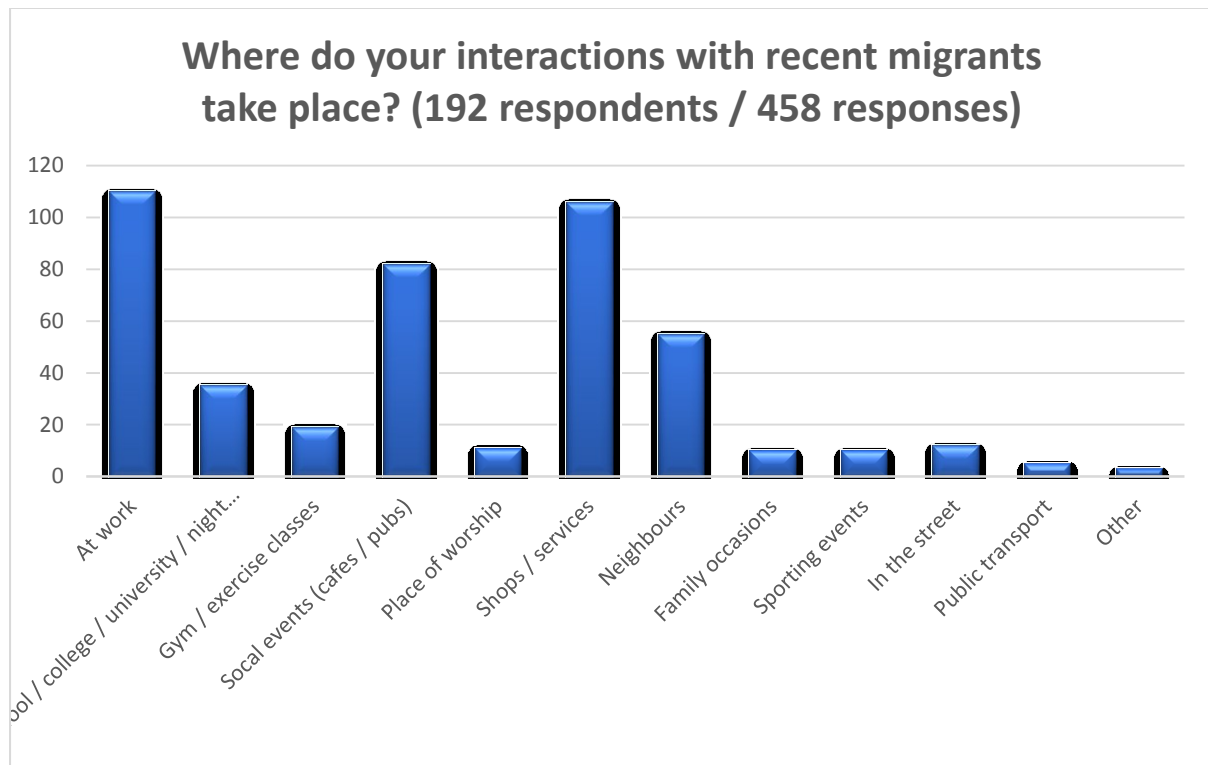
Given these broad categories, 81% of respondents reported occasional to high interaction with migrant workers (see Figure 17) demonstrating that migrants are often encountered in daily life by Bristol residents. Residents in Postcode areas BS9 and BS15 reported the lowest levels of interaction with migrants.

The most popular places of interaction (see Figure 18) were in the workplace, shops and services (including hospitals). Social events and neighbours were the next most common locations for interactions with economic migrants along with educational establishments. The latter included schools, night classes, colleges and universities, as well as those who interacted with migrant workers in the context of their children’s school e.g. school events or informal socialising at the school gate. Many respondents also reported interaction in social spaces such as places of worship and the gym or exercise class.

**Figure 17**

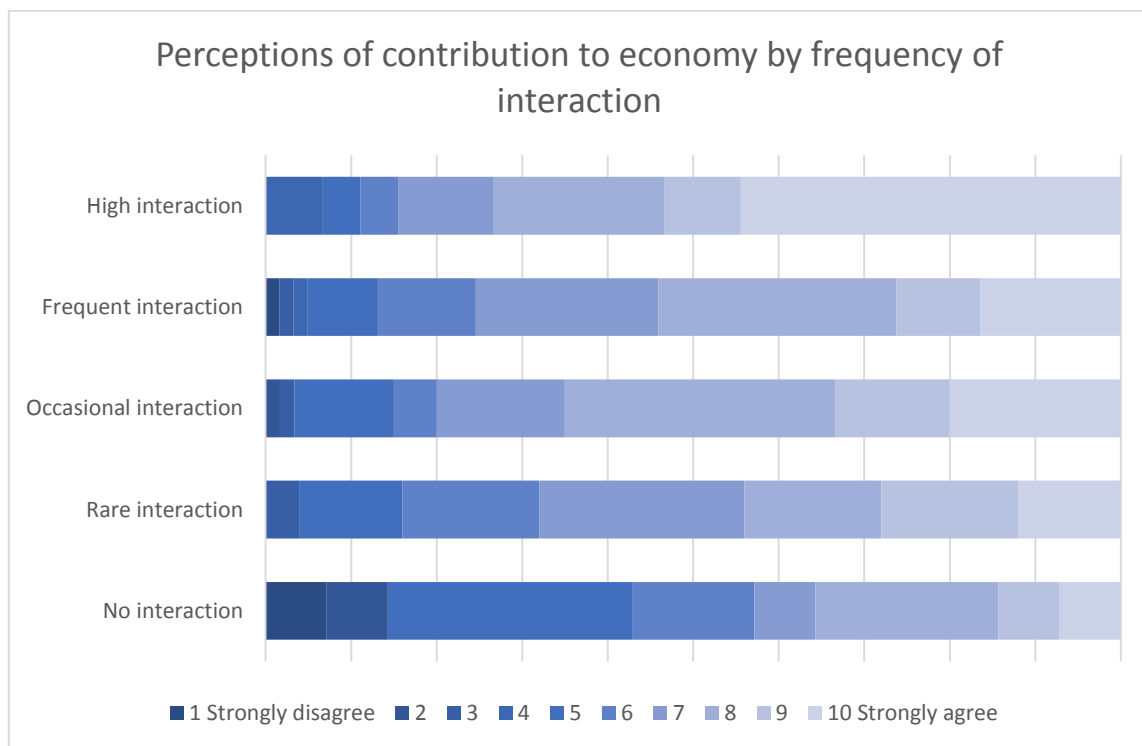


**Figure 18**



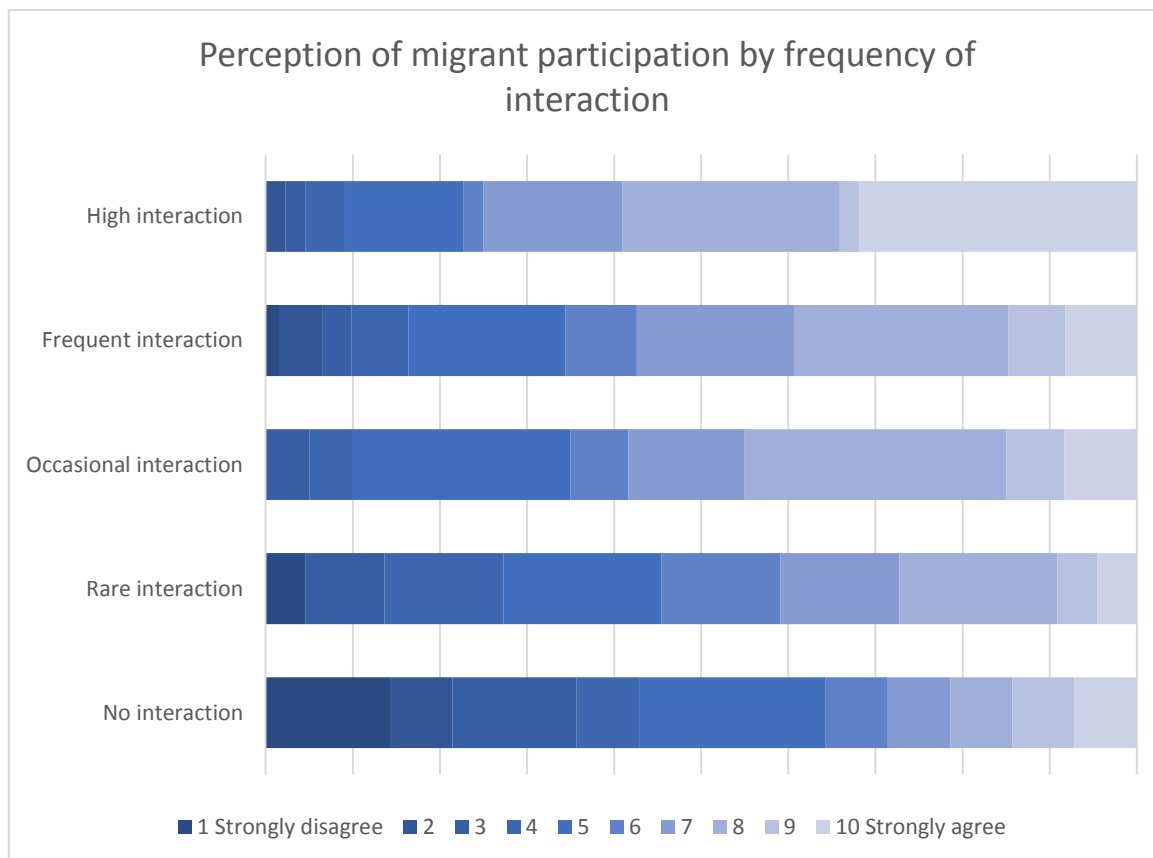
Frequency of resident-migrant interactions data was then cross-tabulated with the respondent's level of agreement with the statement that "Migrant workers make a positive contribution to Bristol's economy." There is a trend illustrated in Figure 19 correlating a greater level of agreement with the view that "Migrant workers make a positive contribution to Bristol's economy" with higher levels of interaction between residents and migrants; likewise the 20% of residents disagreeing with this statement reported correspondingly lower levels of interaction with economic migrants.

**Figure 19**



Frequency of resident-migrant interaction data was cross-tabulated with respondent's level of agreement with the statement in Question 9: "Migrant workers participate in Bristol's community life." As might be expected, Figure 20 illustrates that respondents were likely to be in greater agreement with the statement the more they themselves interacted with migrants in daily life.

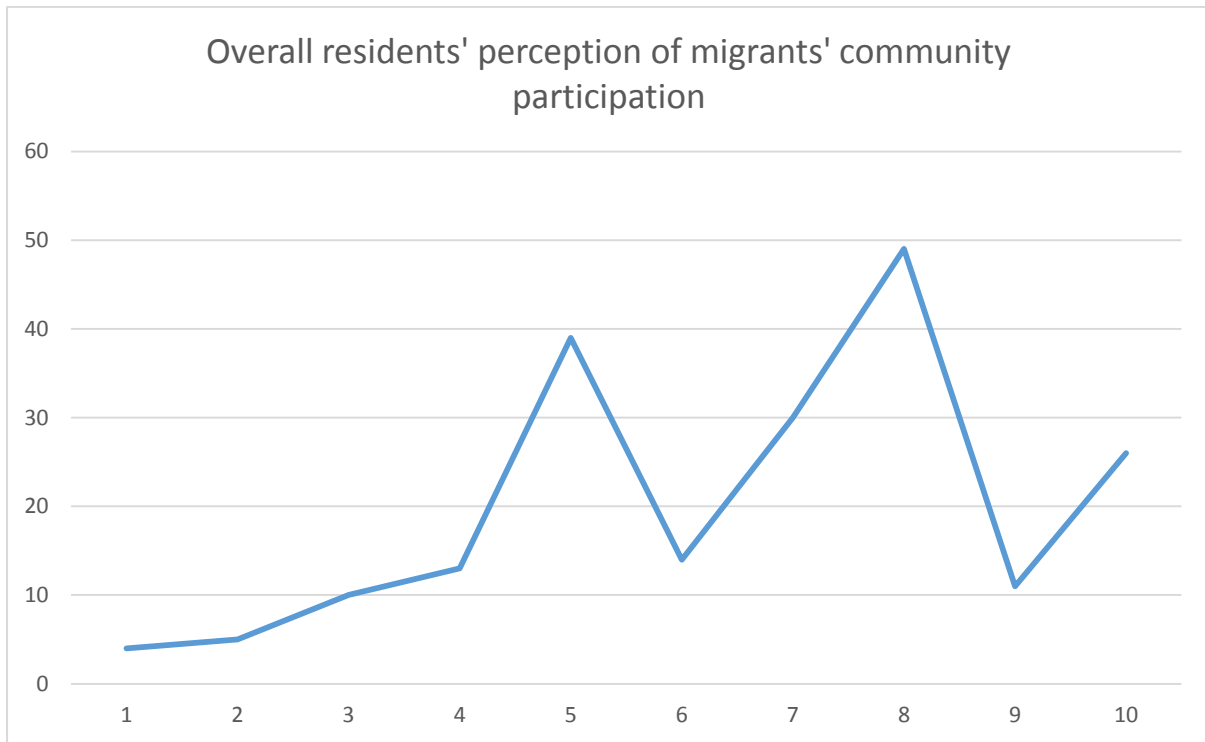
**Figure 20**



**Resident’s perception of community participation of migrants**

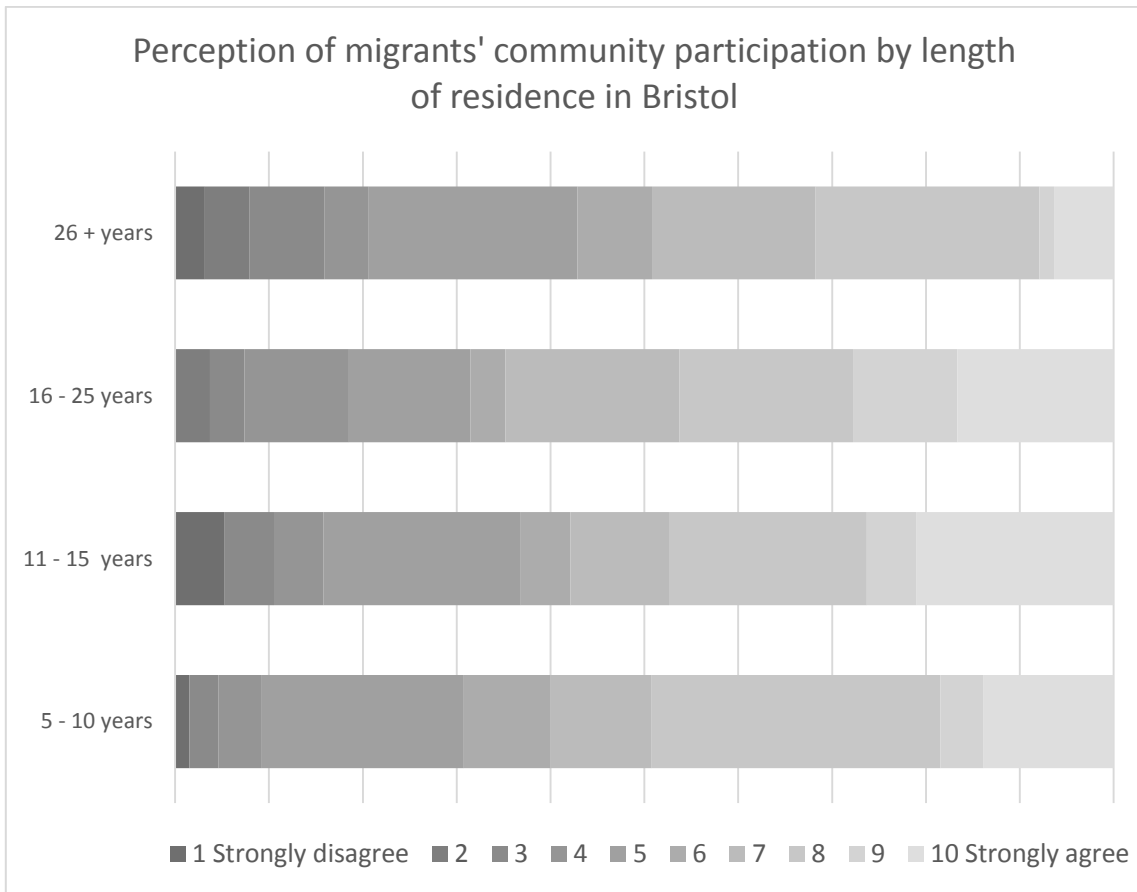
Whilst most respondents reported a degree of agreement with the statement “Migrant workers participate in Bristol’s community life”, there was less agreement than the question regarding their economic contribution (see Figure 21). The mean answer to this question was 6.65 with a greater standard deviation of 2.26, demonstrating a wider range of responses and indicating that respondents were more concerned about participation of migrants than their economic contribution to Bristol. At the high end of agreement, only 26 respondents scored this statement as a ‘10’ compared with 46 respondents giving a ‘10’ to the statement of evaluating migrants’ economic contribution.

**Figure 21**

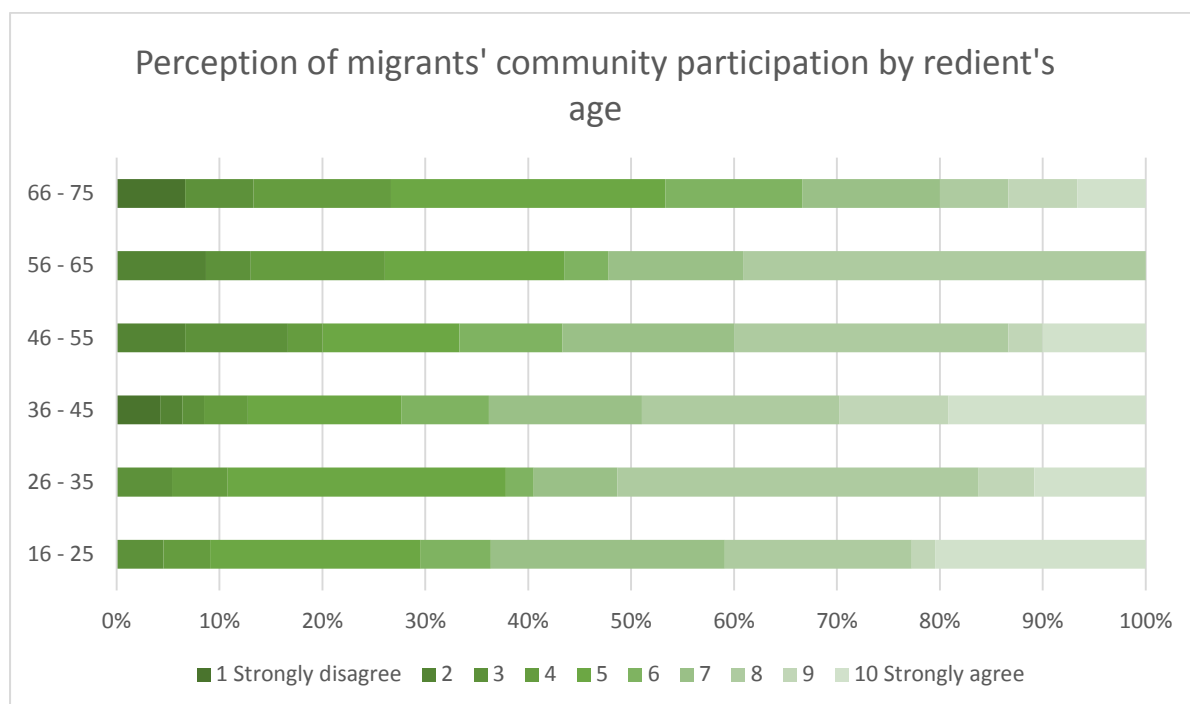


As might be expected there was a slight trend towards more established residents being more likely to disagree with the statement than those respondents who have lived in Bristol for less time (Figure 22). This trend is underscored when participation scores are cross-tabulated with the respondent's age groups, showing younger people are more likely to agree that migrants participate in the community compared to older people (see Figure 23).

**Figure 22**



**Figure 23**



Respondents were also asked to give examples of migrant participation or non-participation in Bristol community life. Many respondents suggested there was some segregation of the different communities in Bristol with different nationalities and cultural groups perceived as primarily socialising amongst themselves rather than the wider community. Some respondents suggested different nationalities were more likely to interact than others but there was little agreement as to which nationalities:

‘Polish/ Eastern Europeans interact but not mosque attendees.’ (Female, 56-66, resident 26+, Retired)

‘Spanish/Italian socialise more than Polish/Slovakian/Hungarian.’ (Female, 46-55, resident 26+, Full time employed)



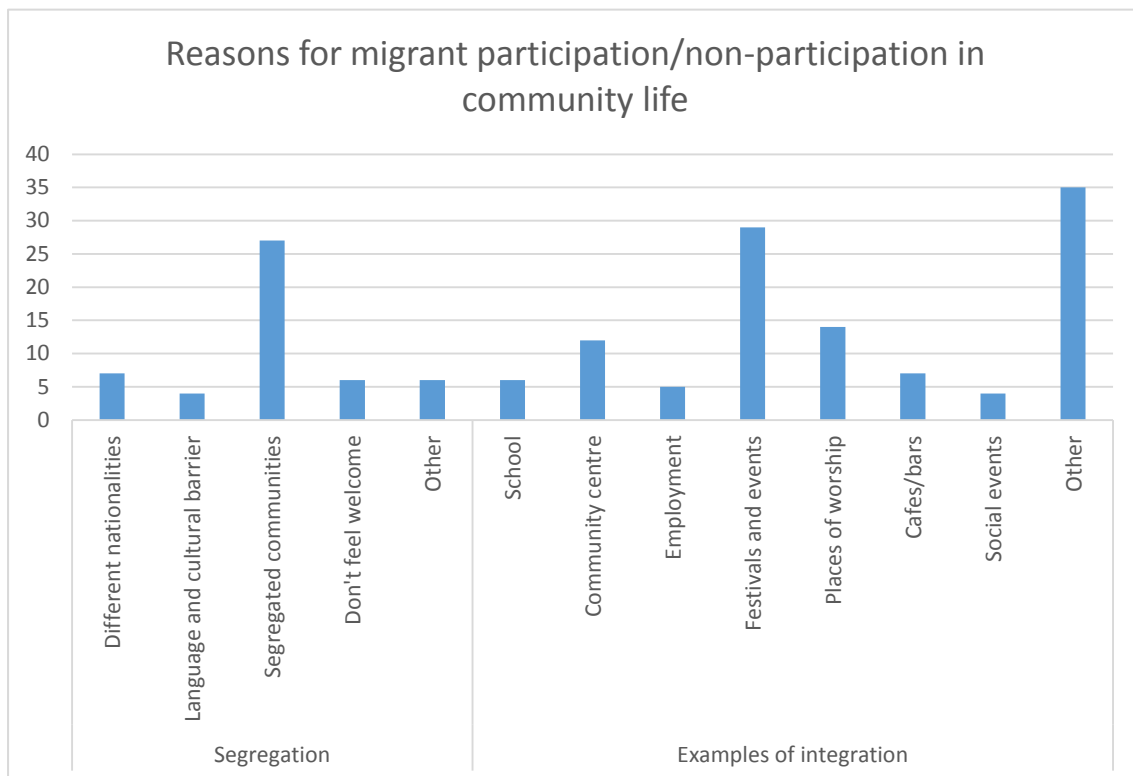
‘Polish migrants integrate but not other nationalities [respondent has Polish friends].’ (Male, 36-45, resident 26+, Part time employed)

‘West Europeans are integrated but Muslims population do not go outside own community and lack places to do so.’ (Other, 16-25, resident 5-10, Self-employed)

‘Certain groups don't integrate very well. Somalians as an example.’ (Male, 16-25, resident 5-10, Full time employed)

Figure 24 presents the thematically coded reasons respondents provided.

**Figure 24**



Examples of occasions when migrants were reported to participate fully were the festivals and events both in local neighbourhood communities and larger city events, as well as places of worship. Interestingly, despite being a significant place for interaction with migrants (as reported in question 8), employment was not seen by many as a form of participation in the community.





## **I. Conclusions**

The overwhelming majority of Bristol residents surveyed stated that economic migrants make a positive contribution to the economy. By comparison only two thirds considered migrants are well integrated in the social life of wider Bristol. Established residents' views were strongly tied to whether they interacted with migrants, with those with the least interaction being most likely to be negative. This suggests that enhancing opportunities for resident-migrant interaction could significantly improve mutual understanding and reduce any sense of 'social churn' established residents may feel.

Highly skilled migrants are commonly recruited to work in Bristol or arrange employment before arriving in Bristol; they are commonly attracted by Bristol's specialist employers and/or Bristol's cultural life; the international airport also facilitates international labour mobility. Many of the migrants arriving in Bristol without employment arranged use online searches for look for work via their mobile phones; they are more likely to find work, particularly their first jobs, through agencies than via a Job Centre. Skilled or graduate workers are often prepared to take low skilled and low paid work on arrival in Bristol, hoping this will be a stepping stone to better work and pay. However, in common with resident workers, migrant workers can get stuck in precarious work: many migrants experience the poverty trap associated with low income zero hour contract work. As Hendra et al (2015) highlight, the 'low pay, no pay' cycle associated with zero hours contract employment is an issue facing many UK residents as well as recent migrants. However, this precarity is a) made worse when migrants are not familiar with or are unable to access support services; b) can become a permanent 'trap' if combined with a persistent English language deficit; c) leads to migrant debt and associated insecurities and risks; and d) is a barrier to the city's ability to access the full skills set migrant workers can offer e.g. depriving employers access to skilled and graduate workers, e.g. engineers and nurses currently employed in basic security work, childcare, cleaning etc..

English language proficiency is central to migrant employment prospects and skills-matching to meet Bristol's employment needs. While highly educated migrants are typically language proficient, not all are, and many semi- or low-skilled migrants are literate in their own language but have little or no English on arrival. English language proficiency is central to both migrant employment prospects and social integration in Bristol community life, but

those arriving with little English and have few opportunities to improve their English (e.g. doing 'back room' jobs which don't require English) can get caught in poverty, and in some cases employer exploitation, because they suffer from an 'English language deficit trap' which limits their opportunities and access to information e.g. employee rights. Improving English language skills was identified as the key to unlock migrant potential, whether accessing secure work, enhancing employment prospects, volunteering opportunities or more general 'cultural capital'.

Some migrants prefer text-based resources which can be read slowly and details checked; some migrant communities prefer oral to written information, some new migrants need key information translated into their native language. An investment in an Information Pack with supporting links and podcasts will improve new migrants' ability to make informed choices e.g. about finding work and accommodation, will improve use of services such as CAB, libraries and migrant support groups, and reduce pressure on public services such as Accident and Emergency services.

## **J. Recommendations**

The research findings shown in this report result in 10 clear recommendations

- 1. The centrality of English language proficiency to migrants' effective employment, appropriate access to services and social integration makes English language teaching a key priority for migrants with little/no spoken English**
- 2. Varied migrant's/groups' language needs require the provision of a range of free/affordable learning modes e.g. online teaching resources which can be accessed at any time, intensive face to face classes with crèche facilities, and integrated Parent-Toddler Groups with basic English conversation in local community centres e.g. St. Werburghs**
- 3. A Migrant/ Newcomer Information Pack would benefit all newcomers to Bristol, helping them to find work, housing, schools, medical services etc. and reducing pressure on some public services e.g. A & E departments.**
- 4. Utilise existing community and migrant support groups, e.g. Somali forum, Espanoles en Bristol, BACWG, Opoka Bristol and CAB, who are well-placed to identify both**

migrant needs and to contribute to the co-production of an Information Pack, as well as its dissemination

5. A Migrant/ Newcomer Information Pack needs to be an 'Information Pack +' including online and paper versions, and non-text based information e.g. podcasts on how to complete an application for a National Insurance Number or register for a GP
6. Provide online information and guidance, including Mobile Friendly versions of to maximise access via smartphones, will help migrant workers with IT access to prepare in advance for living and working in Bristol
7. Translation of key information into migrant group languages will help those with limited English in their transition to living and working in Bristol e.g. Polish, Spanish Somali, Simplified Mandarin and Urdu.
8. Run small business start-up advice and networking events in areas with entrepreneurial migrants e.g. Easton; presentations should be captured as podcasts and made available on via the BCC website or similar
9. Create a central Bristol Orientation walking trail for newcomers including information points and services e.g. City Council offices and Job Centres, as well as historical, leisure and educational sites e.g. libraries, community colleges, parks, John Cabot statue, and free museums and galleries
10. Facilitate a range of opportunities for established residents and migrants to interact as this enhances mutual understanding and reduces the sense of social 'churn'.

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