

# Short-term Migration Feasibility Report

## 1. Introduction

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) currently produces estimates of long-term migration, that is estimates of arrivals of overseas residents in the UK and departures of UK residents overseas for twelve months or more. These estimates have shown increased flows into and out of the UK in recent years. Increases in international migration flows are attributable to a range of factors including globalisation, expansion of the EU, greater labour mobility and travel opportunities. Building on research already undertaken, ONS recently published proposals to improve estimates of these flows through the Report of the Inter-departmental Task Force on Migration Statistics.<sup>1</sup>

Amongst its findings, the Task Force Report identified increasing demand for estimates of short-term migration, that is people moving for less than twelve months. Such migrants use some local services, contribute to the economy, impact on labour supply and are part of the consumer base.

This paper is an initial assessment of the feasibility of producing short-term migration estimates for England and Wales. Central to the paper is an outline of planned outputs, if a suitable methodology can be devised. Also provided are illustrative estimates of short-term migration based on International Passenger Survey (IPS) data. These data show the size and robustness of IPS based estimates.

The issues of estimating stocks and flows of short-term migration are important in understanding demographic trends across the UK. The General Register Office for Scotland and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency have been in discussions with the Office for National Statistics about this research. ONS will continue to involve the devolved administrations in this research in the future.

ONS welcomes reaction to this paper and have posed three specific questions, for example comments are sought on the planned outputs for short-term migration. In order for users views to be fed into planned work, comments are requested by **9 March 2007**. Responses to the questions raised can be fed back through the feedback form downloadable at:

[http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme\\_population/Short-termMigrationFeasibilityReportResponseForm.doc](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_population/Short-termMigrationFeasibilityReportResponseForm.doc)

Responses should be sent to:

short.term.migration@ons.gov.uk.

## 2. Background

The recent Report of the Inter-departmental Task Force on Migration Statistics<sup>1</sup> set out a vision for migration statistics. This included reference to estimation of migration flows and populations present for different durations and reasons (short and long term residence, for work, study, etc). Production of short-term migration estimates are therefore part of fulfilling this vision. At this stage ONS is in a position to outline a plan for these estimates and check whether this plan is in line with user requirements and expectations. Further work is required to develop a methodology robust enough to produce these estimates and overcome the challenges. Two particular issues are how short-term migration should be defined and whether estimates are needed of migration moves or numbers of migrants.

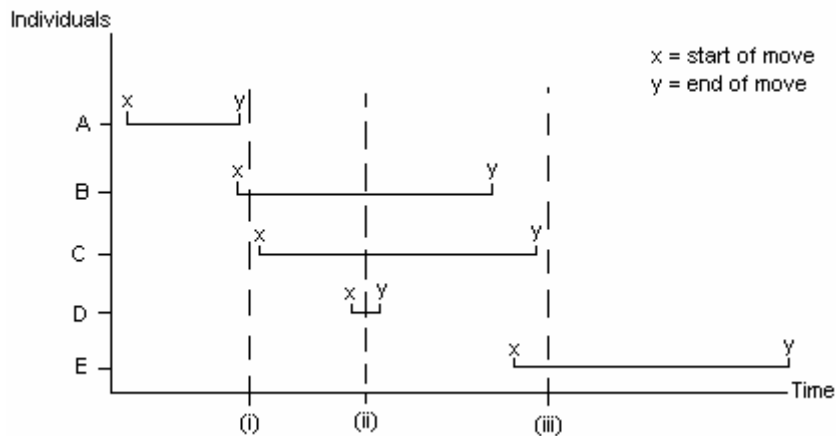
The starting point for estimating short-term migration is the identification of a suitable definition. Central to this definition is the need to distinguish between a visitor and a migrant. While a stay of one day might be assumed to be a visit and one of twelve months indicative of migration, lengths of stay between these points may be more difficult to categorise. Related to this, it is also unclear which reasons for visit should

be defined as migration. A short-term migration definition should therefore include criteria that take account of both length of stay and reason for visit.

A distinction is made in this paper between measuring 'migrant moves' and 'migrants'. Migration estimates may refer to either the number of moves made by all individuals (migrant moves) or the number of people who move in a specified time period (migrants). The distinction is particularly important when estimating short-term migration annually. This issue is most clearly illustrated by considering a particular example. An individual can only be a long-term migrant by definition once in a 12-month period. In contrast a person could be a short-term migrant more than once over the same period. For example moving twice for 3 months on each occasion. This paper focuses on migrant moves rather than migrants as it is difficult to link successive moves in cross-sectional surveys.

Measurement of migration can be made either in terms of flows (migrant moves) or stocks (migrants present at a given time). In order for stock estimates to be made from information on flows, estimates of both arrival and departure dates are required. It is not possible to produce stock estimates of long-term migration using flow data as there is often no defined end-point to the move, the change of residence being permanent. In contrast, short-term moves all have defined end-points which, by definition, are less than twelve months after arrival. As with any stock estimate, the point at which the estimate is made is very important. As shown in figure 1, the stock estimate at point (i) includes only individual B. At point (ii) the stock estimate is three, consisting of individuals B, C and D. However, by point (iii) the stock returns to one (individual E).

**Figure 1** Individuals' Contribution to a Stock Estimate of Short-Term Migration



### 3. Planned Outputs

ONS is aiming to publish experimental estimates of short-term migration. Listed below are the dimensions on which ONS is currently considering building these estimates, subject to feasibility:

- By using a limited number of definitional bases;
- as flow and stock (population present) estimates;
- by sex and broad age group;
- at national, regional, and Local Authority District (LAD) levels;
- by citizenship (as a minimum separately identifying migrants who come from EU accession countries).

Until an appropriate methodology is developed it is unclear whether all dimensions can be produced and which, if any, cross-tabulations might be possible. Other variables may be explored during further work, for example socio-economic group.

Initially short-term migration estimates will be made at a national level. It is anticipated that estimates below national level will take longer to produce. As discussed in this paper, no single data source is available to produce robust estimates at the local area level.

## 4. Migration Definitions

### 4.1 ONS & UN Definitions

As noted in the introduction to this paper, work is required to determine the most appropriate definition of short-term migration. Estimation of short-term migration is not aimed solely at measuring workers and any definition or set of definitions need to cover the full range of priority user needs. Feedback is required from users on what the most suitable definition(s) might be. Three definitions are already available to classify persons moving into and out of England and Wales:

#### (i) Long-term Migration

ONS publish estimates of migration to and from the UK for twelve months or more using the UN long-term migration definition (see Appendix 1). As these moves are for longer than twelve months they are not considered further in this paper. Details of where to find long-term migration estimates published by ONS are given in Appendix 2.

#### (ii) Visits

ONS also publishes estimates of visits into and out of the UK. A visit is defined as a trip abroad (into or out of the UK) that lasts less than a year, mainly for tourist purposes (recreation, holiday, visits to friends or relatives etc. but also includes business travel). Details of where to find estimates of visits published by ONS are also given in Appendix 2.

#### (iii) Short-Term Migration

Estimates of short-term migration are currently not published by ONS. A UN definition of short-term migration is available however, as detailed below. This definition mainly covers those travelling for employment or study.

UN Definition of a Short-term Migrant:

*"A person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least 3 months but less than a year (12 months) except in cases where the movement to that country is for purposes of recreation, holiday, visits to friends and relatives, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimage"*<sup>2</sup>.

Definitions outlined above for moves of less than twelve months (ii & iii) are not mutually exclusive. Figure 2 shows clear overlap (the grey area) between the UN short-term migration and ONS visit definitions. Persons moving for between three and twelve months for formal study or who are looking for work are included in both definitions. As is noted in Figure 2, there are some reasons for visit excluded from both definitions. *Au pairs* represent an area of uncertainty. ONS classifies *au pairs* as visitors as they are legally allowed to enter the UK for 'cultural exchange'. However there is also evidence that many of them undertake additional work while here. Hence, it seems reasonable to include them as a subset of those arriving for work purposes. Other areas of uncertainty include working holidaymakers.

**Figure 2** Overlap between ONS visit definition and UN short-term migration definition

Reason for visit	Length of stay	
	<3months	3-12 months
Definite job to go to	Neither Definition*	UN Definition
Looking for work	ONS Visitor Definition	of short-term migration
Formal study		
Au pair		
Holiday		
Business		
Medical		
Friends		
Family		

\* Other reasons for visit in neither definition: military personnel/diplomats, asylum seekers, transit passengers, and international commuters (someone who is employed in one country while maintaining residence in another country, to which they return on a daily or weekly basis)

#### 4.2 Definition options for publishing estimates of short-term migration

Several National Statistics organisations, internationally, publish information on short-term moves with various lengths of stay and reasons for visit, while the Statistical Service of Cyprus publish estimates of short-term immigrants. There is a lack of published statistics compliant with the UN definition of short-term migration.

Two elements need to be considered in constructing a definition of short-term migration, reason for visit and length of stay. The interaction between these leads to a number of possible definitions. As shown in figure 2, there is overlap between the UN short-term migration definition and the ONS visit definition. In order to develop the conceptual framework for considering how the UN definition might be extended both by reason for visit and length of stay it is necessary to remove this overlap (as is done in figure 3 where each box is mutually exclusive). 'Employment and Study' refers to those reasons for visit covered by the UN definition; 'Other Visits' refers to those reasons included in the ONS visits definition excluding those covered by 'Employment and Study'. Two length of stay categories (less than 3 months and 3-12 months) are adopted as the UN definition uses a three month cut-off.

**Figure 3** Categories for short-term migration definitions



notes:

1 The 'Employment and Study' category consists of those reasons for visit included in the UN short-term migration definition (figure 2).

2 The 'Other Visits' category consists of those reasons for visit included in the ONS visits definition but excludes the areas of overlap with the UN short-term migration definition (figure 2).

Difficulties associated with selecting the most appropriate definitions are best illustrated by referring to examples. Which of the following would users want to be included in a short-term migration definition?

- (a) An individual working for and being paid by, an overseas organisation, making trips to the UK over the course of a year each one lasting between 2 weeks and 4 months;
- (b) A 'gap' year student spending 7 months in the UK living on savings;
- (c) A student on a language course in the UK for a 2 week period;
- (d) An individual on a two week package holiday;
- (e) An overseas resident employed in the UK for 2 months.
- (f) An individual in the UK for a 6 month holiday

The conceptual framework outlined in Figure 3 suggests a number of alternatives to the UN definition (category 2). Table 1 identifies some of the advantages/disadvantages associated with the UN definition and three alternative definitions. Information in Table 1 suggests that options 1 and 2 may not be appropriate (in isolation) to meet user needs due to under/over coverage of certain groups.

Extending the UN definition either by length of stay or reason for visit (options 3a and 3b) are alternatives which may be more appropriate. However, disadvantages shown in Table 1 suggest that whether extending length of stay or reason for visit, there are still persons who it might be more appropriate to exclude (for example, using length of stay alone would include those on holidays).

**Table 1 - Advantages/Disadvantages of Short-term Migration Definitional Options**

Definitional Base	Categories in Figure 3	Advantages	Disadvantages
1. UN Definition of Short-term Migration	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minimise overlap with ONS visitors e.g. excludes example (a), (b) and (f)</li> <li>- Excludes all persons staying for very short periods e.g. examples (c), (d) and (e)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Excludes workers staying for less than 3 months e.g. example (e)</li> <li>- Excludes students staying for less than 3 months e.g. example (c)</li> <li>- Excludes 'Other Visits' for stays of more than 3 months e.g. example (f)</li> </ul>
2. All Moves for Less Than Twelve Months	1 + 2 + 3 + 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Comprehensive as all persons are included if stay is less than twelve months</li> <li>- Easy to apply/understand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Broadening length of stay and reason for visit would include very large numbers of moves, for example those on short holidays e.g. example (d)</li> <li>- Maximise overlap with ONS visits</li> </ul>
<b>Extensions to UN Definition</b>			
3a. UN Definition Extended to Include Moves for Less Than Three Months	2 + 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Would include persons impacting on labour supply irrespective of length of visit e.g. example (e)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Broadening length of stay could include some reasons for visit excluded in figures 2 and 3 e.g. international commuters/border workers*</li> <li>- increase overlap with ONS visits compared to category 1</li> </ul>
3b. UN Definition Extended to Include Other Reasons for Visit	2 + 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Would include all persons using local resources and contributing to consumer base irrespective of reason for visit e.g. examples (a), (b) and (f)</li> <li>- Excludes very short stays e.g. examples (c), (d) and (e)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Includes all reasons for visit including longer stay holidaymakers e.g. example (f)</li> <li>- Exclude workers &amp; students staying for less than 3 months e.g. examples (e) and (c)</li> <li>- Overlap with ONS visits</li> </ul>

\*An international commuter/border worker is someone who is employed in one country while maintaining residence in another country, to which they return on a daily or weekly basis.

In defining short-term migration, users are asked:

Q1 What short-term migration definition is most appropriate for your uses?

- In particular, which of the options proposed comes closest to identifying the groups of most relevance to your needs?
- Would it be appropriate to amend the proposed definitions (e.g. by including or excluding specific reasons for visit or using time cut-offs other than three or twelve months)?

## 5. Estimates of Short-Term Migration Flows for England and Wales 2003 & 2004

Estimates of short-term migration presented in this section are illustrative and indicate the size of flows at both national and regional levels. They also highlight how robust the estimates are, in particular at the regional level. It is also intended that the estimates indicate the size of flows to be expected when using the definitional bases discussed in section 4.2.

Short-term moves presented in this section are based on data from the IPS. The IPS samples passengers both as they are departing from/arriving in the UK and when they return to/leave the UK. Sampling of passengers leaving for their short-term destination is referred to in this paper as 'intended flow'. Sampling of those returning is referred to as 'completed flow'. All data presented in this section are based on completed flow but refer to the time the move began. Further research is required in to the use of intended and completed flow data; this is discussed in more detail in section 6.1. Further information on IPS data, including the variables available is provided in Appendix 2.

### 5.1 National Estimates of Short-term Migration Flows

Estimates of short-term moves for calendar years 2003 and 2004 are presented in tables 2 and 3 for England and Wales, set out so as to be comparable with the conceptual framework shown in Figure 3, with the addition of total flow estimates. As in Figure 3, 'other visits' (recreation, holidays, visits to friends and relatives etc.) refer to those ONS visits not included in the UN short-term migration definition. Tables 2 and 3 clearly demonstrate that moves lasting for less than three months for 'other visit' reasons are by far the largest group. This is particularly evident for out-flows of England and Wales residents, where over 99 per cent of all moves were for 'Other Visit' reasons where the duration was less than 3 months (59,014 thousand in 2004). This highlights the problem of including these moves in a short-term migration definition.

The total out-flow of England and Wales residents was consistently greater than the in-flow of overseas residents in both years. However, when broken down by reason for visit it is clear that this pattern was driven by 'Other Visit' reasons. The in-flow of overseas residents for employment and study was consistently greater than the out-flow of England and Wales residents for the same reasons. For example, overseas resident in-flows of less than 3 months for employment and study were more than three times greater than the equivalent out-flows of England and Wales residents in 2004.

Estimates of overseas residents coming to England and Wales for a stay that corresponded to the UN short-term migration definition increased by 44 per cent between 2003 and 2004 (from 71 to 102 thousand). This increase was, in part, due to the accession countries joining the EU on 1 May 2004. In contrast, there were decreases in the number of moves to England and Wales for 'Employment and Study' lasting less than three months and for 'Other Visit' reasons lasting 3 to 12 months.

While there is no directly comparable measure of long-term migration based on completed flow, published figures based on intended flow are available. Long-term migrant in-flows were 473 thousand in 2003 and 542 thousand in 2004, while out-flows were 331 thousand in 2003 and 325 thousand in 2004. Further information on long-term migration can be found in Appendix 2.

Tables 2 and 3 can be used to compare the difference between the numbers of short-term stays of overseas residents in England and Wales with stays abroad by England and Wales residents. However such comparisons cannot be used to infer a net impact on the population present in England and Wales (in the same way that net long-term migration provides a measure of change in the numbers of resident population). The reason for this is that the pattern of short stays may differ between the groups covered by the two tables, both in terms of duration and timing. For example, if short-term immigration was spread evenly through the year but all short-term emigration was in the first quarter and only for three months, the net figure would depend on when in the year the estimate referred to. The appropriate figures to use to assess net impact are estimates of stocks (see Section 6.2, below).

**Table 2**

**In-flow of Overseas Residents into England & Wales**  
 (completed flow data - sampled when departing from England & Wales)  
 by Length of Stay and Reason for Visit

Moves in Thousands

Reason for Visit Category	2003				2004			
	<3 months	Standard error %	3-12 months	Standard error %	<3 months	Standard error %	3-12 months	Standard error %
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,699</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>22,045</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>8</b>
Employment and Study	537	5	71	13	528	5	102	13
Other Visits	19,162	1	144	9	21,517	1	135	9

**Table 3**

**Out-flow of England & Wales Residents**  
 (completed flow data - sampled when returning to England & Wales)  
 by Length of Stay and Reason for Visit

Moves in Thousands

Reason for Visit Category	2003				2004			
	<3 months	Standard error %	3-12 months	Standard error %	<3 months	Standard error %	3-12 months	Standard error %
<b>Total</b>	<b>56,933</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>59,176</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>5</b>
Employment and Study	185	8	41	17	161	10	34	19
Other Visits	56,748	0	389	5	59,014	0	341	5

## 5.2 Regional Estimates of Short-term Migration Flows

Tables 4 & 5 demonstrate that standard errors are higher at regional level than at national level. The higher degree of uncertainty at regional level demonstrates the difficulties faced with estimating flows at the regional level. As estimates are not robust enough to use at regional level, local area estimates would clearly not be robust enough to publish. The distribution of short-term migration to local area level is considered in section 6.3.

Moves for less than 3 months are more frequent and hence estimates are more robust than those for 3-12 months. Estimates for London and the South East are clearly larger and more robust than for other regions, for both in-flows and out-flows.

As for tables 2 and 3, it is not appropriate to calculate net flows using the figures in tables 4 and 5.

**Table 4**

**In-flow of Overseas Residents into England & Wales (completed flow data - sampled when departing from England & Wales)**  
 by Region of Visit and Length of Stay (Employment and Study and other visits)

Moves in Thousands

Area	2003				2004			
	<3 months	Standard error %	3-12 months	Standard error %	<3 months	Standard error %	3-12 months	Standard error %
	Moves		Moves		Moves		Moves	
<b>England &amp; Wales</b>	<b>19699</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>22045</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Government Office Region</b>								
North East	302	7	3	45	300	7	9	39
North West	1061	4	5	33	1062	4	18	29
Yorkshire and the Humber	429	6	4	59	570	5	7	43
East Midlands	618	5	9	36	658	5	10	39
West Midlands	1130	4	10	33	1124	4	8	35
Eastern	1272	3	21	26	1481	3	18	31
London	9737	1	91	12	11209	1	97	12
South East	2879	2	38	19	3093	2	37	20
South West	1544	3	25	22	1716	3	16	25
Wales	727	4	11	35	831	4	17	30



**Table 5**

Out-flow of England & Wales Residents (completed flow data - sampled when returning to England & Wales)  
by Region of Residence and Length of Stay (Employment and Study and other visits)

Moves in Thousands

Area	2003				2004			
	<3 months		3-12 months		<3 months		3-12 months	
	Moves	Standard error %	Moves	Standard error %	Moves	Standard error %	Moves	Standard error %
<b>England &amp; Wales</b>	<b>56933</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>59176</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Government Office Region</b>								
North East	2099	3	15	29	2133	2	9	32
North West	5611	2	47	16	5969	1	51	15
Yorkshire and the Humber	4290	2	33	18	4582	2	31	19
East Midlands	4004	2	30	22	4423	2	17	24
West Midlands	5048	2	33	20	5256	2	38	16
Eastern	6062	2	40	17	6296	1	32	18
London	11739	1	108	10	12283	1	77	10
South East	11083	1	72	12	10905	1	64	14
South West	4501	2	37	19	4839	2	39	15
Wales	2495	2	16	26	2489	2	18	29

#### Notes:

- 1) Tables 2-5 exclude records where regional information is not available, where the reason for visit is not categorised as 'Employment and Study' or 'Other Visit' (see figure 2) and where there is no overnight stay.
- 2) The 'Employment and Study' category includes those reasons for visit identified in figure 2 as UN short-term migration. The 'Other Visit' category includes the remaining ONS visitor reasons not included in the 'Employment and Study' definition.
- 3) The data in tables 2-5 are based on IPS completed flow. Figures are presented by the year in which the move began. Therefore data for 2004 include moves which were completed in 2005.
- 4) Standard error % is the standard error expressed as a percentage of the estimate. The Standard Error is an indication of the accuracy of an estimate and how much a sample estimate is likely to differ from the true value because of random effects.

## 6. Further Work

### 6.1 Sampling Short-term Migrants at the Start or End of Trip

Any international move that is non-permanent consists of two moves - a move from the origin country to the destination country, followed later by a move out of the destination country. Short-term migrants can therefore be sampled on either the first or second of these moves. In section 5, these were described as 'intended flow' and 'completed flow' respectively. Long-term migrants can only be sampled when individuals first migrate, as there is no equivalent 'end trip' in those cases where the move is permanent.

Further work is planned to explore the use of intended and completed flow IPS data. The primary advantage of intended flow data is that it is more timely than completed flow. By definition, completed flow data is only available after all short-term moves have been completed i.e. just under twelve months after the start date. It may be possible to use intended flow data to model more timely estimates of completed flow and further work is planned to consider this. There are however difficulties associated with intended flows, as these are commonly associated with uncertainty about intentions and changing plans. Uncertainty may relate to various characteristics important for short-term migration measurement, for example:

#### 1. Duration.

Individuals may initially be unsure how long they intend to stay. They may intend to stay for a certain length of time but actually stay for more or less time.

#### 2. Destination.

Individuals may intend to go to one area but subsequently move to another.

### 3. Reason for Visit.

Individuals may arrive in the country for one purpose but stay for other reasons. In depth interviews with migrants suggest that some enter as visitors before staying on to work.<sup>3</sup>

As noted, ONS use intended flow IPS data to measure long-term migration as no equivalent completed flow data are available. ONS has recently undertaken research to refine how it uses intention-based long-term migration data. Further information is available at [www.statistics.gov.uk/imps](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/imps).

An additional complication, in measuring short-term migration using intended flow data, is the potential risk of double counting. As an example, if an individual enters the country for an intended stay of 9 months but travels overseas after 2 months for a weekend visit, on their return from this weekend they will state their intended length of stay as 7 months. This would result in two overlapping short-term moves being counted rather than one.

## 6.2 Stock/Flow Estimation of Short-Term Migration

Part of the planned outputs for short-term migration estimates (see section 3) includes estimates of stocks, as well as flows. Stock estimates refer to the population of short-term migrants at any point in time. Initial exploration of IPS data suggests that there is seasonality in the flows of short-term migrants during the year. As a result, the stock estimate will vary depending on the time of year the estimate refers to, as well as varying in relation to trends in stocks. Instead of estimating the stock of migrants at any one point, it is proposed that estimates are produced of the average stock of short-term migrants over a fixed period (e.g. a year). In theory, this can be done using the following:

Average Short-term Migrant Stock Population =

$$\frac{\text{Sum of months spent by short-term migrants present during the period}}{\text{Length of period in months}}$$

Short-term migration flows include both flows into and out of England and Wales, as illustrated in Tables 2 and 3. Associated with these flows are, respectively, the stock of overseas residents present in England and Wales on a short-term basis (short-term immigrants) and the stock of England and Wales residents outside the UK for a short time (short-term emigrants).

An advantage with the 'average stock' approach is that the time period could be mid-year to mid-year and so consistent with mid-year population estimates/projections. It may be possible to produce stock estimates for shorter periods, for example quarters. Work will be carried out to consider this, particularly in the context of the size of standard errors likely to be associated with these estimates.

It is also acknowledged that average stock estimates do not indicate the length of short-term moves. Similar averages can be produced by large numbers of moves for short periods (e.g. 3 months) or a smaller number of moves for longer periods (e.g. 11 months). Stock estimates may therefore either need to be supplemented by flow estimates or some additional 'average length of stay' estimates.

Q2 Do users require estimates of short-term migration stocks as well as flow?

- Should these be supplemented by other estimates, e.g. of average lengths of stay?
- Are these stock estimates required both for overseas residents in England & Wales and England & Wales residents who are overseas?

### 6.3 Distribution to Local Area Level

Standard errors presented in Tables 4 and 5 show that IPS estimates of short-term migration at Government Office Region level (based on where they spent the majority of their time) are not robust enough to be published as a regular series. Given these standard errors it is clearly not feasible to publish IPS estimates of short-term migration at Local Authority District (LAD) level (based on where they spent the majority of their time). Supplementary sources must therefore be used.

ONS have made an initial assessment of which sources might be used, as shown in Table 6. It is apparent from this table that no one source provides everything needed to distribute all short-term migration. Only National Insurance Number (NINo) allocations, Worker Registrations Scheme (WRS) data, and GP registrations provide local area level data, whilst only the IPS, Labour Force Survey, and GP registrations provide broad coverage of reasons for visit. The IPS is the only source to provide detailed information on length of stay and comprehensive information on outflows.

**Table 6 - Potential Sources for Distribution of Short-term Migration**

<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Inflows and Outflows</b>	<b>Length of Stay</b>	<b>Coverage of Reason for Visit</b>	<b>Geographic Level</b>
<b>International Passenger Survey</b>	Inflows and outflows	Detailed information	Broad	National/ regional
<b>National Insurance numbers issued to overseas nationals (NINos)</b>	Inflows only	No information	Workers and benefit claimants only	Local
<b>Work permits</b>	Inflows only	Limited information	Non-EEA workers only	National
<b>Worker Registration Scheme (WRS)</b>	Inflows only	Limited information	A8 workers only	National/ postcode
<b>Labour Force Survey (LFS)</b>	Inflows only	No information. Only lengths of stay of more than 6 months are sampled.	Fairly broad (communal establishments are excluded)	National/ regional
<b>Health data (GP registrations)</b>	Inflows; limited outflows	No nationally consistent data on temporary registrations of less than 3 months.	Broad (though there is no requirement to register)	Local

Note: From 2008 the LFS will be subsumed by the larger Integrated Household Survey (IHS). Further consideration of collecting information on length of stay and coverage of communal establishments will be taken forward as part of the ongoing IHS developments beyond its launch in 2008.

Estimates of long-term migration are also required at local area level to feed into the mid-year population estimates and projections. ONS is able to use 2001 Census data (responses to the question on address one year ago) as a source in distributing long-term migrants to local area level. Data on short-term migrants was not collected in the 2001 Census. Recognising the importance of this issue, ONS is currently considering how short-term migrants could be identified in the 2011 Census. However the

census would only provide estimates at a point in time so would provide no information on seasonal patterns.

## 7. Conclusions

Demand for estimates of short-term migration has coincided with recent increases in international migration. Recognition that short-term migrants use local services, contribute to the economy, impact on labour supply and are part of the UK consumer base is in large part driving this demand. In setting out its plan for short-term migration statistics, ONS is keen to clarify whether its intended work is in line with expectations.

Q3 How well do the planned outputs meet users expectations and requirements?  
- Which of these outputs are highest priorities?

Within the plan set out for producing short-term migration statistics, it remains unclear which definitional base is most appropriate for the users of population statistics. An appropriate definition has two elements, length of stay and purpose for visit. As discussed in section 4, the UN definition of short-term migration is restricted to moves where the reason for visit is employment or study. This paper has outlined options for expanding this definition, either in terms of a wider length of stay criterion (inclusion of zero to three month visits) or a wider set of reasons of visits (including tourists). ONS would welcome any feedback from users on the appropriateness of these definitional options.

Data presented in this paper have indicated the scale of short-term migration in England and Wales. Using the UN definition of short-term migration (stays for three to twelve months) there has been an increase in the level of migration between 2003 and 2004. Part of this rise may be attributable to the accession of new EU member states on 1 May 2004. These data also show the scale of tourist visits for less than three months.

Further work outlined in the paper consisted of three main strands

- (i) estimation of short-term migrant stocks,
- (ii) use of IPS data sampled at the start or end of moves, and
- (iii) estimation of short-term migration at local area level.

The challenge presented by the third of these elements is highlighted by the standard errors of IPS estimates of short-term migration at the regional level (Tables 4 & 5), suggesting that alternative sources, such as those noted in table 6, are required to distribute IPS data from England and Wales to local area level.

As noted in the introduction to this paper, ONS hopes to gather as much user feedback as possible in order to ensure that any outputs are in-line with expectations. ONS expects to announce its plans for publication and further work in the summer. Responses to the questions raised in this paper can be fed back through the feedback form downloadable at:

[http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme\\_population/Short-termMigrationFeasibilityReportResponseForm.doc](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_population/Short-termMigrationFeasibilityReportResponseForm.doc)

Feedback is requested by **9 March 2007**, and can be sent to:

short.term.migration@ons.gov.uk.

## References

- 1 .*Inter-departmental Task Force on Migration Statistics* (2006) Available from:  
[http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/methodology/specific/population/future/imps/updates/downloads/Inter-departmental\\_Task\\_Force\\_on\\_Migration\\_Statistics.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/methodology/specific/population/future/imps/updates/downloads/Inter-departmental_Task_Force_on_Migration_Statistics.pdf)
2. *Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration*, revision 1 (1998). UN Statistics Division.  
Available from: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/pubs/gesgrid.asp?ID=116>
3. Anderson, Ruhs, Rogaly, and Spencer (2006), *Fair Enough: Central and East European migrants in low-wage employment in the UK*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

## Appendix 1

### UN definition of a long-term migrant:

"A person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year (12 months) so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence." <sup>2</sup>

## Appendix 2

The Migration Statistics Unit home page can be found at:  
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=507>).

The International Passenger Survey (IPS) is the main source of ONS travel and tourism statistics. An annual 'Travel Trends' report, which includes information about the IPS and how the data are collected, is available at the link below together with monthly and quarterly travel and tourism data.

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=1391&Pos=&ColRank=1&Rank=272>.

## Appendix 3

### UN short-term migration and ONS visits definitions

#### UN definition of short-term migration

A person who moves from their country of usual residence for at least 3 months, but less than 12 months for the following reasons:

Formal Study/ Training

Workers with a definite job to go to

Looking for work

Self Employed workers

Au Pairs

**ONS definition of a visit**

A person who travels from their country of usual residence for less than 12 months for the following reasons:

Holiday/Pleasure

Cruise

Business (including Trade fair/ Exhibition, Conference/Large business meeting)

Formal Study

Looking for Work

Au Pair

Personal Shopping

Accompanying/ Joining

Medical Treatment

Visiting Family or Friends

Getting Married

Asylum Seeker

Overnight

Other