



Over Half a Million Newly Arrived Foreign Migrants Registered with GPs Last Year

1 Official statistics show that 605,000 people, arriving from overseas registered with GPs in 2007/8. Analysis by Migrationwatch indicates that this was nearly 100,000 more than the inflow recorded in the International Migration Statistics for England and Wales for the same period. This suggests that short-term migrants (or illegal migrants) have also registered. Only 69,000 of the 605,000 were British people returning from a spell overseas.

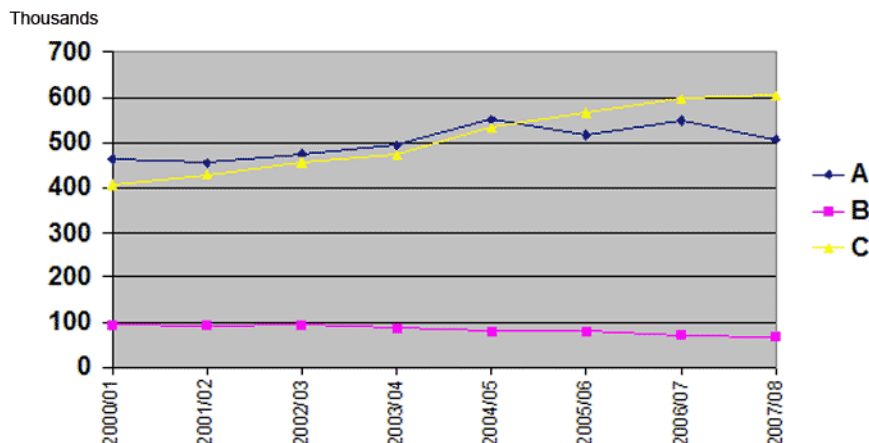
2 The number of new arrivals from overseas registering with GPs has increased by 50% in the past seven years but it is only in the last three years that registrations have exceeded immigration (see graph below). Of course migrants also leave the UK -333,000 did so in 2007/8 - but this huge "churn" together with the extra population adds significantly to the pressures on the National Health Service (NHS).

3 These data are not precise as they are not compiled for statistical purposes. If anything, they understate the pressure of immigration on the NHS as those migrants who move practices within a year would not show up as arrivals from overseas. Furthermore, young men who make up a large proportion of migrants are known to be less likely to register with a GP than other groups.

4 There are no checks on the entitlement of those who seek to register with a GP, indeed doctors have discretion to register whoever they choose.

5 The Department of Health went out to consultation in May 2004 with proposals to exclude overseas visitors from eligibility to free NHS primary and medical services. On 20 July 2009, five years later and on the last day of parliament, the government issued proposals which included "to maintain GP discretion to determine registration to access free NHS primary care medical services along with the established principal that GPs may charge non-residents as private patients". This amounts to an open door to primary care which can also lead to access to secondary care.

REGISTRATION WITH GPs BY PEOPLE PREVIOUSLY LIVING OVERSEAS



- A - International Migrant inflow to England & Wales (thousands) [1]
- B - Of which British returning to UK
- C - Registrations with GPs by arrivals from overseas (thousands) [2]

21 December, 2009

NOTES

1. Long Term International Migration Time Series 91/2 to 2007/8 (mid years). Table 2.10
Citizenship <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=15053>
2. ONS Flag 4 GP registrations by Local Authority 2001-2008