



**A STUDY OF THE BUSINESS NEEDS OF THOSE
EMPLOYING MIGRANT WORKERS IN THE
WELSH AGRICULTURE AND PRODUCTION
HORTICULTURE INDUSTRIES**

June 2007

**A report prepared by Lantra with support from
the Welsh Assembly Government**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Much has been written about the increase in migrant workers throughout the UK. One of the main sectors actively recruiting migrant and seasonal workers from overseas is the UK agriculture and horticulture industry. This report concentrates on the agriculture and production horticulture industries in Wales and seeks to understand the nature and size of the workforce and the business needs of those employing migrant workers.

In surveying businesses employing or seeking to employ overseas workers the report illustrates the business rationale for employing overseas workers rather than employees from the local area and attempts to gain an estimate of the numbers employed. Whilst responses received provided a wealth of information concerning the origin of the migrant workforce, the occupational profile of the workforce and the business and skills needs of employers, the number of participating businesses gave some indication that the volume of migrant workers, or at least those known about, may not be as high as some estimates.

However, the issues raised and the opportunities to improve the situation for businesses and migrant workers themselves are real and clearly evidenced in this report and the associated annexes. Key indications are:

- 46.5% of Welsh agriculture and production horticulture businesses responding to the survey recruited migrant workers to permanent positions. These are largely micro-businesses employing five or less people.
- Agency based recruitment is the principal method of recruiting overseas workers.
- Migrant workers are generally employed in non skilled job roles.
- 44% of businesses foresee migrant workers filling vacancies in the future.
- 69% of employers seek advice and guidance in employing migrant workers.
- Whilst many migrant workers are seen to possess relevant skills and experience for the job role, in reality the nature, practices and scale of businesses in Wales means that many employers have to provide training and development for their migrant workforce.
- Businesses require more information and access to training provision suitable to the needs of migrant workers, especially in terms of English language and health and safety.
- Many employers rely on the recruitment agency to match individuals to vacancies with 47.7% of employers saying that they had a mechanism in place to assess the training needs of migrant workers.
- Much of the training received by migrant workers conforms to legislative requirements.

From the analysis of data taken from the telephone surveys and face to face interviews with businesses, it can be seen that businesses and agencies need to have improved methods of assessing individuals' overseas qualifications, skills and experience against the requirements of vacancies in Wales. In addition, more multilingual training and/or support materials would benefit the migrant workers themselves. Whilst businesses made active use of a wide range of support and advice with regard to employing overseas nationals, a central point for accessing this information was viewed as valuable.

INTRODUCTION

Background

During the development of the Environmental and Land-based Sector Skills Agreement (SSA), businesses identified an increase of overseas workers in the sector and the need to understand the impact of such temporary or permanent workers on the labour market. It also highlighted a requirement to look at the business and training needs of employers who employ overseas or migrant workers.

Migrant workers are widely seen across the sector not only in Wales but throughout the UK as vital components of the environmental and land-based workforce. They fulfil replacement demand and whether in the UK as seasonal or temporary employees or, anecdotally, as increasingly fulfilling supervisory and management positions on a permanent basis, there was seen to be a lack of information on labour requirements in Wales concerning the use of migrant workers in both the short and long term.

To this end, and supported by the Welsh Assembly Government, Lantra as the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the environmental and land-based sector, undertook research with specific reference to agriculture (crops and livestock) and production horticulture industries with the aims of:

- identifying the short and long-term trends, demand and labour requirements around the need and use of migrant workers
- establishing data around volumes, duration of work term, country of origin, occupation
- identifying employers' needs in respect of migrant labour and possible areas of business support
- ascertaining the skills and development needs of migrant workers to evidence the need for a learning supply fit for migrant workers.

In addition, the research would aim to assess employer demand for a recognition system for the skills and competences of migrant workers to enable businesses to evaluate suitability for specific roles and/or identify and recognise training needs and actions taken to fulfil such training requirements. The recognition system would be based on, and inform further development of Lantra's Online Competence Framework (OCF).

For the purposes of this research and report migrant workers are classed as:

“A non-UK national that has come to the UK at some point during the last three years and is working on a permanent, fixed-term, seasonal or casual basis”

Migrant workers in agriculture and production horticulture

Migrant workers play an important role within agriculture and production horticulture because there is an apparent lack of local labour willing to undertake the work, on both a seasonal and permanent basis. The jobs with the greatest demand for workers are generally seasonal positions that require a lower level of skills, although many businesses report that skilled workers and supervisors/managers are also hard to recruit and retain. Interestingly, almost half (46.5%) of Welsh agricultural and production horticulture businesses interviewed indicated the recruitment of overseas workers to permanent positions, although predominantly in lower skilled roles.

There is also a demand for a particular type of person. Some employers rate attitude, enthusiasm and team working as necessary to do the job, above technical skills or experience which they are often willing to provide for suitable candidates. Overseas workers are often viewed as more likely to have these skills than UK nationals available to do similar work. Similarly, research has shown that employers feel there is an 'attitude gap' rather than a skills gap, especially in younger UK workers, who were perceived as unmotivated and unwilling to take low skilled or seasonal jobs.

Across the UK, specific shortages lie within the areas of planting, gathering, processing and packing of crops (e.g. salad vegetables, soft fruit, and flowers) and animal husbandry (e.g. on-farm poultry processing and lambing). A recent survey of agricultural employers reported that 85% of them claimed to have raised salaries, and over a third have increased non-wage benefits and changed shift patterns in order to encourage UK workers to take up jobs within agriculture.^{1,2,3,4,5} This pattern of employment was echoed in the study undertaken in Wales, although poultry processing did not feature in the businesses surveyed.

Research has shown that horticultural businesses have increased their use of migrant workers over the past decade, both through the use of labour providers and the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS). The experience of many employers is that UK workers do not want to work within agriculture and horticulture, mostly due to the work being physically demanding, the long working hours and the perception of unattractive salaries. This illustrates a cultural shift observed in employment expectations, as traditionally such seasonal work would have been performed by local people and student labour who now do not regard this work as attractive.

¹ Precision Prospecting (2005). Temporary workers in UK agriculture and horticulture.

² LSC. Employers Perceptions of migrant workers research report, December 2006

³ IER, Changing Patterns of Employment by Ethnic Group and for Migrant Workers, National Report November 2005

⁴ Central and East European Migrants in Low Wage Employment in the UK.

⁵ Migration Commission: Migration: A Welcome Opportunity, A New Way Forward by the RSA Migration Commission, Web Annex A: 4 Sectoral reports - A scarcity of labour?, November 2005

Categories of migrant worker and sector recruitment schemes

There are many categories of migrant workers (Table 1), some of which require documentation and work permits in order to be employed. There are certain programmes which enable workers from countries outside the UK to work in the UK such as the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme (HSMP, part of the Work Permit Scheme), the Sector Based Scheme (SBS) and the Skills Shortage Occupations (SSO) Scheme. There are also programmes that are marketed at the agriculture industry. These are the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS) and the Seasonal Workers Programme (SWP).

Table 1: Types of migrant workers

Categories of migrant workers	Migrant's rights/requirements/typical age etc
Nationals of the European Union (EU) or European Economic Area (EEA)	Individuals have a right to travel, live and work in the UK
Nationals from new EU countries	Have the right to travel, live and work in the UK by registering with the Home Office for the first year of employment 82% of workers registered on the Workers Registration Scheme (WRS) between May 2004 and June 2006, were 18 – 34 years of age. ⁶
Nationals of all other countries	Require a work permit, which is obtained by an employer who cannot find a suitable national to fill a post
Nationals of Switzerland and British Overseas Territories	Require clearance to enter the UK but do not require a work permit
Overseas students, who work mostly in agriculture under the Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Scheme (SAWS)	Students from outside the EEA can engage in low skilled work within the agricultural sector. Maximum length of stay is 6 months Age of students is 18-25
Those on the Sector Based Scheme (introduced in May 2003)	Currently applies to nationals from Romania and Bulgaria, between the ages of 18-30. The work permit is issued for a maximum of 12 months. Workers cannot bring a spouse and dependents to the UK under the scheme.
Those on the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme (HSMP)	Individuals with specific skills can come to the UK for one year initially. Successful applicants can bring relatives to the country. To succeed, applicants must demonstrate that they will be able to continue their chosen career (in any field) in the UK. Individuals need to provide evidence that they score 75 points or more in the following five areas: educational qualifications, work experience, past earnings, achievement in the chosen field, HSMP priority application list (available to qualified GP's).

⁶ Home Office: Accession Monitoring Report, May 2004-June 2006

The **SAWS** is managed by Work Permits (UK), part of the Home Office. It allows students from outside of the European Economic Area to come and work in the UK for a limited period of time, particularly during the planting and harvesting seasons. The scheme was introduced to help meet the shortfall in the supply of seasonal labour from within the UK.

The scheme offers a great advantage to sector employers as they can be reassured that workers found through the scheme are both legitimate and reliable. SAWS operators are organisations that administer the scheme on behalf of Work Permits (UK). There are two types of SAWS operators: Multiple Operators are organisations that act on behalf of farmers and growers and do not recruit individuals to meet their own seasonal labour, while Sole Operators are organisations (farmers/growers etc) that act on their own behalf to meet their own labour needs.

The number of people able to participate on the SAWS each year is limited by a quota. In 2004 the UK government authorised 25,000 work permits under SAWS, however, the accession of eight east European states in 2004 led to the Government reducing the number of SAWS places in 2005 to 16,250. The quota is currently set at 16,250 places for 2006. The Government's longer term plan is to phase out SAWS completely by 2010.

Table 2: SAWS Quota 2006

SAWS operator name	Allocation
Concordia (YSV) Ltd	6,058
Friday Bridge (International Farm Camp)	355
Barway Services	680
Haygrove Ltd	387
HOPS Labour Solutions	6,806
R & JM Place (International Farm Camp)	420
S & A Produce	1,330
Sastak Ltd	100
Wilkin & Sons Ltd (International Farm Camp)	114
Total	16,250

The above operators are largely seen to place migrant workers in businesses in other parts of the UK, as those Welsh businesses surveyed did not report these organisations specifically as having been used to recruit their labour. In fact, many businesses surveyed reported that once reliable employees had been found further recruitment came from 'word of mouth' or through contacts in the country of origin of their current workforce.

The plans to phase out SAWS have caused concern amongst many UK employers of migrant labour. Many employers are concerned that the reductions in SAWS numbers may severely affect their business.

METHODOLOGY

A significant amount of research relating to migrant workers has been carried out in recent years. Most of this research has been conducted in England or UK-wide and only a small amount has focused on agriculture and related businesses. To avoid duplication, and to provide a foundation for this research in Wales, a detailed literature review was conducted.

Literature Review

The first strand of the research process was to conduct a literature review to establish if any similar research had been undertaken recently and to extract sector specific information from existing research reports. Given that the review would facilitate understanding of the key issues around the employment of migrant labour, it subsequently contributed to the development of focussed and representative interview schedules.

Significantly, the literature review identified no specific research in the area of migrant labour in these industries for Wales. **Annex G** contains the list of sources used in this literature review.

Primary Research

The primary research involved telephone interviews with employers of migrant workers and more in-depth face to face discussions with specific businesses. A short questionnaire was also developed to explore the training aspirations and understand the training which may have been received by migrant workers whilst working in the UK. These questionnaires were delivered face to face with workers where possible.

The telephone interview approach was taken for a number of reasons:

- to maximise the response rate - the percentage of those contacted who respond is generally higher than for postal surveys
- to collect the data quickly, and
- to ensure respondents would be representative of Wales as a whole, i.e. more random and accurate results are usually achieved with telephone surveys because the sample is less self-selective than it would be with a postal survey.

Through the telephone interviews, employers were given the opportunity to show their interest in participating in a more in depth face-to-face interview. The face-to-face interview formed the next stage of the primary research and was intended for employers and their migrant workers. It was designed to dig a little deeper into certain issues and gain a more thorough picture around migrant labour in agricultural and production horticultural industries in Wales. A more detailed description of the methods adopted in this research is stated below.

Telephone interviews with employers

The interview schedule was developed consisting of closed response questions and took between five to ten minutes to complete (see **Annex B**). The purpose of the telephone interview was to identify the number and percentage of migrant workers within businesses and the demand employers will have for migrant workers in the future, their occupations and length of stay in the UK, and their skills gaps and shortages. The interviews were conducted by Precision Prospecting Ltd, who had an extensive database of agricultural and horticultural businesses and who also had previous experience in conducting migrant worker research within the agriculture and horticulture industries.

Telephone interviews were conducted during November 2006 to January 2007 and Precision Prospecting Ltd made contact with a total of 1,155 businesses⁷. Of these, 29 employers (2.5%) said they employed migrant workers and participated in the telephone interview. The remaining 1,126 businesses did not participate in the telephone interview for the reasons specified below:

Table 3: Non Participants

Reason	Number of businesses
Do not employ migrant workers	1102
Land rented/let out	4
No longer farming	4
Not interested	5
Other	2
Retired	9
Total	1126

Data obtained from the telephone interviews was analysed using a Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Face-to-face interviews with employers and their migrant workers

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with employers, and where possible, their migrant workers.

The interview schedule was developed consisting of both closed and open response questions (see **Annex C**). Open response questions were developed to capture as wide a scope as possible, employer's experiences and needs with respect to the use of

⁷ This figure excludes wrong numbers, recall at another time, and no answer.

migrant labour and to identify any areas of business support. For the migrant workers, questions were developed to explore their occupations and length of stay in the UK, the training they have received and what information, advice or guidance they would like to receive about living and working in the UK.

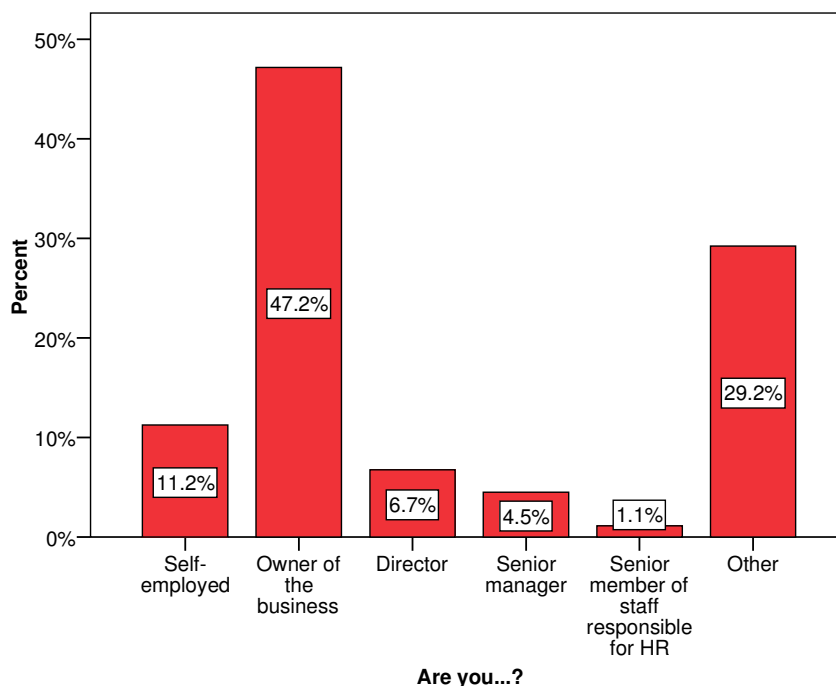
The interviews were carried out by Lantra's Research Co-ordinator in Wales. Participants were engaged in the face to face interview through various means; in many cases potential participants were contacted by telephone in order to gain consent to participate and arrange a suitable time to conduct the interview. Upon arranging the interview, participants were asked if they would also be willing for one or more of their migrant workers participate in the interview.

During this research many migrant workers were unable to be interviewed in relation to training provided since being employed in Wales. This was due to the interviews taking place during working hours. Those employees that were available declined the opportunity to be questioned. There were a variety of reasons given for declining an interview, not withstanding the most frequently cited issue of linguistic ability. As a consequence, only one face-to-face interview was conducted with a migrant worker and this has been excluded from the research.

Interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes. A total of 60 face-to-face interviews were achieved and the information gathered was analysed using SPSS.

Interviews with employers

A total of 89 employers participated in the interviews; of these, 29 responded to the telephone interview and 60 responded to the face to face interview. Almost half of the respondents were business owners (47.2%), 11.2% were self-employed and 6.7% were directors.



Base: 89 businesses

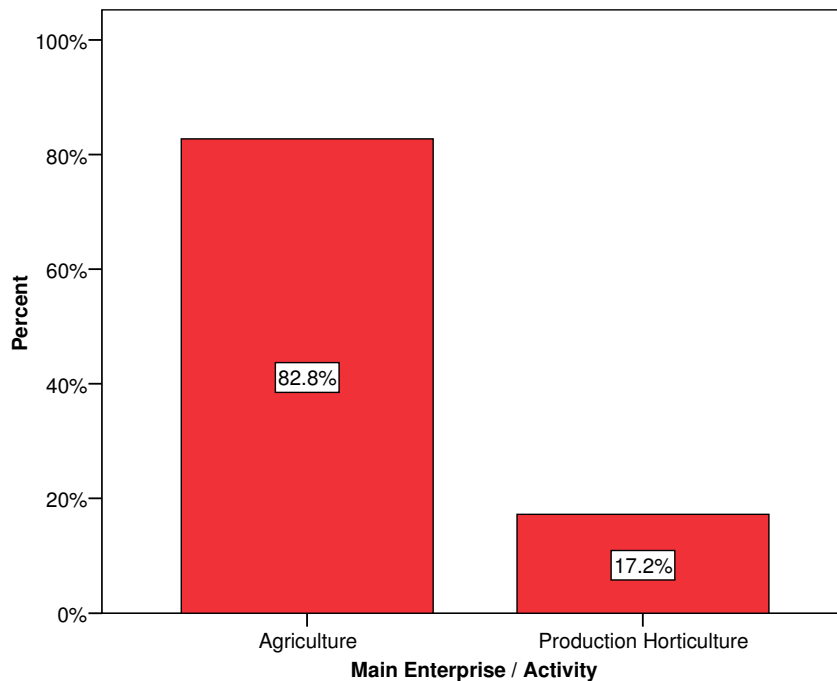
Many employers (29.2%) did not place themselves within any of the pre-specified occupational categories; instead they chose 'Other'. These other participants are shown in the following table:

Table 4: Other Participants

Title	Frequency
Unspecified	1
Assistant manager	1
Consultant	1
Family member	1
Farm manager	1
General manager	1
Managing director	1
Operations manager	1
Partner	15
Tenant	3
Total	26

Main enterprise/activity of the business

Over four fifths of the businesses said agriculture was their main enterprise/activity (82.8%).



Base: 87 businesses

Sub-industries of the businesses

A total of 80 employers responded to this question. Almost three fifths of them (56.2%) said they manufactured/produced dairy products, almost one fifth (18.8%) said production of sheep, and 17.5% said production of beef. A small percentage of employers said they were primarily concerned with arable production, including oil seeds, sugar and potatoes (7.5%). For the full list of sub-industries, refer to **Annex D**.

THE NATURE OF MIGRANT LABOUR

Whilst much has been made of the increase in overseas nationals working in the UK and a variety of research and reports exist, no specific research has been identified for the Welsh agricultural and horticultural industries. Research for Lantra's Sector Skill Agreement identified a knowledge gap in understanding the needs of businesses in Wales who employ overseas or migrant workers and the extent of the matter. There is a lack of information on labour requirements concerning the use of migrant workers in both the short and long term.

This research provides a snapshot of the make up of migrant labour in a sample of Welsh agriculture and production horticulture industries. Whilst perhaps not as extensive as anecdotal evidence may have suggested, it is clearly evident that migrant workers are being recruited to fill vacancies left by either an ageing local workforce or

by hard-to-fill vacancies due to the unwillingness of local labour to work in such industries. It is also clear that businesses overcome a number of hurdles in the sourcing, recruitment and training of such workers. This information has been gathered and will form a valuable resource to be made available to other businesses and employers who may seek support in engaging migrant workers.

Of those businesses responding to the survey the vast majority employed workers from the European Union (with EU nationals having freedom of movement and not requiring work permits etc). The large majority of these workers come from the newer 'accession' states of Eastern Europe. Many respondents stated that their migrant workers adapt quite quickly to the lifestyle and the job and have good relationships with British employees.

Employers said that the driving force behind the migrant worker's decision to come to the UK is almost always economic. Migrants mainly come over to earn as much money as they can, learn the language, and gain new skills. Generally, they like to come short term, for approximately three months. They then return to their home country for a month before returning to the UK again and repeating the rota. Migrant workers generally aimed to send as much as possible of their earnings home, thereby contributing very little to the local economies.

Some are known to come for as little as four weeks, but most businesses consider this too short a period. Although many migrant workers are here short term, some are also interested in staying longer term and sometimes permanently. However, almost half of businesses surveyed reported that those employed on seasonal or casual basis returned in subsequent years.

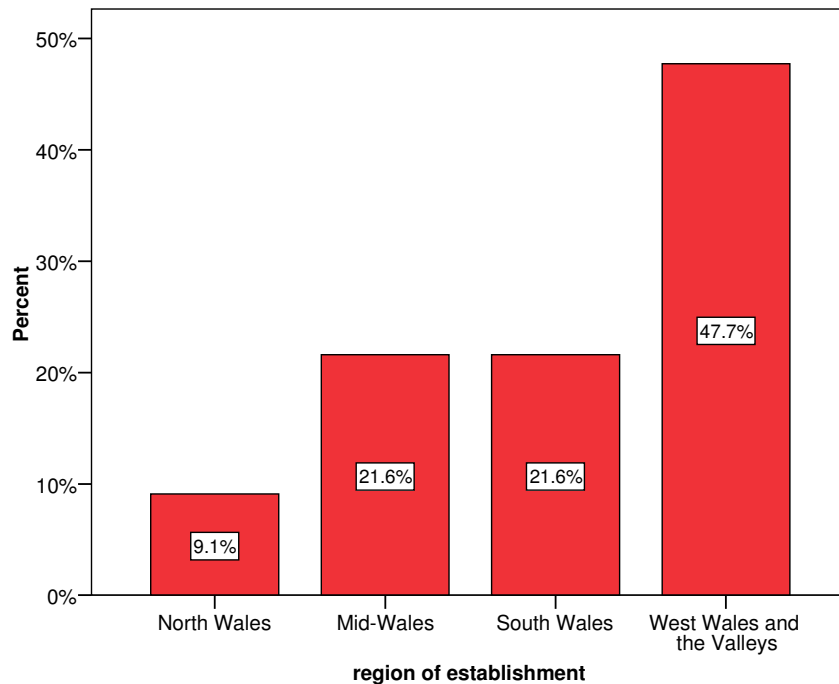
“Within 18 months, they made considerable progression, living permanently, with their own houses, cars etc”.

Some workers are so keen to come over that they often exaggerate their ability. Employers quoted numerous examples of migrant workers who claimed experience or skills which they did not possess in practice, such as being able to drive tractors when their experience had been lorry driving, or falsifying some documentation such as qualifications achieved. However, their personal attitudes and behaviours and keen nature were seen to outweigh these particular problems.

Location of migrant workers in Welsh agriculture and production horticulture

Whilst secondary research did not identify any references for where migrant workers were located in Wales, primary research indicated that almost half of the establishments employing migrant workers said their businesses were located in West Wales (47.7%). Over one fifth (21.6%) were situated in Mid-Wales, as was the case for

South Wales. Only a small percentage of participating agricultural and production horticultural businesses (9.1%) were located in North Wales.

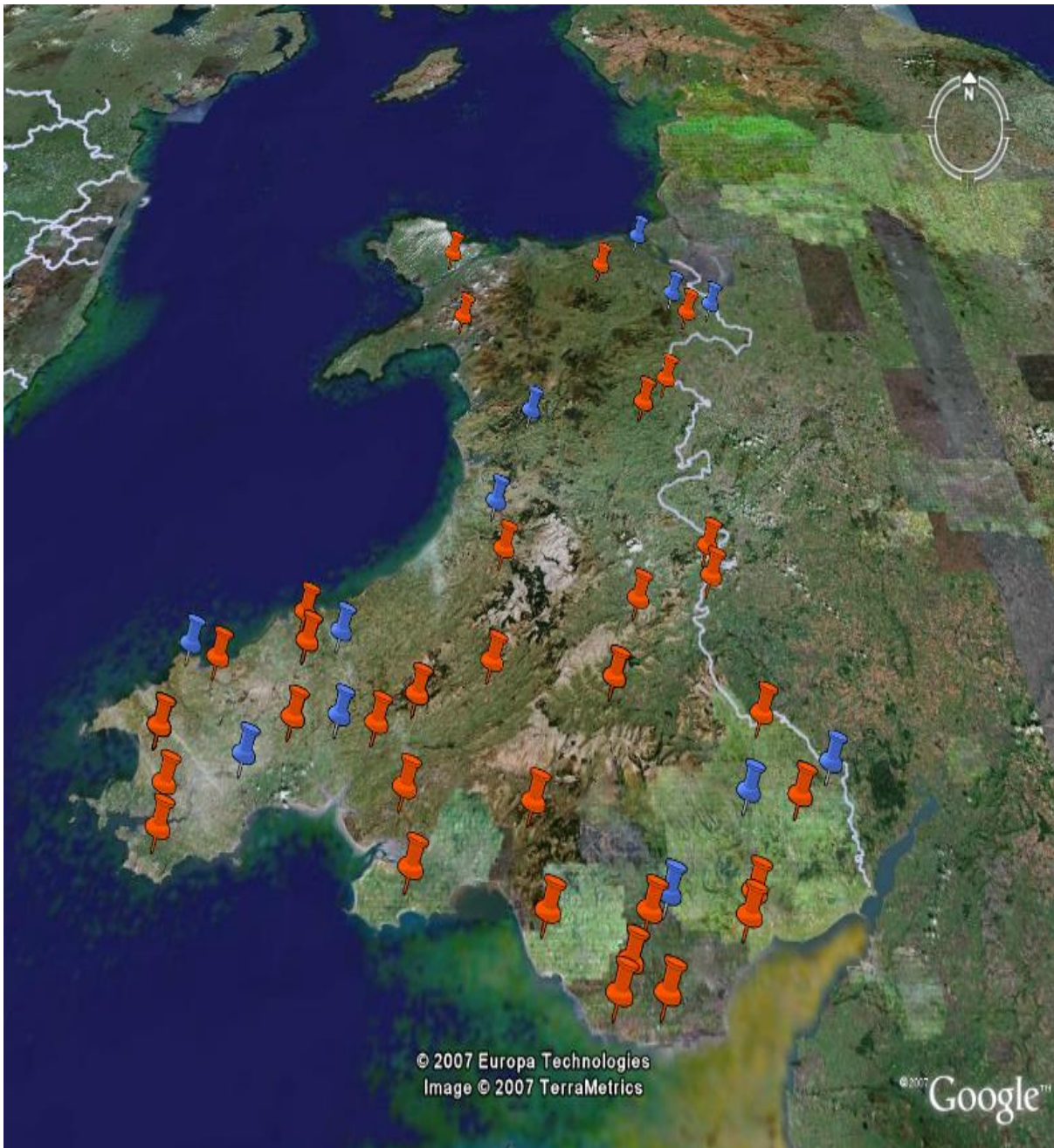


Base: 88 businesses

North, Mid, South, and West Wales and the Valleys were chosen to ensure the data was comparable with any previous LMI data collected using these predefined categories.

The following map gives a more detailed geographical representation of where the interviews took place by using the postal codes of the establishments. The map, however, does not show each and every establishment due to incorrect or no postal codes being recorded. Also, where an interview took place in close proximity to another, only one pin is depicted. Although almost half of the establishments were located in West Wales and the Valleys, the map shows that the majority of these were in fact located in West Wales.


Distribution of completed telephone interviews and face-to-face interviews with employers of migrant workers in Wales



Telephone interviews achieved

 Telephone

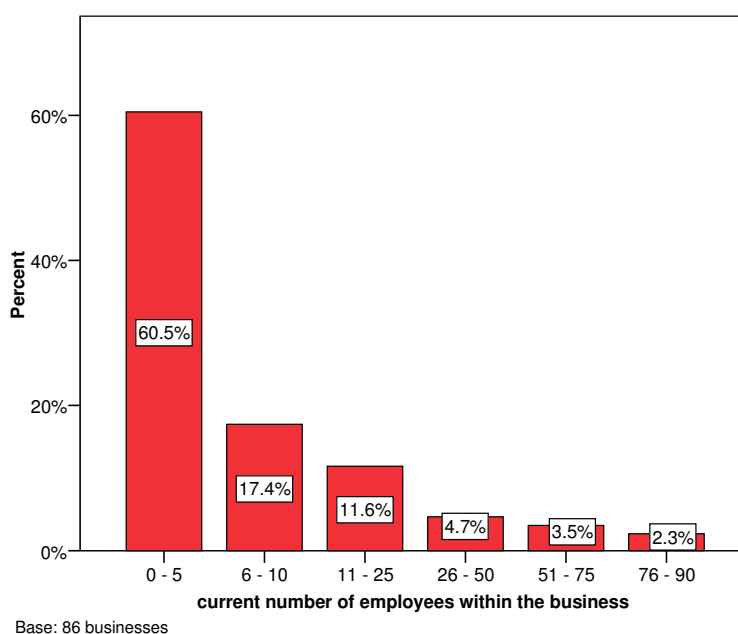
Face-to-face interviews achieved

 Face-to-face

Please note: Completed telephone interviews and face-to-face interviews in Wales number 29 and 60 respectively. The above map may not show each and every one due to incorrect or no postcodes being recorded. Where an interview took place in close proximity to another only one pin is depicted.

BUSINESS AND WORKFORCE CHARACTERISTICS

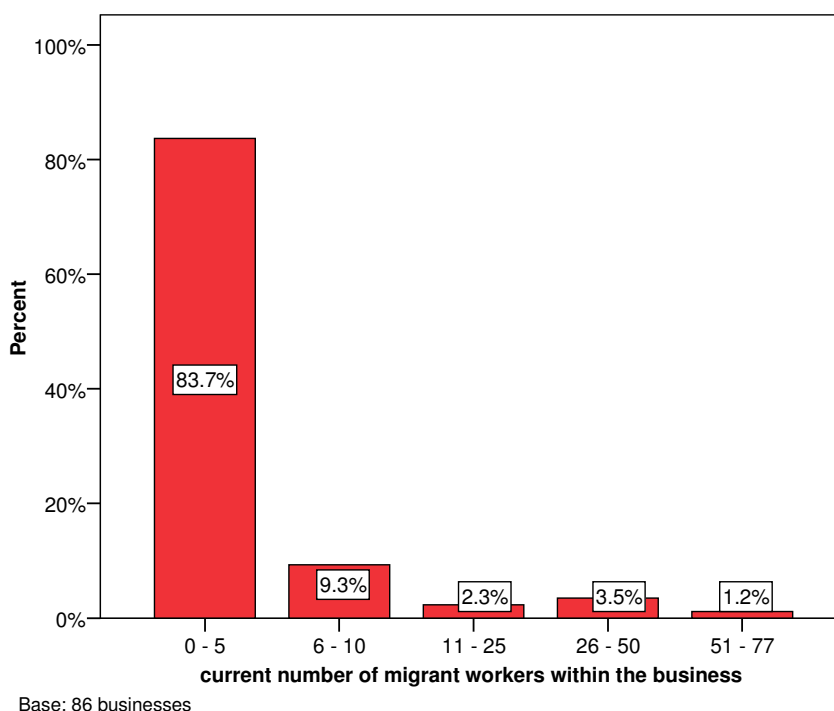
When asked about the **total number of employees in the businesses**, three fifths of the businesses (60.5%) were micro-businesses, employing between 0-5 employees, whereas almost one fifth (17.4%) employed 6-10 and just over a tenth employed 11-25 employees. A small percentage of employers employed 26-50 (4.7%), 51-75 (3.5%) and 76-90 (2.3%).



The literature review estimated that approximately 1-2% of all migrant workers, from all sectors, were residing in Wales. During May 2004-June 2006, 50,235 registrations were made (on the Workers Registration Scheme) by workers within the agriculture industry, of which 69% worked on a temporary basis and 27% were permanent. Of these, only 355 were in Wales.⁸

Whilst this research did not intend to determine the number of migrant workers within agriculture and production horticulture in Wales, it did indicate the **number of migrant workers employed by the businesses**. The majority of businesses (83.7%) employed between 0-5 migrant workers and almost one tenth (9.3%) employed 6-10. Some employers employed a large number of migrant workers; 2.3% employed 11-25, 3.5% employed 26-50, and a further 1.2% employed 55-77 migrant workers.

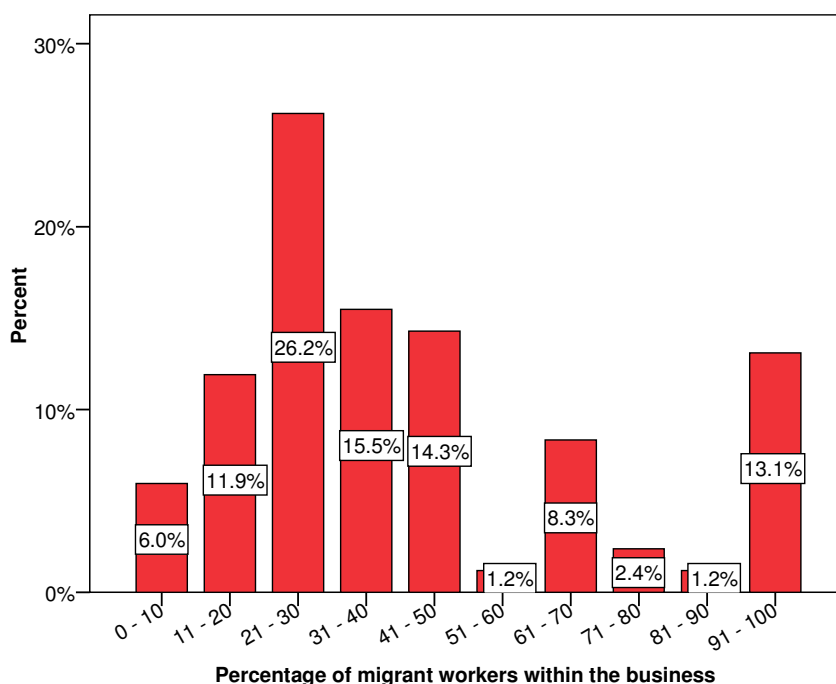
⁸ Farmers Guardian August 25, 2006



Secondary research did not identify specific data regarding the percentage of foreign nationals that make up the workforce within agriculture and production horticulture businesses. By asking employers to give the total number of employees and of those, how many were migrant workers, we were able to calculate the **percentage of the workforce that accounted for migrant workers**.

Migrant workers most commonly made up 21-30% of the workforce of those businesses that were interviewed. However, a significant proportion of those surveyed (40.5%) said migrant workers made up 41-100% of their workforce. Given the nature of businesses in the sector (over 90% of which employ fewer than 10 people⁹) this indicates, together with the proportion of migrant workers on permanent contracts, that the presence of migrant workers is key to a number of businesses being able to operate.

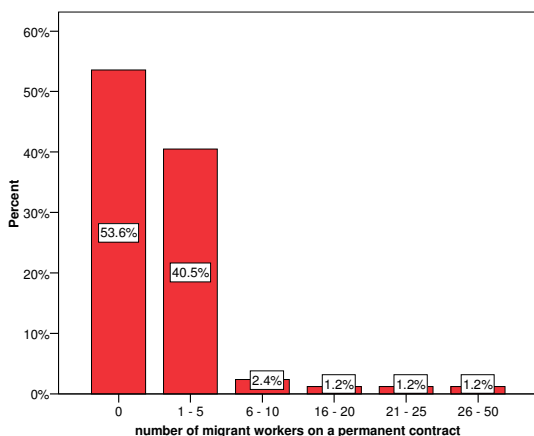
⁹ Lantra Sector Skills Agreement – Wales National Consultation Document, December 2005



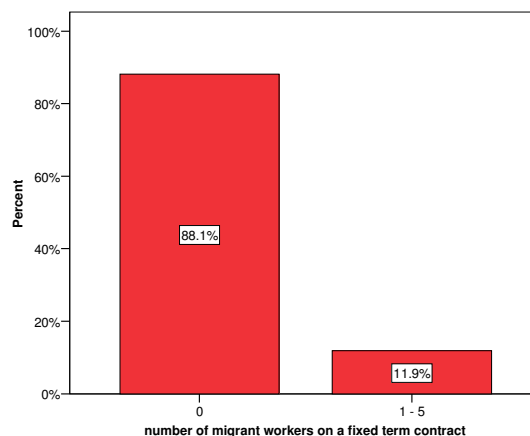
Base: 84 businesses

Permanent, fixed term, seasonal and casual migrant labour

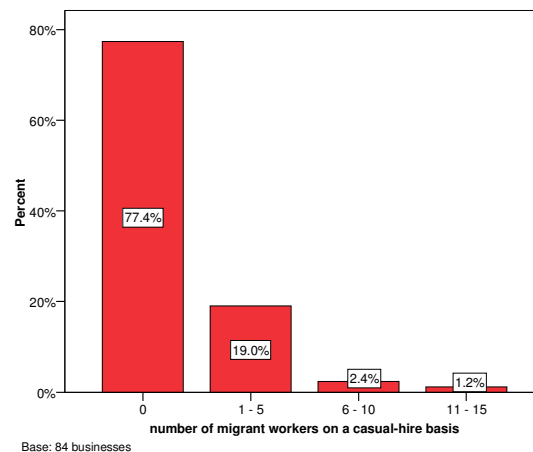
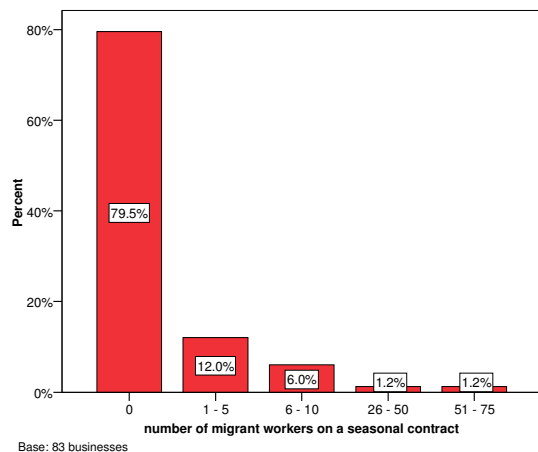
Importantly, almost half of the employers interviewed (46.5%) employed migrant workers on a permanent basis, demonstrating that overseas nationals are being used to fill vacancies and indicating that employers are satisfied that individuals possess the necessary skills. A further third of businesses employed migrant workers on a fixed term contract (11.9%) or on a seasonal basis (20.4%). The remainder (22.6%) employed them on a casual hire basis.



Base: 84 businesses



Base: 84 businesses



Seasonal and casual workers' length of stay

The literature review found that seasonal workers in agriculture stay typically for three to six months as allowed by SAWS, but employers encourage good workers to come back the following year. Many accession state nationals come back through the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS), which entitles students to stay for a longer period of time. Likewise, some Central and Eastern European workers wanted to stay in the UK for longer and some started to come in family groups.¹⁰ In respect of those overseas nationals employed on a casual basis, the average length of stay was one to two months, in line with expressed employer preferences for casual employment.

Almost half of the businesses that employed seasonal or casual migrant workers said they return in subsequent years.

Countries of origin of migrant workers

In this study, employers were asked where their migrant workers originated from. The questions allowed multiple responses as many businesses employed workers, or had employed workers, from more than one country.

The majority of businesses (92.0%) employed individuals from the newer East European EU states. Businesses were also found to be employing people from Asia (8%), and small percentages employed workers from the EU-15, (France and Portugal) (3.4%), Africa (1.1%) and America (1.1%).

Of those who said they employed workers from the **new EU states**, the majority of employers (81.8%) employed workers from Poland. This was followed by Latvia (10.4%), Bulgaria (6.5%) and Romania (5.2%). Other countries mentioned by employers included the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania and Slovakia.

¹⁰ Employer's Use of Migrant Labour, Home Office, April 2006

Businesses were also asked whether they preferred to recruit workers from a particular area or country. Over one quarter of employers said they did, 60.0% of which said they preferred to employ workers from Poland. Those interviewed regarded these workers as well educated, reliable and hard working. Given recommendations by other employers to employ Poles, they were also seen as having some experience and being dedicated and committed to their work, as well as being familiar with our culture and having some command of English.

A small percentage of employers also reported that they preferred to employ workers from the Czech Republic, the Eastern countries, Latvia and Russia (collectively 26.8%).

A proportion of businesses (13.3%) said they prefer to employ workers locally in the UK whenever possible. Such businesses regarded UK workers' knowledge and understanding of our laws and procedures as important. However, the same businesses raised the issues around the difficulties of recruiting UK nationals into relatively low paid positions, the 'poor' image of the sector and lack of progression as key factors in turning to the recruitment of overseas nationals.

Recruitment of migrant workers

Due to the reported significance of migrant workers to micro businesses, employers were asked how they set about recruiting migrant workers. Agency-based recruitment was given as by far the most common method (51.7%) whilst 17.2% recruited them directly from their country of origin. However, a significant proportion of businesses (31.0%) said they used other methods such as 'word of mouth', adverts in local or trade press or via other similar businesses.

Those businesses using agencies/labour providers cited the flexibility, ease of use/ease of finding migrant workers and lack of paperwork as the main reasons for adopting this method. Other employers used an agency initially, but now recruit directly by word of mouth or have workers returning in subsequent years. Employers mentioned the following agencies specifically: West Wales (Pembrokeshire) Machinery Ring (PMR), Eurocraft, Euro UK, Europeople, Gelli Aur, HOPS and SFC.

Agencies were seen to offer a service which ensured that all required paperwork (e.g. work permits, visas etc) was accurate and meeting legal requirements. Some degree of matching individuals with the vacancies was also seen as advantageous. Those businesses largely interested in seasonal labour used the SAWS scheme.

Job roles of migrant workers

Various literature has shown that most of the job roles of migrant workers within the agricultural sector are low-skilled. Job roles include fruit, vegetable and flower picking, sorting, packing, weeding and planting, farm labourers/farm hands, crop harvesters

and chicken catchers. However, some migrant workers were involved in forklift truck driving and quality control.^{11,12, 13, 14}

The most common job roles of the migrant workers were general labourers (employed by 47.2% of employers), livestock workers (including rearing, husbandry, stockmen, herdsmen, calving, lambing, poultry production, young stock manager, sheep/sheep shearing, beef and feeding) (employed by 41.6% of employers), drivers (tractor, forklift) (18.0%), dairy/milking (14.6%), grounds maintenance (5.6%) and harvest workers (4.5%). (For the full list of job roles, refer to **Annex D**).

The vast majority of employers surveyed made no differentiation in the type/level of work offered to workers in relation to their country of origin.

FUTURE TRENDS

From the secondary research, it is clear that migrant workers play an important role within agriculture and production horticulture because there is a lack of local labour willing to undertake the work. The review of existing research has shown that horticultural businesses have increased their use of migrant workers over the past decade, both through the use of labour providers and the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme. It appears that businesses expect demand for migrant workers to remain, with 44% of those interviewed indicating that they would need migrant workers to fill job roles in the future.

From the businesses surveyed, the jobs with the greatest demand for workers were generally seen to be permanent positions that require a lower level of skills. However, there is also a demand for a particular type of person. Some employers regarded demeanour, enthusiasm and team working as key factors in recruitment. It was the general view that migrants were more likely to have these skills than the UK nationals available to do similar work. Similarly, further research has shown that employers feel there is an 'attitude gap' rather than a skills gap, especially in younger UK workers, who were seen as unmotivated and unwilling to take low skilled jobs.

This study asked businesses whether their demand for migrant workers would increase, decrease or stay the same in three, five and 10 years time. Over two fifths of employers said their demand for migrant workers would remain the same in three years

¹¹ Home Office, Accession Monitoring Report, May 2004 – September 2005.

¹² Home Office, Employers' use of migrant labour, April 2006.

¹³ HSE, Migrant workers in England and Wales: An assessment of migrant worker health and safety risks

¹⁴ Farmers Guardian August 25, 2006

(43.1%) and five years (44.8%) whereas some employers said their demand would increase slightly in three years and five years (37.9% and 24.1% respectively). When employers were asked about their demand for migrant workers in 10 years, over one third said their demand would stay the same (36.2%) but a further 36.2% said they did not know. However, when coupled with the average length of stay of migrant workers, it is evident that there will still be a large amount of recruitment.

Table 5: Demand for migrant workers

	Demand for migrant workers						Total
	Increase significantly	Increase slightly	Remain the same	Decrease slightly	Decrease significantly	Don't know	
3 years	.0%	37.9%	43.1%	6.9%	1.7%	10.3%	100.0%
5 years	.0%	24.1%	44.8%	6.9%	5.2%	19.0%	100.0%
10 years	.0%	15.5%	36.2%	6.9%	5.2%	36.2%	100.0%

Table six below shows the demand that employers will have for migrant workers to fill common job roles. Over two fifths of employers (45.0%) said their demand for **general labourers** would increase slightly in three years whilst 35.0% said it would remain the same. In five years and ten years, there is only a small percentage difference between employers saying that their demand will increase slightly and those that said their demand would stay the same. Additionally, one tenth of employers said their demand for general labourers would decrease significantly in five years and ten years time.

The demand for **livestock workers** will largely remain the same over the next three, five and ten years (reported by 46.7%, 53.3% and 46.7% of employers respectively), whereas one third of employers said their demand would increase slightly in three years, and one fifth said it would increase slightly in five years and ten years' time. Just over one eighth of employers (13.3%) said their demand for livestock workers would decrease slightly in three, five and ten years' time.

The demand for **milking** staff will also remain the same for many employers over the next three, five and ten years (reported by 66.7%, 55.6% and 44.4% of employers respectively), whereas just over one fifth (22.2%) said their demand would increase slightly in three years, and just over one tenth (11.1%) said it would increase slightly in five years and ten years' time. A further 11.1% of employers said their demand for milking staff would decrease significantly in five and ten years time.

Table 6: Demand for migrant workers, per job role in three, five and ten years

		Demand for migrant workers, per job role in three, five and ten years						Total
		Increase significantly	Increase slightly	Remain the same	Decrease slightly	Decrease significantly	Don't know	
General labourer	3 years	.0%	45.0%	35.0%	5.0%	5.0%	10.0%	100.0%
General labourer	5 years	.0%	30.0%	35.0%	5.0%	10.0%	20.0%	100.0%
General labourer	10 years	.0%	25.0%	30.0%	5.0%	10.0%	30.0%	100.0%
Livestock work	3 years	.0%	33.3%	46.7%	13.3%	.0%	6.7%	100.0%
Livestock work	5 years	.0%	20.0%	53.3%	13.3%	.0%	13.3%	100.0%
Livestock work	10 years	.0%	20.0%	46.7%	13.3%	.0%	20.0%	100.0%
Milking	3 years	.0%	22.2%	66.7%	.0%	.0%	11.1%	100.0%
Milking	5 years	.0%	11.1%	55.6%	.0%	11.1%	22.2%	100.0%
Milking	10 years	.0%	11.1%	44.4%	.0%	11.1%	33.3%	100.0%

Of those employers that said they would need migrant workers to fill other job roles in the future, one third said they would need drivers (tractor, forklift), one third said they would need general labourers, and over one fifth (22.2%) said they would need to employ migrant workers for harvesting. Livestock management, milking and office assistant were also listed as future job roles that they wanted migrant workers to fill. In the face-to-face interviews, 41.2% of employers who said they would need migrant workers to fill job roles in the future spoke of their need for drivers/tractor work. Dairy/milking roles, pickers (of fruit, flowers or vegetables) and supervisors were each needed by 11.8% of employers.

In face-to-face interviews the study aimed to provide more detail in terms of how many migrant workers businesses would need in three, five and ten years' time for specific job roles. This was designed to demonstrate whether there were any patterns in the recruitment of migrant workers to specific job roles and to highlight any specific skills shortages. Given concerns expressed by businesses regarding the sustainability of their operations, only half of the employers responded to this question with many of them being unsure of the numbers of migrant workers they would need in the future. Overall, employers generally anticipated either the same demand or a slightly increased demand for migrant workers in the future.

When analysed by job role and collated, a 38% increase in demand for workers between the three and ten year period was seen, as illustrated in the table below. For a detailed breakdown of the numbers of workers needed per job roles, refer to **Annex F**.

Table 7: Sum of migrant workers needed

	Sum of migrant workers needed
3 years	223.00
5 years	253.00
10 years	308.00

Base 31 businesses

Rather than specifying the numbers of migrant workers needed per job role in the future, many employers made additional comments about employment demand in general. Many felt that the number of migrant workers needed would be dependent upon how their businesses developed (or not) and whether local labour conditions would improve. The most common reasons why employers anticipated an increased demand for migrant workers in the future is due to an unwilling UK workforce and business expansion.

The most common reasons for an 'unwilling' local labour market were given as long working hours combined with physically demanding or 'dirty' work. When combined with an ageing population/workforce and coupled with, in the eyes of business, little or no 'careers' promotion in schools and with young people, overseas nationals are seen as the key source of labour. The perceived impression of wages and conditions in these industries, which is not necessarily true, highlights careers work within Wales as essential if home grown employment is to be a viable option. This, coupled with a range of relevant entry and progression routes understood and recognised by employers and industry in general, was seen as vital.

Those businesses citing business development and expansion as the rationale for increasing staff numbers concentrated on the aforementioned work ethic and reliability of migrant workers (often based on previous experience with seasonal workers) as the factor which led them to recruit permanent labour from overseas.

BUSINESS AND EMPLOYER NEEDS

Information, advice and support

Primary research with employers sought to ascertain the type of support accessed by businesses or identified as required by businesses when employing migrant workers. It transpired that a large proportion (69%) had sought some information, advice or support on employing migrant workers.

A wide range of information had been accessed, mainly general information about

employing migrant workers (20.0% of businesses), legislation on migrant workers (8.6%) and national insurance (5.7%). Interestingly, just over a quarter of businesses reported receiving unsolicited information, advice or support about employing migrant workers, although the sources of such information were not clear.

Almost one third of employers (32.4%) sought the information through agencies whilst nearly one quarter (24.3%) sought the information through the Home Office. Over one tenth (10.8%) sought the information on the internet and a further 10.8% found information through employer groups such as the Pembrokeshire Machinery Ring. 8.1% of employers also used the Job Centre, the Tax Office and other farmers as sources of information. Virtually all respondents reported that the information, advice or support was useful. However, almost three quarters of employers said they needed more information, advice or support on employing migrant workers.

Some of the most often cited sources of information, together with the type of information or guidance provided are expanded below.

Current UK initiatives and support for employers and migrant workers

There are currently a number of initiatives, services and websites, all intended to advise and support employers and their migrant workers. Some of these are described below.

The **Health and Safety Executive (HSE)** (www.hse.gov.uk) is currently producing a health and safety guide for migrant workers: *Working in the UK from overseas? Your health and safety at work in agriculture and food processing*. This will be available in six different languages (Polish, Romanian, Bulgarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Ukrainian as well as English) and will contain information about what the employer must do regarding situations such as providing information and training, equipment and clothing and welfare. It also provides information regarding what the worker must do and what to do if they are concerned about their health and safety.

A website, www.employingmigrantworkers.org.uk which is supported by the Home Office, the Recruitment and Employment Federation (REC), The Work Foundation and the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) has been set up to support employers when employing migrant workers. The website gives a step-by-step guide that employers can use to check whether their migrant workers are legal, provides information to help employers comply with the law and has a variety of other resources. Resources include links to and information on employment rights, current legislation, work permits and visas (including application forms), support for migrant workers, discrimination issues, health and safety regulations and the welfare of employees, recruitment and retention, government websites, publications, case studies and a glossary.

In addition to a 'know your rights' helpline (see www.tuc.org.uk for further details), the **Trade Union Congress (TUC)** have produced a leaflet (available in 11 different languages) for people coming to work in the UK giving them information about their legal rights to work in this country. A new safety leaflet, 'Your health, your safety: A guide for workers' has also been published by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the TUC. This leaflet provides information about safety rights at work and is translated into 19 different languages. Both leaflets can be downloaded at www.tuc.org.uk/international (Migration section).¹⁵

Multicultural UK (www.multiculturaluk.com) is a company that produces guide books for international workers and students visiting the UK. The most recent guide is 'UK Guide for International Workers, 2007', published January 2007, and this provides information on topics such as health, information rights and banking. Multicultural UK also produces A-Z guides to Wales.

In addition to producing guides, they also provide advice for staff working with international students and workers, and provide training/consultancy on the needs and support of international workers and students. Regular courses include *Cross Cultural Communication* – for businesses moving in the international world, and a training weekend for migrant workers themselves: 'Learn to Lead in a Multicultural Setting'.

The **Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)** has generated a range of initiatives to support migrant workers.¹⁶ In relation to language and communication issues the CAB has focused on:

- Recruiting and training specialist advisers and volunteers, some from within the migrant community. For example, as many Portuguese workers are located in the Carmarthen area, Carmarthen CAB has recruited a Portuguese worker to act as a translator and they also intend to employ a Portuguese advisor
- Publishing translated leaflets on rights and entitlements
- Language Line - used to aid translation, but this service is only available in few of the rural bureaux
- Promoting websites with free translation
- Holding special advice sessions, and
- Forging links with cultural associations of migrant workers.

In addition to the initiatives described above, there are also a number of **useful websites** provided in **Annex A**.

Formal requirements

There are also a number of formal requirements for migrant workers. However, in practice, a number of points raised by employers are worth highlighting:

¹⁵ <http://www.tuc.org.uk/international>

¹⁶ Supporting Migrant Workers in Rural Areas: A guide to Citizens Advice Bureaux Initiatives

National Insurance number

As long as the worker has a right to work in this country he/she can apply for a National Insurance number which is obtained through Job Centre Plus. Due to rationalisation within Job Centre Plus there are only certain hub offices which can administer the allocation of a National Insurance number, which has to be done via a personal interview with the applicant. It is therefore sometimes necessary for applicants to travel up to one and half hours to their nearest office as this service is no longer available through local offices. Given the rural location of many of the businesses that are employing overseas workers, this often dictates a long journey and a loss of income for the individual and a loss in productivity for the employer.

Whilst there is a telephone contact centre (0845 6000 643) to find out the nearest available Job Centre with this service by postcode, businesses have indicated that they incur costs in this process not associated with employing UK labour, such as transport for workers to the job centre and/or the cost of cover or loss whilst the employee is attending the office. For the migrant workers themselves there are also added costs for travel or loss of income whilst away from work.

Whilst Job Centre Plus does operate a service whereby businesses which have a large number of migrant workers can arrange for someone to come out to the business, in reality this is impractical given the average number of migrant workers employed and the fact that workers are unlikely all to be ready on the same day to register.

Worker Registration Scheme

This scheme has been set-up by the Government to monitor the participation in the UK labour market of workers from eight of the ten countries that joined the EEA on 1 May 2004. There is a one-off charge of £70 (which may be rising to £90) for each individual to join the scheme and it is required that each worker should register within one month of employment commencing. In order to register, the migrant worker must send away their passport which may take several weeks (sometimes months) to come back. Many workers are very reluctant/unwilling to do this in case they have to leave the country, with many having left families and small children at home.

There is a fine of up to £5,000 for the employer if this does not take place, despite the onus being on the employee to register. This means a further check must be made by businesses employing such overseas workers. If an individual then moves jobs, which is commonplace with seasonal agricultural workers in particular, the individual is required to inform the Home Office. However, there is no additional charge and it is possible to fill out a form online. As stated, due to the frequent occurrence of seasonal workers moving around the country from one place of work to another and then back to the first place in order to ensure regular work, a number of examples of businesses appearing to liaise with each other and collaborate on this matter have been identified.

With the type and nature of agricultural and production horticulture work, seasonal migrant employees often move around the country to where the work is at the time and then back when needed again. A registration system which is so difficult and lengthy can cause problems and stress to all concerned, and it may mean that the authorities are not collecting all the payments due or getting an accurate representation of the numbers of workers that are in the country. The employers are doing everything they can to make the systems work, but sometimes under very trying circumstances.

Further support requirements

There were three main areas about which employers wanted further information. These were:

- assistance with overcoming language barriers
- better information about the individual workers prior to appointment
- employment law / legal issues.

Other areas for further support focused on the process for employing migrant workers and more information about sector-specific qualifications possessed by overseas nationals and their UK equivalents.

Assistance with overcoming language and cultural barriers

Employers said that language was their main concern and sometimes workers were totally capable of doing the work but they could not do it because of the language barrier. For example, they found it difficult to follow written or verbal instructions. Many employers said they would like further assistance for their migrant workers, for example, an introduction to Great Britain, a conversational phrase book, CDs and course materials, all in a variety of languages. Some employers also mentioned how useful it would be if training providers delivered training in different languages, as workers found it difficult to understand the training that was delivered in English, especially health and safety training.

The need for English language training and websites offering translations were also mentioned by several employers as some workers found it difficult to understand basic farming and growing terminology. A minority of respondents said it would be useful for farmers to have Polish or Russian lessons so that they can converse with the workers. Equally a small proportion of respondents felt that certain 'key' training courses such as manual handling and forklifts should be made available in other languages.

Primary research indicated that whilst the majority of businesses did not provide language training for migrant workers, those that did signposted workers to adult (evening) education classes. Such classes were viewed to be inappropriate as they concentrated on taking learners towards GCSEs and A levels. However some employers identified the adult provision of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other

Languages) classes as having been useful and available free of charge to migrant workers.

In terms of support for the migrant workers themselves, a helpline was seen to be a popular idea. This could be a phone line for migrant workers to ring to speak to someone in their own language and discuss issues such as taxation, the banking system in the UK, terminology of farming, and to verify the advice the employer is giving is correct.

A number of employers mentioned how providing email access to migrant workers helped with communications with family back home. This type of facility appeared to provide better security and stability for the individual and employer. In fact, many of the reasons or factors cited as potentially enabling their migrant workforce to become more effective were seen to be of a socio-cultural aspect. It was illuminating to see the scope of support being made available or the nature of need that employers identified in this respect. Such support included the employer helping to set up bank accounts for their employees, help with completing forms and documentation and support with transport costs or driving licences.

Better information on individuals

A key area where employers wanted further information was how to find and assess suitable workers and their match to the available positions. For example, employers said it would be useful to have a list of workers available (a database of migrant workers) with details such as whether individuals are skilled or unskilled, if they are university qualified in the field of farming or what experience they have, their standard of English (reading, writing and speaking) and level of numeracy, and references from the worker's past employer, translated into English.

- ***“An assessment of the migrant workers qualifications/experience before you employ them is essential.”***

Employers would also like to know the country of origin of the worker, whether they are married or single and if they have any family commitments, how long they want to stay, their CV and a photo to indicate their weight and height to assess suitability for the work involved.

Qualification and their equivalents

Some employers wanted further information on foreign qualifications:

- ***“All sorts of qualifications. Clarity of qualifications.”***
- ***“Qualifications and their equivalents.”***
- ***“List of qualifications would be useful.”***
- ***“Skills passport would be useful as there would be references that you could contact to find out what experience they have.”***

- ***“Skills passport would be useful and beneficial to the workers.”***
- *“Passport will be good for all the skills obtained in the UK”*

In relation to the above, businesses were asked whether there were any additional requirements they could foresee, in relation to employing migrant workers and the factors outlined in the above section. When socio-economic factors were removed, by far the most common requirement was for a consistent approach in how the skills, qualifications and experience of individuals could be captured and recognised. The idea of a ‘skills passport’ was suggested by a number of businesses, especially in relation to recording the skills and qualifications obtained whilst in the UK. Such a document which carried referees who could be contacted was also seen as advantageous.

Employment law and legal issues

Employers said they would like to have a regular update of legal requirements when employing migrant workers and that they would like this to be a simple account of the ‘do’s and don’ts’. Employers said they needed information and advice specifically on how to check the registration of gangmasters/labour providers, how to check that migrant workers are legal, taxation/NI, registering workers (the Worker Registration Scheme), what to do with work permits, and visa requirements. One employer also made the following comment relating to driving licenses:

- ***“Had a problem with driving licence. After 12 months of being in the UK, driving licence was not valid - can’t get insurance. Farmers need to be advised that driving licences are only valid for 12 months.”***

How to employ migrant workers

Some employers wanted further information on how to employ migrant workers, in terms of what their responsibilities are, what process they need to follow, what paperwork they need to do, whether it was different for different countries and how they employ migrant workers without having to use an agency.

A minority of employers also wanted further information on accommodation, transport and setting up bank accounts.

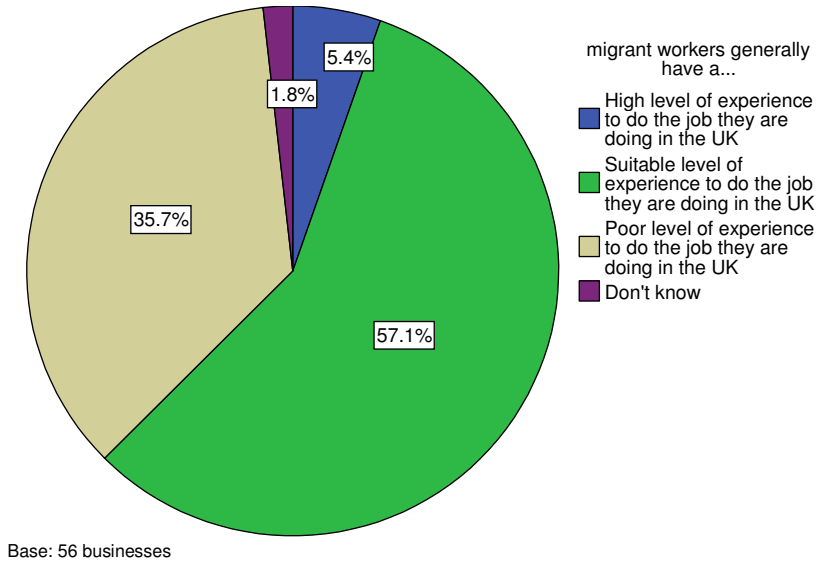
- *“Accommodation. Transport. These are not costs we would generally incur with a British worker so advice in this area would be useful.”*

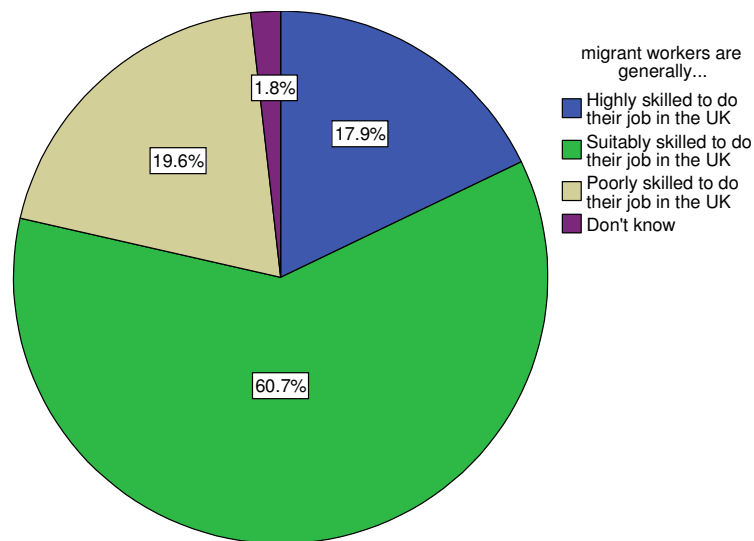
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

The research aimed to identify what skills development the migrant workforce had received whilst in employment and looked at what training and development was needed for individuals, based on the business requirement from the employer's perspective. It also aimed to highlight any issues which may arise around assessment of individuals' skills and experience, together with access to and the availability of relevant training opportunities for such workers.

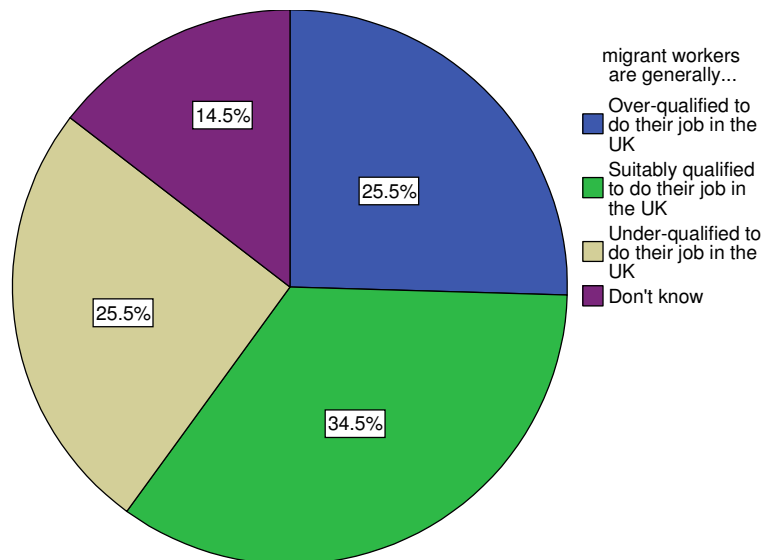
The study also enabled us to gain insight into the extent to which businesses are able to assess the skills and experience of individual workers, whose qualifications and experience from their country of origin are not always recognised or understood by Welsh employers.

Interestingly, almost half of employers surveyed (48.3%) said their migrant workforce had the necessary skills for the positions occupied upon arrival. This finding was also supported by the face to face interviews where the majority of employers said their migrant workers (past and present) were highly or suitably experienced, skilled and qualified to do their job in Wales. Given that the majority of businesses surveyed were employing migrant workers in low skilled positions, such as general labourers and livestock workers, this is perhaps to be expected. A caveat to this statement is that here employers cited and valued what could be termed a better work ethic in overseas nationals as opposed to that present in the local population.





Base: 56 businesses



Base: 55 businesses

The 51.7% of employers who said that most, few or none of their workers had the necessary skills upon arrival were asked a series of questions to determine what skills were lacking. When asked about technical and sector specific skills, the vast majority of businesses questioned were generally content that their migrant workers had the appropriate skills. However, when afforded the opportunity to provide additional information on skills that such employees lacked, the information given contradicted this point.

Nearly all businesses cited lack of knowledge and experience of specific tasks and jobs such as milking and fencing, particularly in relation to the scale of the operation on Welsh farms and enterprises, as opposed to their experience in their country of origin.

Most felt that this was due to working on very small family farms in their native country where the scale and working practices, for example the tagging of calves, are quite different, as is the scale of legislative requirements.

One employer gave the following example.

“The employee has a degree in Agriculture from their own country. This appeared to be completely theory based and the worker is therefore not experienced practically. Their practical skills are low due to work experience on small family farms. You cannot judge what level of experience a migrant worker will have until they have worked for you for several weeks. The CV and experience stated before arriving is not checkable due to language barriers. The English language skills of my migrant workers are checked with a hand written letter and 3 telephone conversations before arriving. With last employers, references would need to be trusted and translated.”

However the issue around the assessment of the skills, capability and experience of migrant workers seems to be at the crux of recruiting and retaining overseas nationals. The evidence suggests that whilst employers responded to questions relating to whether their migrant workforce lacked technical, supervisory, business and management skills or health and safety training in a positive manner, which seemed to indicate no issues, the face-to-face interviews were able to draw out the emerging patterns outlined above.

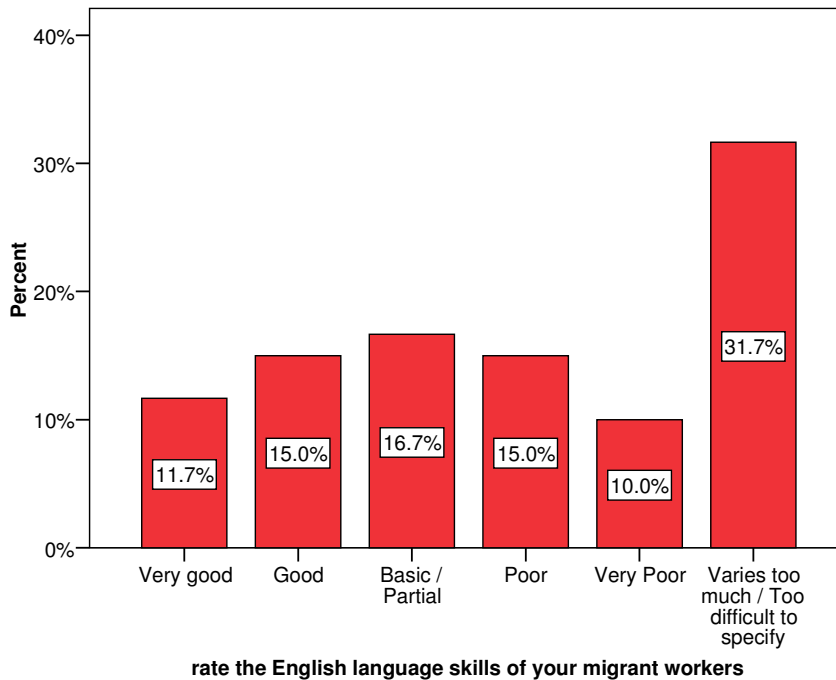
This is to say that when actually working in a business, the lack of experience with specific equipment or of UK farming and horticultural practices, training needs did have to be identified and solutions sought. With reference to the importance of the attitude, adaptability and ability of migrant workers previously expressed, where such training needs were identified (after 2-3 weeks in employment), individuals were seen to pick things up very quickly. It transpired therefore that much of the actual training given to migrant workers is ‘informal’ and non-assessed and provided in house by the employer/business itself.

Only one quarter of employers described the English language skills of their migrant workers as ‘good’ or ‘very good’, whilst almost one third of employers felt that the language skills varied so much that it was too difficult to specify. It appeared from individual interviews that employers often used the ‘better’ language skills of one employee to facilitate translation of instructions to other speakers of the same language. This is borne out below:

“When employers gave training as part of an individual worker’s induction, or training required to meet legislative purposes, they often relied on fellow workers

to translate information”.¹⁷

This was also found to be the case for many of the employers in Wales; almost three fifths (56%) used some of their migrant workers to convey instructions to other workers within the business in their native language.



Base: 60 businesses

On the subject of communication, and English language competence more specifically, one quarter of businesses had provided some form of language training for their staff whilst the majority of those interviewed identified communication skills as the largest skills gap in their migrant workforce. There is certainly room for development in this area, but what is required is very different to what is on offer at the moment, with conversational English and work-related vocabulary being perceived as the greatest need. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this would be best accessed in small groups in a social setting, perhaps related to IT training which was seen as important for those in permanent and supervisory positions.

A common held employer view is described below:

“Most have poor or basic English language skills when they arrive. They pick it up quick, but none of them are very good. There are always enough people to translate so we don’t provide English language training. Some Polish people in Head Office so we translate all induction materials into Polish - task sheets etc.. Each member of staff is being continually trained on the job. There is a training and development plan for each person.”

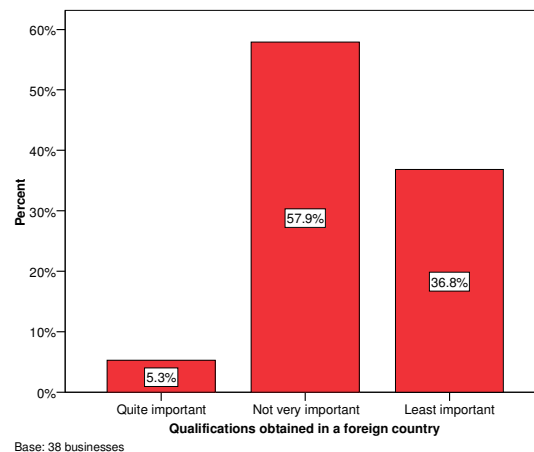
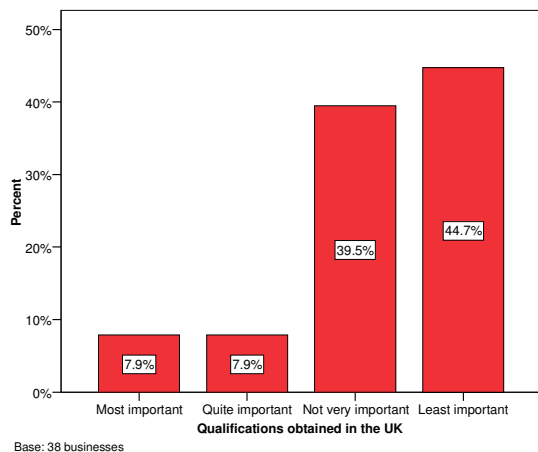
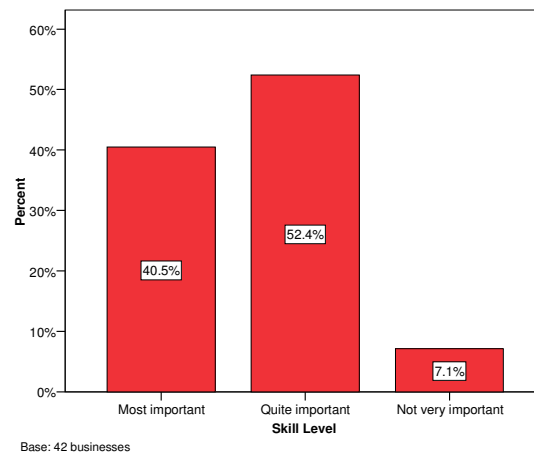
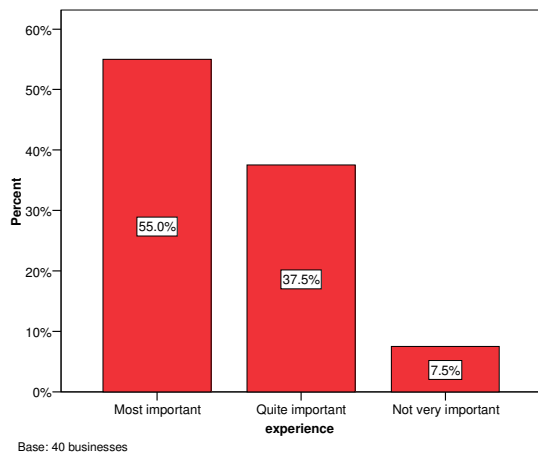
¹⁷ Home Office, Employers’ use of migrant labour, April 2006.

Skills assessment of migrant workers

Whilst a number of businesses relied on overseas recruitment agencies to vet the skills and experience of potential employees, over four fifths of employers (81.6%) assessed the present skill level of their migrant workers and over three fifths (65.8%) assessed their past experience before employment or in the first two weeks of employment. Almost half (47.4%) of the employers said they had a mechanism in place to assess the training needs of migrant workers.

In terms of qualifications, 36.8% looked at the workers qualifications obtained in their home country/another foreign country whilst 10.5% looked for qualifications obtained in the UK. No consistent method or resource was seen to be used and judgments appeared to be made on an individual by individual and employer by employer basis.

In general, employers rated experience as '*most important*' when assessing the training needs of their migrant workers. This was closely followed by skills levels, which was rated '*quite important*' and followed by *qualifications obtained in a foreign country* and *qualifications obtained in the UK*, which were rated as '*not very important*' and '*least important*' respectively.



When asked how such skills assessment takes place, many businesses cited face-to-face interviews and on-the-job monitoring in the first few days/weeks as the most common forms. Work shadowing was also a popular method of assessing competence and training requirements of individuals. Employer groups also mentioned how they had begun to develop an understanding of overseas qualification equivalents, given the numbers they had received or experienced from specific countries.

Typical of the views expressed, a respondent commented:

“Experience is the most important factor by a long way. Skills levels are assessed over the first couple of weeks. We do consider qualifications in terms of who has a fork lift licence. Someone who picks something up quickly, we see what else they are good at.”

Employers’ perspective on training migrant workers

This field research, identified that the majority of migrant workers in agriculture and production horticulture in Wales are being employed on permanent contracts. However, the secondary research pointed to the fact that few employers want to invest in training simply because migrant workers are mostly employed as temporary staff. The secondary research did seem to be confirmed in respect of those businesses surveyed, who did provide some form of training to those workers who stayed or returned to them for a longer period of time.. This demonstrated that employers are more willing to invest in training for migrant workers to help them to move on to higher skilled or supervisory positions within the business.

The research showed that harvesting, stock management and nursery work were the areas where businesses prioritised training for migrant workers. Perhaps somewhat disappointingly less than one quarter (21.7%) of respondents was seen to give training to all workers, in whatever roles they were undertaking. Whilst informal training and job shadowing were by far the most frequent form of training provided for migrant workers, the table below lists more formal training and assessment undertaken.

Table 7: Training/qualifications undertaken

Job Title	Frequency
Basic JCB/telescopic handler	3
Biological control/pesticides application (PA1, PA6, PA12)	2
Driving lessons for a car	1
English language/English lessons	3
Foot trimming	1
Fork lift truck	2
General tasks/duties on the farm	2
How to use an electrical trolley safely	1
In-house training provided by the farmer/on-the-job/training undertaken by farm manager	3
Manual handling	1
Multiples pack / house standards	1

Pest control	1
Tractor driving	2
Total	23

All respondents arranged the training for their migrant workers, either on the job or via third parties such as the Pembrokeshire Machinery Ring. Just over one third of the training (35.7%) was fully funded and 50.0% was partially funded by employers themselves. 14.3% of the training was not funded by the employer. Over three quarters of the training was delivered on-site (76.9%). However, many employers did not use a training provider; instead, the training was delivered by people within the business such as the farm managers or owners of the business.

When asked how businesses set about to address identified skills gaps, almost three quarters of employers (73.3%) said they did so by providing help, assistance, advice or guidance. Just over half of employers (53.3%) said they provide training whilst 13.3% of employers implement mentoring.

In drilling down into what might make their migrant workforce more effective or lead businesses to retain staff for longer, only one third thought that a better knowledge of living and working in Britain would help. However, in contradiction to this, many employers did state in other sections of the survey that a better command of English and familiarity with our employment and taxation system, legal, housing and social services would improve the lifestyle of migrant workers employed in Wales and increase their 'social inclusion' into the communities into which they had settled.

CONCLUSIONS

The study has provided an insight into why and how businesses recruit migrant labour and the issues and considerations employers face when employing migrant workers. It has also given an indication of the difficulties faced by overseas labour working in Wales.

In respect of trends in employment, it is clear that the use of migrant workers is set to continue and will increase slightly given the factors discussed. The use of seasonal migrant workers will, in particular, continue, as will the trend for some workers to gain permanent contracts. The report detects that the main employment area is in low skilled agricultural/horticultural roles but with an increasing proportion of workers gaining supervisory and management positions on a permanent basis.

Whilst many employers have found very useful information, advice and support, a key issue has been the range of sources and time/resource spent searching for such information. In their responses to the surveys and interviews, businesses seemed to

favour the idea of a central signposting function, perhaps a web-based portal with links to all the relevant information. This would not only benefit agricultural and production horticultural businesses but could be developed in a way that would make it appropriate for all sectors.

Employers also stated that the system for registering workers for the Workers Registration Scheme could be refined, given the period of time that a migrant worker was required to surrender their passport and the penalty for employers. However, of more concern in Wales was the accessibility to Job Centres able to issue National Insurance numbers. This seemed to present real difficulties to migrant workers and their employers given that they are often based in rural areas and the offices are in large conurbations.

In respect of the training and development of migrant workers, the key issues seemed to be assessing and validating the actual skills and experience of those seeking employment, and providing legislative and other health and safety training to non native speakers of English. With many workers originating from the A8 European Accession states, the availability of information or courses delivered in East European languages is seen as essential by the migrants. Such material would provide a back up to those who have some command of English, but more importantly it would provide essential information to those whose command of the language is basic or non existent.

With regard to the recognition of skills and experience, businesses supported the idea of some form of system which could equate the skills and experience of the migrant worker to that required for job roles within Wales. Due to the demand by UK employers for the recognition of learning and skills, Lantra has developed the Online Competence Framework (OCF). This tool has already been adapted and used by a migrant worker recruitment agency as part of a successful pilot. The OCF will form the basis of the UK's version of the European Union 'Agripass'. This is a system of Europe-wide job profiles (from December 2007) against which the skills and experience of individuals are mapped and thereby provides an indication as to how that individual links to national qualifications and occupational requirements. The OCF could therefore provide Welsh businesses with a skills assessment and training needs tool, linked into a Europe wide system for agricultural and horticultural workers.

In conclusion and in terms of recommendations, the report would suggest that:

- A central signposting web portal should be developed and promoted.
- Health and safety information and training should be provided in a range of languages
- The use of Lantra's Online Competence Framework should be explored in relation to assessing the skills and experience of migrant workers and to record the training and development received against UK/Welsh job profiles.