



## THE EAST OF ENGLAND FAITHS COUNCIL

### FAITH BASED PROJECTS SUPPORTING MIGRANT WORKERS INFORMATION AND RESOURCES IN THE EAST OF ENGLAND

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#### Introduction

Workers from other countries, commonly known as 'migrant workers', make a valuable and significant contribution to the region's economic prosperity. This document is intended to provide some underpinning information and guidance for faith groups that are offering support to migrant workers in the East of England. This support may provide general advice and guidance to individual migrant workers; advocacy work (for example, assisting migrant groups to access health service providers); building bridges between migrant and host communities etc.

The following definitions may be helpful:

Migrant worker – a person who leaves his or her own country of origin to seek employment in another country.

'Illegal' immigrant – someone whose entry into or presence in a country contravenes the immigration law of that country.

'Illegal' worker – someone whose presence in a country is in accordance with the law but who is working without the appropriate permission or more hours than permitted.

It is difficult to be certain about the exact number of migrant workers in the region but it is thought that they make up about 12% of the region's workforce and are found primarily in the agricultural, health and social care, hospitality and high-technology sectors. Since 2004 the majority have come to the UK from the most recent European Union accession countries – Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, frequently referred to as A8 countries, as well as Bulgaria and Romania, known as A2 countries. There are significant numbers also from China, Ghana, India, Nigeria, the Philippines and Zimbabwe. Some migrant workers lead mobile and transient lifestyles (perhaps because their work is seasonal) and some may live in isolated rural areas and such groups may find it particularly difficult to gain access to information and services.

## Support infrastructure in the region

**The East of England Strategic Migration Partnership (SMP)** was formed by the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) as the regional multi-agency co-ordinating body for services to migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees. It provides support, advice and representation to private, statutory and voluntary organisations working with migrant workers, asylum seekers, unsuccessful asylum seekers and refugees. In addition it tries to ensure that the needs of these groups are appropriately reflected in policy development and service delivery.

The regional **Migrant Worker Steering Group (MWSG)** was formed in 2006 and forms part of the SMP that specialises in migrant worker issues. Its purpose is 'to provide strategic leadership for interagency co-operation in addressing issues facing migrant workers, existing communities and business and the region as a whole'. Membership includes representatives from the public, private and third sectors. It is led by the **East of England Development Agency (EEDA)**, whose role is to promote and improve sustainable economic growth throughout the region, with close links to EERA and the Government Office for the East of England.

EERA and EEDA work together through the strategic migration partnership to support and develop Multi-Agency Fora (MAFs) across the region. These bring together large numbers of organisations at a local level to discuss migration issues in their area. MAFs are a good source of information on local issues for faith groups supporting migrants. Contact details and meeting dates are available on [www.partnershipdevelopmentproject.org.uk/html/our\\_fora\\_meeting.html](http://www.partnershipdevelopmentproject.org.uk/html/our_fora_meeting.html). These MAFs are supported by the Partnership Development Project at MENTER (see contacts below).

The attached diagram demonstrates the structure of the SMP and linkages to MWSG and MAFs.

For more information about the work of the Strategic Migration Partnership please visit the website [www.eera.gov.uk/What-we-do/working-in-partnership/strategic-migration-partnership](http://www.eera.gov.uk/What-we-do/working-in-partnership/strategic-migration-partnership). For general information and advice about its work call Ian Beattie on 01284 729418 or Malgorzata Strona on 01284 729433 or email [ian.beattie@eera.gov.uk](mailto:ian.beattie@eera.gov.uk) or [malgorzata.strona@eera.gov.uk](mailto:malgorzata.strona@eera.gov.uk).

There is also AS&R/MW Weekly Newsflash, which provides a round-up of information, publications, events, funding etc. To subscribe to this, or to advertise your own news, event or vacancy, email [malgorzata.strona@eera.gov.uk](mailto:malgorzata.strona@eera.gov.uk).

For more information about EEDA's work on migration visit <http://www.eeda.org.uk/migrant-workers.asp> or contact Mark Allison on 01223 484688 or email [markallison@eeda.org.uk](mailto:markallison@eeda.org.uk)

## Resources and advice

In addition to the Strategic Migration Partnership, which can offer general signposting and information, you may wish to access particular forms of support for your project or beneficiaries. Here is information about some national, regional and sub-regional bodies that may be able to help:

**Local Authorities** (County and District Councils; Unitary Authorities) can help with such things as council tax, education, housing, social services etc.

**MENTER** ([www.mentor.org.uk](http://www.mentor.org.uk)) is the network for Black/Minority Ethnic (BME) communities and voluntary organisations. The regional office is in Cambridge – 01223 355034; [office@mentor.org.uk](mailto:office@mentor.org.uk).

**NHS East of England** for information about health services – 01223 597500; [www.eoe.nhs.uk](http://www.eoe.nhs.uk)

**Learning and Skills Council (LSC)** for general information about education and training provision – [www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/EastofEngland](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/EastofEngland); 0845 919 4180. There is also a regional ESOL (English Spoken as Other Language) strategy in which EEDA, EERA and LSC are among the partners. Sector Skills Councils – [www.sscalliance.org](http://www.sscalliance.org) – may also be able to help.

**INTRAN** gives help with translation and interpretation: [www.intran.org/cms](http://www.intran.org/cms); contact [intran@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:intran@norfolk.gov.uk); 01603 495131/495132.

**Employment** issues – UK Border Agency, [www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk) and also [www.employingmigrantworkers.org.uk](http://www.employingmigrantworkers.org.uk).

**Legal** services – for information about the Legal Aid scheme, go to [www.legalservices.gov.uk](http://www.legalservices.gov.uk); 0845 345 4345. Citizens Advice Bureaux (CABx) may also be able to help with legal as well as many other issues and can be located through the Yellow Pages.

Other websites that provide general advice and information on a wide variety of topics are [www.directgov.org.uk](http://www.directgov.org.uk); [www.migrantsrights.org.uk](http://www.migrantsrights.org.uk); [www.multikulti.org.uk](http://www.multikulti.org.uk); [www.myukinfo.com](http://www.myukinfo.com).

## **Asylum seekers and refugees**

Many faith groups work with asylum seekers and refugees as well as migrant workers. As indicated above, the SMP is also involved with the provision of services to these groups and in this context the following definitions may be helpful:

Asylum seeker – a person who has left their country of origin and formally applied for asylum in another country, but whose application has not yet been decided.

Refugee – someone whose asylum application has been successful and is allowed to stay in another country having proved they would face persecution in their country of origin.

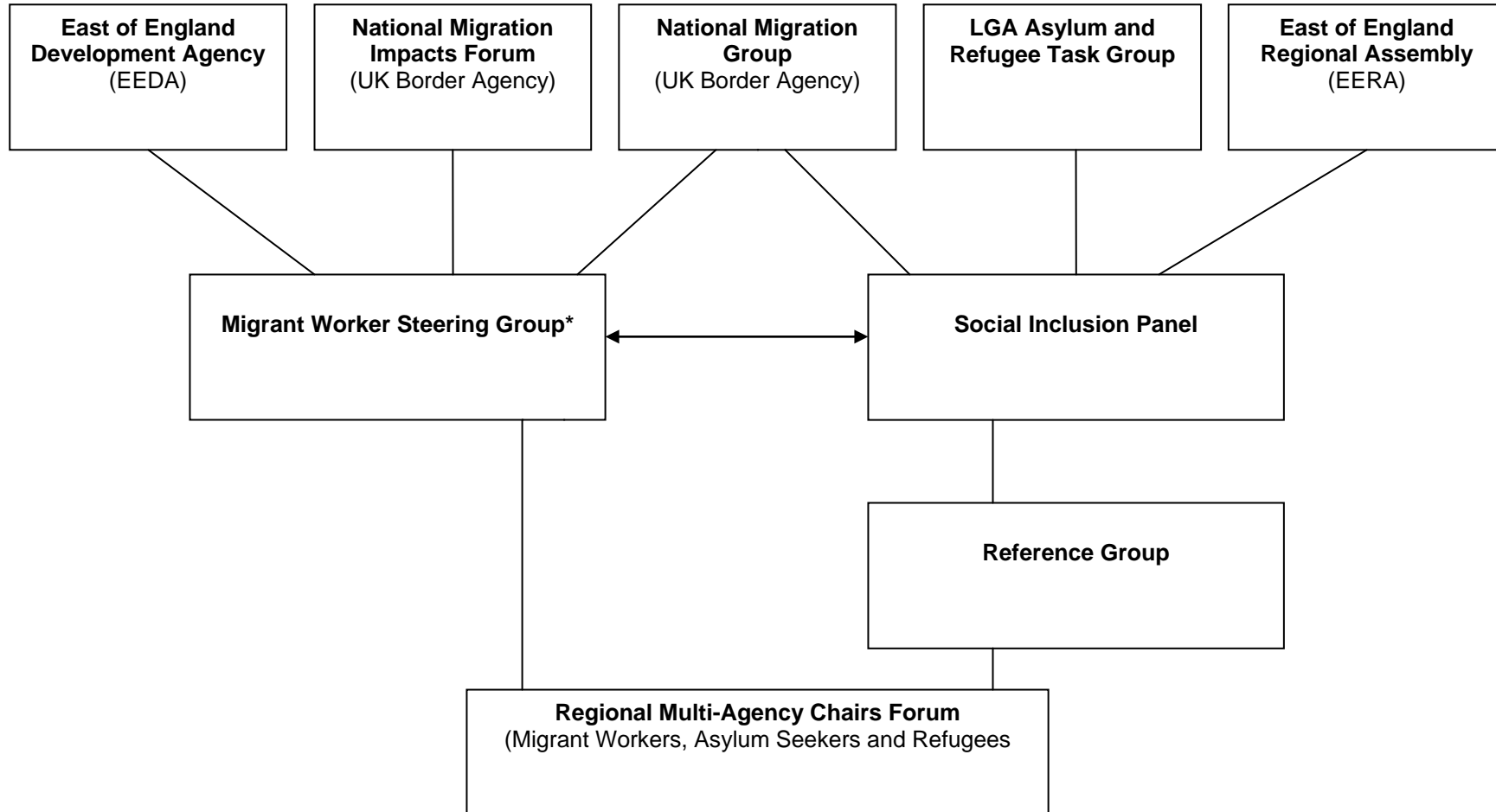
'Unsuccessful' asylum seeker – a person whose asylum application has failed. Some refused asylum seekers voluntarily return home, others may be compulsorily returned and for some it is not safe or practical for them to return until conditions in their country change.

**The Refugee Council** provides advice to asylum seekers and refugees and to organisations supporting them. In the East of England their services include the new Refugee Integration and Employment Service (RIES). Their website is [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk) and the regional office is at: First Floor, 4-8 Museum Street, Ipswich IP1 1HT; tel: 01473 297900.

## **Acronyms**

A full guide to acronyms you may come across is given on the East of England Faiths Council website: [www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk/glossary.htm](http://www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk/glossary.htm).

## EAST OF ENGLAND STRATEGIC MIGRATION PARTNERSHIP



\* Lead agency: East of England Development Agency