

Inter-departmental Task Force on Migration Statistics

Background:

In May 2006 ONS set up an interdepartmental Task Force to identify timely improvements that could be made to international migration statistics, in advance of those that might flow from long term strategic systems (such as e-borders). The Task Force is being conducted in the context of large recent changes in the size and nature of UK international migration and its net contribution to population increases. Increases in globalisation, expansion of the EU, political instability in many regions of the world and the rise in access to travel have all led to a substantial rise in volume. These changes make it difficult to get the migration component of population change right. The Task Force is being taken forward as part of work already being carried out by ONS to improve migration and population statistics.

Uses of migration statistics

It is increasingly important to have high quality statistics on the magnitude of migration to and from the UK and to be able to monitor changes in the pattern of migration and migrant populations for policy development (e.g. assessing the wider impact of immigration policies) and to provide accountability to the public and Parliament.

Migration has a direct impact on the size and age structure of the population. Key uses include:

- resource allocation to Local Authorities and Primary Care Organisations
- developing and monitoring fiscal and monetary policy
- developing and monitoring social policy
- planning and providing public services

Aims and objectives

The aims and membership of the Task Force are set out in more detail in the Terms of Reference which are available at www.statistics.gov.uk/about/other_letters/downloads/MigrationTaskForceToR.pdf. The Task Force aims to make recommendations, using clear criteria, to the National Statistician at the end of August / early September 2006. ONS expects to report to Ministers on this work in October.