



---

## **Impact on Services of EU Enlargement**

**for the Learning Partnership Bedfordshire and Luton**

---



**Global Consulting (UK) Ltd  
Global House  
2 Spinney Hill Road  
Leicester LE5 3GG**

**[www.Global-Consulting.Com](http://www.Global-Consulting.Com)**

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect those of the Learning Partnership Bedfordshire and Luton.

© Learning Partnership Bedfordshire & Luton June 2005

# CONTENTS

---

## Executive Summary

1. Background to the Project
2. Aims and Objectives
3. Context
4. Methodology
5. Key Findings and Issues
  - Entry and Movement of Immigrants
  - Eligibility for Existing Provision
  - Education and Training
    - Data Sources
    - Analysis of the Immigrant Population
    - Funding of Education and Training Provision by LSCs
    - Funding of Education and Training Provision by Learndirect
    - Skills Training Provision
    - Funding Values
    - Limiting Factors
    - Specific Areas to Address re ESOL Provision
    - Possible Variations in Demand
    - Recording of Outputs by LSC and Learndirect
    - Employment
    - Skills and Employers
    - Recognition of Overseas Qualifications and Experience
    - Self Employment and Business Start Up
6. Specific Input from the Focus Groups
7. Conclusions and Recommendations
8. Personnel involved in the Project
9. Acknowledgments

Appendix 1 Database of the Stakeholders

Appendix 2 Scenario Forecast

Appendix 3 Extract from BLEDP Consultation Draft

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

The Learning Partnership Bedfordshire and Luton identified that there was potential pressure on resources due to increased migration resulting from the ten state enlargement of the European Union on 1<sup>st</sup>. May 2004, and it awarded a contract to assess the Impact on Services of EU Enlargement to Global Consulting (UK) Ltd.

## Objectives

The objectives of the project were:-

- To identify the potential impact on education and employment services due to increased immigration from the new member states of the European Union;
- To identify the supply and demand side issues for Bedfordshire and Luton of this immigration, in their impact on education, training and employment provision;
- As a part of the research, the opportunities and capacity to assist entry to self employment and business start ups would also be considered.
- To assess the ability of Bedfordshire and Luton to meet these challenges.
- To make recommendations as appropriate.

## Methodology

The methodology used and outline of the focus groups is to be found at Section 4 of this report.

## Context

In the first eight months after EU enlargement, over 90,000 immigrants entered the UK from the accession territories, and a further 50,000 who were already here regularised. This is nine times the original national projection. Of these, so far approximately 90% have been Polish.

The Bedfordshire and Luton Economic Development Partnership (BLEDP) consultation draft of the Joint Economic Development Strategy projects an additional 50,000 jobs requirement in Bedfordshire and Luton between now and 2021.

## Key Findings

The key findings are as follows:-

### **a) Numbers coming to Bedfordshire and Luton**

As EU citizens the immigrants have entitlement of access to the UK, and as such are not subject to control or directed movement around the country under the Home Office Dispersal Policy. There is therefore no basis for predicting the numbers coming to Bedfordshire and Luton from Home Office sources.

Most immigrants are so far arriving via the Channel Tunnel or Kent ports, and dispersing to their chosen locations within the UK from the London area. It does not follow that all immigrants in Bedfordshire and Luton gain employment there; examples exist of EU immigrant workers being transported on a daily basis from Bedfordshire and Luton to employment in Corby and Leicestershire.

**b) Eligibility for Existing Provision**

Different conditions apply between agencies in respect of the EU immigrants' access to provision / assistance, and these are detailed at Section 5.3 of the Report.

**c) Data Sources - Individual Learner Record (ILR)**

To establish reliable statistical data in respect of EU immigration, it will become necessary to make country of origin or country of last residence information mandatory as ILR input information, or ensure that all Bedfordshire and Luton education and training providers collect this information voluntarily as a part of their recording systems for this purpose.

**d) Data Sources - Use of SIC Codes in the NI system for analysis purposes**

A matching of the new NI numbers, only issued to the new EU immigrants on attaining their first employment, by country of origin to the first employer's SIC code would be capable of providing useful information on the employment sectors into which the immigrants were initially fitting. It is recommended that this possibility is explored.

**e) Take control of the planning by moving to targeted recruitment in the 10 most recent accession territories**

Instead of being reactive, it would be possible to take control of the planning of employment and education issues by targeting / advertising the area and the skills required in the Bedfordshire and Luton economy in selected target European locations.

It is proposed that targeting a little under one third of the total jobs increase of 50,000 projected as needed by 2021, ie a net increase of 15,000 jobs sourced via EU immigration, would provide a realistic basis for assessing the incremental demand for Skills for Life programmes. Evidence so far is that only ESOL would be in high demand, with present immigrants being broadly OK in the other Life Skills. (This position would change if there were to be immigration from the Eastern European Romany community, which has not so far been encountered.)

The impact on potential demand for ESOL provision if there were to be a degree of re-emigration and matching replacement additional immigration has also been considered, and the potential impact of this in Section 5.4.9 of the report.

**f) ESOL Training**

It will be necessary to review the balance and appropriateness of the ESOL provision so as to best meet the needs of the expanding customer base, and it is also suggested as a precaution that the quality of tuition re technical English in ESOL provision is monitored to ensure that it meets employers' needs.

The availability of ESOL tutors may turn out to be the limiting factor in the ability of providers to supply appropriate education and training provision, particularly in light of the enhancement of the required tutor qualifications, especially Level 4 qualifications,

## **g) LSC and Learndirect Funding Regimes**

The LSC funding regime is now moving significantly towards the direction of its funding to the key educational priorities being set by the government.

Despite the present weakness in data sources, and therefore the consequential need to exercise caution in interpreting conclusions capable of being drawn from non-numeric data, there are reasons for some confidence in the ability of the partners to cope with the impact of the expected immigration from the ten newest accession states. This is because:-

- It is considered probable that Skills for Life will continue to be seen as a key priority for funding, and it is therefore considered reasonable to anticipate that the amount of funding which the LSC is required to devote to this area of provision can within reason rise to match demonstrable need. In 2003/04, the total of ESOL and all other Key Skills was 17.28% of the LSC Bedfordshire and Luton's expenditure.
- The indications from employers are that present immigration from the A8 countries is of an already technically skilled nature, where the immigrant community is in practice taking employment opportunities below their skill level. The life skills needed by this group therefore overwhelmingly relate to the provision of ESOL.

Similar opportunities for access to Skills for Life, including ESOL, also exist via Learndirect, and a similar position may be expected to prevail as applies to Learning and Skills Council provision.

## **h) Skills**

The BLEDP draft plan identifies business sectors targeted. If targeting of immigration is accepted, it would equally be possible to bias the targeting for EU immigration towards capturing these skills. This targeting would of course have to be kept under constant review because of movements within Bedfordshire and Luton's economic priorities to 2021, and movements in the timing of the developments in question.

Anecdotal and focus group evidence is that EU immigrants to the area were taking employment below their skill level. There could therefore be a tendency towards upskilling and employment changes within the immigrant community over time.

There is a natural tendency, imposed by the restriction of access to benefits, for the actual skill levels filled initially by the EU immigrant to gravitate to the lower end of the skills spectrum. It is therefore likely to be reasonable to project that any skills-related training initially required would therefore be likely to be biased towards the lower end of the skills spectrum.

## **i) Overseas Qualification Recognition**

One of the principle barriers for an immigrant seeking work in the UK is the need for recognition (conversion) of the qualifications which he/she has gained elsewhere, and the time taken to obtain that recognition.

It is suggested that agencies could usefully bid to establish a Bedfordshire and Luton service in respect of overseas qualification recognition similar to the one running at Leicester College (cf Section 5.5.2 of the Report), which would a) defray the £35 cost of conversion of a qualification, and b) more importantly provide practical assistance in getting through the process in a timely fashion.

**j) Self Employment and New Business Starts**

The existing rates of Self Employment and Business Start Up are radically below the profile needed to match the economic planning. Many EU immigrants are entrepreneurial enough to start businesses, given a helpful environment, and it is recommended that the appropriate bids for funding for an enhanced service are launched as soon as possible.

**k) Mapping**

There is a need for a comprehensive, iterative mapping exercise of facilities and support available to be undertaken covering all agencies, all categories of immigrant including old EU, new EU, other economic migrants, refugees, asylum seekers.

This is detailed in Section 7.8 of the report.

**l) Consider other aspects of issues around immigration, eg. health, housing**

There are other issues related to immigration from the ten EU accession territories (as for any other source of immigrants), for example the provision of healthcare and housing resources, and it is recommended that consideration is given to a review of these related aspects of the economic planning in respect of immigration.

**m) Validation of this Exercise in 2 Years**

It would be appropriate to validate the conclusions of this study in say two years time, when more specific data on the immigration from the ten EU accession territories may be available, and there will also be evidence of the practical impact upon the Bedfordshire and Luton economy.

**n) Recording of Outputs by LSCs and Learndirect**

Under the existing scoring structures, which are somewhat biased towards completion of qualifications, there is a considerable risk that less than full credit for effort committed to ESOL programmes for the accession territory immigrants will be recognised.

This is because for many of the EU accession territory immigrants, their customer need in this instance may be in many instances to exit from the programme as soon as possible because of successfully gaining employment, rather than proceeding to completion of the formal qualification. The formal qualification, if completed at all, may only come much later.

It is therefore suggested that LSCs and Learndirect may wish to consider negotiation of a modification to the scoring systems so as to adequately reflect that the programmes will have delivered real economic benefit, while potentially frequently falling short of the existing success point. If this is not done, the real measure of the success of addressing the needs of this group of customers may be missed.

**A detailed listing of the recommendations is included in Section 7 of this report.**

# **1. Background to the Project**

## **Contract Award**

The Learning Partnership Bedfordshire and Luton, in response to a tender dated 29<sup>th</sup>. November 2004, awarded a contract to Global Consulting (UK) Ltd. dated 13<sup>th</sup>. December 2004, in respect of the Impact on Services of EU Enlargement. Subsequent refinements are as agreed in reviews with the Learning Partnership.

## **Learning Partnership Remit**

The Learning Partnership Bedfordshire and Luton is charged with maximising the impact of learning on neighbourhood renewal, and through informed learning choice contributing to individual and economic prosperity.

Its strategic aims for the period 2003-2006 are:-

- To promote the development of a cohesive independent infrastructure to support the growth of sustainable economic prosperity
- To raise awareness of the lifelong learning agenda with a wide range of organisations and groups who can act as intermediaries to encourage wider participation and equality of access to learning opportunities at all levels
- To inform national and local planning and policy by feeding back the impact of initiatives on local provision
- To facilitate networking between partners, planners and funding bodies and support local delivery to meet local needs

It is also expected to be able to demonstrate achievement of the objectives agreed in The Learning Partnership Project Plan with the Learning and Skills Council, and use the resources allocated by the Learning and Skills Council effectively and efficiently.

## **Reason for the Project**

The arrival of immigrants from the newly admitted states within the European Union means that the public agencies with an interest in employment, education, housing, health and benefits, etc., have a responsibility to ensure the adequacy of resources to enable economic migrants to positively contribute to their own development as well as to the local economy.

The partnership identified that there was potential pressure on resources due to the increased migration into the area as a result of the enlargement of the European Union on 1<sup>st</sup>. May 2004. It accordingly commissioned this research to assess and scope out the possible impact on resources of the immigration from new EU member states, with particular reference to the provision of education, training and employment opportunities, and opportunities for self employment and business start up.

## **Bedfordshire and Luton**

The population in Bedfordshire and Luton is already ethnically diverse, and numbers around 550,000. The area enjoys good connections to Europe, especially from the services of London Luton Airport, and it was considered that Luton could therefore be a convenient point of arrival for many of the new EU immigrants.

## **2. Aims and Objectives**

### **2.1 Aim**

To identify the potential impact on education and employment services due to increased immigration from the new member states of the European Union.

### **2.2 Objectives**

- To identify the supply and demand side issues of the immigration from the new EU accession territories on Bedfordshire and Luton.
- To forecast the potential number of new arrivals and identify their characteristics by:
  - Age
  - Skills
  - Education.
- To assess the impact on education, training and employment provision, for example:
  - On those with no skills requiring full time education (including ESOL and Skills for Life)
  - On those with some skills to enable entry to employment but with a need for on the job training/education
  - On those with higher level skills and qualifications
  - By mapping the equivalence of their qualifications to UK qualifications
  - By assessing the impact that all of the above will have on education, employment and training provision in Bedfordshire and Luton
  - By exploring the extent to which the local economy could accommodate the influx of immigrants (ie number of jobs available).
- As a part of the research, the opportunities and capacity to assist entry to self employment and business start ups would also be considered.
- To assess the ability of Bedfordshire and Luton to meet these challenges.
- To make recommendations as appropriate.

### **2.3 Approach to Project**

The approach to be taken in delivery of this project was to be agreed with the Learning Partnership at the start of the project, and refined as necessary in the course of project reviews.

### **3. Context**

#### **3.1 New Member States**

10 new states became members of the European Union on 1<sup>st</sup>. May 2004:-

- Eight of these (the "A8 territories") are former Eastern European bloc countries, being Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania;
- The other two are Cyprus and Malta.

The remit for this project focuses on these last ten new entrants. It should however be noted that, apart from eligibility to benefit (see below), the impact on the provision of the services which are the subject of this remit is the same as for immigrants from the earlier fifteen EU member countries. It should therefore be noted for example that, nationally, there is also a perceptible flow of immigrants from Portugal, with similar issues.

#### **3.2 Rights of Residence and Access to Benefits**

Where citizens of these countries had rights of residence in their previous EU country, they then gained rights of residence in the UK as part of EU accession. Immigrants from the A8 countries do not however under the present transition arrangements have the same rights to benefits in the UK (at present) as residents of the earlier EU member countries. (This is significant in the context of services available through Jobcentre Plus.)

#### **3.3 Numbers**

From the start of EU membership for the ten new EU countries on 1<sup>st</sup>. May 2004, to December 2004, immigration to the whole of the UK from the A8 countries exceeded 90,000 people coming to stay for more than three months. (Source:- Office of National Statistics, based on the International Passenger Survey). A further 50,000 who were already in the UK had also regularised their position.

- This is 9 times the national figure originally projected before EU enlargement;
- Of these, approximately 90% nationally so far have been Polish.

Subsequently, the latest estimate by the Home Office of numbers of Eastern European workers entering the UK legally and signing up to the Workers Registration Scheme (which confers entitlement to benefits and free health care after 12 months) is that immigration is now running at 13,000 to 14,000 per month. (Source:- Sir Andrew Green, Migrationwatch, commenting on a speech by Mr. Mervyn King, Governor of the Bank of England, on 13<sup>th</sup>. June 2005 on the economic impact of immigration.)

#### **3.4 Geography of the Project**

This study was commissioned by the Learning Partnership Bedfordshire and Luton, and is accordingly framed in the context of the Bedfordshire and Luton area.

It should be noted, however, that related issues will arise in respect of migrant workers elsewhere in Eastern Region, and that work is under way on a Milton Keynes and South Midlands Study (covering the period to 2031 for Bedfordshire and Luton, Northamptonshire,

and Milton Keynes Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire) to establish the future needs and priorities for that area, for which this study would also have some relevance.

### **3.5 The LSC Funding Regime**

When first established, Learning and Skills Councils' funding was initially used largely for paying for what providers, esp. FE Colleges, had previously been delivering. With the passage of time, and developments in political priorities for expenditure, the Learning and Skills Councils across the country are now moving significantly towards funding to be directed to address the key educational priorities being set by the government.

Within Bedfordshire and Luton, the milestones in respect of Skills for Life were met in 2004, and the next milestone date is 2007. Within Eastern Region, the LSC Bedfordshire and Luton was the only LSC to exceed the Eastern Region target for Skills for Life at the 2004 milestone ascertainment.

The nature of the present funding regime is that it is possible, where appropriate and supported by a good case, for a Learning and Skills Council to pitch for an increased slice of the national resources based on performance achieved.

### **3.6 Skills**

The Roger Tym and Partners consortium study of the future needs and priorities for Milton Keynes and the South Midlands projected different levels and rates of growth for the region, with the implications for education and training provision differing according to the nature of the growth which might be experienced:-

- High skill jobs and population growth predominantly in young people;
- High skill jobs and population growth predominantly in older people;
- Low skill jobs and population growth predominantly in older people;
- Low skill jobs and population growth predominantly in young people;

That study, and subsequent work by the LSCs, accordingly identified a rising level of demand for education and training in all of school sixth forms, FE institutions and HE institutions, but without being able to reach clear conclusions as to how the incidence of this might fall. There is however a more general agreement that the long term forecasts project a continued shift towards service sector employment, with fewer jobs being supported by manufacturing. The wide range of skills required in the service sector still however means that the study found it difficult to clearly identify the future impact of these developments upon education and training provision.

The focus groups held as part of this study into the impact of EU immigration in some respects provide a more specific form of feedback, albeit for the shorter term. Current skills shortages were identified across the spectrum of job opportunities (for details cf. Section 5.5.1 below), and there was general agreement that immigration from the 1<sup>st</sup>. May 2004 accession territories could only assist in addressing these issues.

It was noted during the course of this study that the anecdotal and focus group evidence was that EU immigrants to the area were taking employment below their skill level. Other studies within Eastern Region discussed at a Migrant Workers study day in Cambridge had found this a surprising conclusion. However, the economics for the immigrant involve a need to gain employment quickly, which in fact make this an unsurprising result. It is possible that

there could therefore be a tendency towards upskilling and employment changes within the immigrant community as the years go by.

### **3.7 BLEDP Forecasts to 2021**

“Meeting the Needs”, the Draft Joint Economic Development Strategy for the Bedfordshire and Luton Economic Development Partnership (BLEDP) is a comprehensive document.

The highlight from this document for the purposes of this remit is its forecast of an additional 50,000 jobs requirement in the Bedfordshire and Luton economy between now and 2021. This is analysed by clusters and sectors:-

- Aviation related
- High tech manufacturing
- Other manufacturing
- Construction
- Financial services
- Leisure / tourism
- Retail / distribution
- Other services
- Public sector

and by possible sources of employment creation:-

- Growth of new SMEs
- Growth of existing employers
- Foreign direct investment
- Inward Investment from UK
- Social Enterprise and Other

An extract from the consultation draft of the Joint Economic Development Strategy giving the indicative numbers for each of these clusters / sectors and sources of employment is reprinted here as Appendix 3.

## **4. Methodology**

The approach to the project was agreed at the initial contract meeting, and progress updates given at the subsequent project review meetings on 2<sup>nd</sup>. February 2005 and 7<sup>th</sup>. April 2005.

Interviewing of the various parties was undertaken in person, by phone and by E-Mail. The scenario forecasts have been somewhat restricted by the limitations of data sources currently available, which are discussed elsewhere in the report and recommendations made, but the demand side projections are attached as Appendix 2, and considered at Sections 5.4.9 and 7.2 below.

Two Focus Groups were held as part of the project, to obtain qualitative input and comment, and these used the PinPoint Facilitation Process.

### **a) The PinPoint Facilitation Process**

This is an internationally recognised process that is more cost and time effective than traditional processes. In Europe it is known as 'Metaplan-Technique' or 'PinPoint-Method'. The overall time needed is, typically, 30% of that taken by other types of facilitation and learning delivery.

The process also facilitates the development of ideas and ensures full participation of respondents regardless of background or temperament; everybody has an influence on discussion and decisions, since the process is participative and interactive. This also ensures that participants 'buy' into the whole process. PinPointing introduces a problem solving approach in which decisions are made and agreed, and action plans are produced when appropriate to the subject matter. The process can accommodate any size of group and the advantages of the process include:

- Minimum time taken
- The participative and interactive approach allows everybody to have an influence on discussion and decisions because of the problem solving approach
- Decisions are made and agreed
- Negative conflict is eliminated
- Quiet or shy people are able to contribute ideas and influence
- People who are verbose or tend to hog the floor can be kept in check without loss of input
- The process provides an opportunity for visualisation, other forms of right brain stimulation and, where appropriate, accelerated learning techniques
- Complex issues can be simplified
- Capability for production of action plans, where appropriate
- The recording of sessions visually as they progress, allowing a complete record to be provided - usually on CD-Rom but also as a report containing a photographic record of the event.

### **b) The Focus Group Specifications**

Attendees at the Focus Groups were invited to give qualitative feedback on key issues which had emerged during the interviewing stages of the project, and in particular:-

- Perceptions of how the system works at present

- Participants' perceptions of the opportunities and difficulties posed by recently arrived and potential immigrants;
- Identification of the key skills shortfalls relative to employer needs in Bedfordshire and Luton;
- Identification of the specific nature of education, training and self-employment provision needed by EU Immigrants;

Comment on the input from the Focus Groups is made at Section 6 of this report, and in other sections as appropriate.

## **5. Key Findings and Issues**

### **5.1 Establishment of Database of Stakeholders**

This is covered under Section 4, Methodology, and the outcome is attached as Appendix 1.

### **5.2 Entry and Movement within the UK of Immigrants**

The position in respect of the last ten EU accession territories is not the same as with refugees and asylum seekers, in that as EU citizens the immigrants have access entitlement, and are therefore not controlled or subject to directed movement around the country under the Home Office Dispersal Policy.

There is therefore no basis for predicting the numbers coming to Bedfordshire and Luton from Home Office sources.

The initial presumption that, as Luton Airport enjoys good connections with Europe it would therefore become a convenient point of entry for immigrants of the last ten accession states, appears so far not to be borne out by developments. As more low cost flights to Europe are gradually introduced this may of course come to be the preferred route, but comment at the first Focus Group indicated that the most frequently used points of access were the Channel Tunnel and Kent ports, with most of the immigrants heading to the London area. After establishment of bearings, immigrants were then leaving the capital to go elsewhere - either on perceived opportunities in Bedfordshire and Luton, or because of historic family connections in Bedfordshire and Luton.

The presence of these new immigrants within Bedfordshire and Luton does not automatically mean that all of them gain employment within Bedfordshire and Luton; examples have been identified of new EU immigrant workers being transported on a daily basis out of Bedfordshire and Luton to employments in Corby and Leicestershire.

### **5.3 Eligibility for Existing Provision**

A recent EECARI report on Pathways to Employment: Services for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the East of England identified confusion among key stakeholders as regards the range of services available to asylum seekers and refugees in their local areas, including the provision of ESOL classes, volunteering opportunities, etc.

Similar issues arise in respect of immigration from the new EU member states, with different services having different eligibility criteria according to length of stay for citizens of the A8 countries.

For example:-

#### **a) Services via Jobcentre Plus**

- Financial assistance is not available to immigrants from the A8 accession territories unless they have been employed for 12 months out of 13;
- No type of assistance in provision is available if they haven't been registered with Jobcentre Plus for at least 6 months;

- Access to Jobcentre Plus offices is available re the advertisements and the computerised vacancy systems, but interviews and publicity on a recent television programme clarified that the interpreter services were not available in those circumstances.

#### **b) Services via the LSC and providers**

Eligibility for funded provision is satisfied if the applicant is able to confirm nationality of any of the EU territories.

#### **c) Services via Chamber Business Link**

There appear to be no restrictions on the rights of EU immigrants to access Chamber Business Link services in respect of self employment, business start up and general business advisory services.

### **5.4 EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

#### **5.4.1 Data Sources**

As discussed at the project review meetings on 2<sup>nd</sup>. February 2005 and 7<sup>th</sup>. April 2005, these are thinner than hoped, because:-

- While the Learning and Skills Council's Individual Learner Record (ILR) fields do include a field (L24) for country of domicile, it is not a mandatory field, and therefore information on country of origin or of last residence is deficient.
- The system for allocating NI numbers to the immigrants is the basis for ensuring the recording of individual activity within the recognised economy. The NI number is however only allocated to the EU accession territory immigrant on commencement of employment, and also does not record country of origin, country of last residence, or business sector.

#### **a) The Individual Learner Record (ILR)**

The lack of mandatory identification within the ILR system of the immigrant's country of origin or country of last residence is not an obstacle to an FE College's ability to secure payments from the LSC for education and training undertaken. The only requirement to secure payments via the LSC is to confirm residency within the EU; the number meeting this test is therefore greater than was the case pre 1<sup>st</sup>. May 2004, but the increase is not capable of analysis via the ILR record in the way hoped for.

The availability of more detailed information therefore depends on individual FE colleges and other programme suppliers choosing to capture additional information for their own purposes at the time of course registrations, and in fact Bedford College IT Department has very recently (9/6/05) indicated that it may be possible to extract data on country of origin and / or country of last residence from internal college systems.

However, this means that any data capable of collection by this means for the Learning Partnership area is only going to be as good as the number of programme delivery outlets prepared to collect this supplementary information. To provide a good statistical basis it will therefore be necessary for the recording of either country of origin or country of last residence data in the ILR to become mandatory, or become a requirement that this information is to be collected uniformly within Bedfordshire and Luton.

## **b) The NI Number Allocation System**

A possible alternative approach to collection of appropriate statistical detail exists which arises from the feature by which the NI numbers are only allocated to the new EU immigrants on actually starting in employment.

Since all employment activities are covered under the SIC coding system, a matching of the new NI numbers by country of origin to the first employer's SIC code would in theory provide useful information on employment sectors into which the immigrants were initially fitting.

Further reference to this possible opportunity is made in the recommendations at Section 7 below.

### **5.4.2 Analysis of the Immigrant Population by Age, Skills and Education**

The lack of a firm identified existing basis for data collection does mean that it has not been possible at this stage in the immigration cycle to identify an analysis of EU immigration from the most recent ten accession states by age, skill sets, etc. For reasons described under Funding of Education and Training Provision (below), a knowledge of skills and qualifications is not however a good guide to the sectors in which the immigrants actually find employment, due to the extent of down-skilling which is currently being observed in the interests of finding employment and therefore earning a living quickly.

A move towards the mandatory recording of data on country of origin or country of last residence (cf. Individualised Learner Record, above) would then open up the ability to undertake analysis of the immigrant population in the way originally envisaged. Such an analysis may therefore come to be of use in helping to project medium term training provision requirements as immigrants attempt later to transfer to jobs nearer to their real skill levels.

Further reference to this possible opportunity is made in the recommendations at Section 6 below.

### **5.4.3 Funding of Education and Training Provision by LSCs**

Despite the present weakness in data sources, and therefore the consequential need to exercise caution in interpreting conclusions capable of being drawn from non-numeric data, there are however reasons for some confidence in the ability of the partners to cope with the impact of the expected immigration from the ten newest accession states.

Since this project was committed, there has been a General Election which has seen no change in administration, so:-

- It is considered probable that Skills for Life, which are currently in the top three priorities in respect of adult education, will continue to be seen as a key priority for funding. It is therefore considered reasonable to anticipate that the amount of funding which the LSC is required to devote to this area of provision can within reason rise to match demonstrable need, if necessary at the expense of other provision, and / or on the basis of an increase related to past performance (cf. Section 3.4 above). (See also under Funding Values, below.)
- The indications from employers are that present immigration from the A8 countries is of an already technically skilled nature, where the immigrant community is in practice taking employment opportunities below their skill level. The life skills needed by this

group therefore overwhelmingly relate to the provision of ESOL. Comment from employers and union representation in the Focus Groups was that few of the immigrants so far engaged by these big employers within Bedfordshire and Luton are currently arriving with other key skills deficiencies.

- The acceptance of jobs below training and skill level attained is logical, since immigrants from the A8 accession territories do not enjoy access to benefits, and therefore need to find gainful employment as fast as possible.
- It should be noted that there has so far, nationally, been no discernible immigration from the Eastern European Romany community. Were this to change in the future, the likelihood of an increased demand on the other life skills would come into play.

#### **5.4.4 Funding of Education and Training Provision by Learndirect**

Opportunities for access to Skills for Life, including ESOL, also exist via Learndirect, and a similar position may be expected to prevail as applies to Learning and Skills Council provision.

It is therefore considered probable that Life Skills will also continue to be seen as a key priority for Learndirect funding, and that the amount of funding which Learndirect could devote to this area of provision could also within reason rise to match demonstrable need, if necessary at the expense of other provision. (This is considered further under Funding Values, below.)

#### **5.4.5 Skills Training Provision**

The impact on skills training provision, for which demand is therefore most likely to come from employers becoming willing to up-skill their workforce over a period of time, is therefore likely to be related more to the skills training requirements naturally arising from the projected 50,000 jobs expansion within the Bedfordshire and Luton economy by 2021 than from any specific relationship to immigration from the most recent ten EU accession countries.

The focus groups identified significant skills shortages across a wide spectrum of business activity, and this is considered under Skills and Employers, Section 5.5.1 below.

The ability of the Bedfordshire and Luton economy to cope with the level of skills training needed is also considered under Skills and Employers, Section 5.5.1 below.

#### **5.4.6 Funding Values**

Funding values for the Learning and Skills Council Bedfordshire and Luton for the last two finalised accounting years are as follows:-

	<u>2002/03</u>	<u>2003/04</u>
	£000	£000
All ESOL + all Key Skills:	5384	7673
Total LSC Beds and Luton Funding	39874	44405
% of Total	13.50%	17.28%

In respect of comment made above under the Funding of Education and Training Provision by the LSCs and by Learndirect, the scope for there to be an increase in funding through the LSC if needed to increase the availability of ESOL within the overall LSC budget is therefore perceived as realistic. The potential limiting factors on this are considered at Section 5.4.7 below.

Learndirect is also considered to offer the likelihood of similar funding flexibility within overall budgets, and it is additionally also (currently) possible for an individual Learndirect hub to negotiate for an absolute increase in Learndirect units allocations from the University for Industry.

While ever the government education prioritisation concentrates on Skills for Life, it should therefore be possible to accommodate the ESOL requirements of the immigrants for the foreseeable future, subject to:-

- No change in prioritisation or major reduction in funding levels;
- No movement of immigrants into Bedfordshire and Luton which is grossly disproportionate to the total numbers entering the country
- The impact of limiting factors as described below.

The impact on demand of possible variations due to subsequent re-emigration and replacement by further immigration is considered below and in Appendix 3.

#### **5.4.7 Limiting Factors**

Potentially limiting factors are:-

Any policy changes which come to affect the above assessments;

The number of ESOL tutors available, which could well become the key limiting factor, because:-

- In any event an absolute increase in the number of these is likely to be needed, even allowing for possible stretching of class sizes;
- These problems will be exacerbated because of the impact of the regulations requiring enhancement of tutor qualification levels, especially Level 4 qualifications.

#### **5.4.8 Specific areas to address re ESOL provision**

Existing provision is delivered in a variety of ways and settings, varying from a limited provision of eg. 2 hours / week to around 15 hours per week. Delivery may be in colleges, at work places, in community centres, etc.

The balance of this provision will need review to determine the pattern of delivery and the offering that will best suit the needs of the client group. It needs to be recognised that the 15 hours / week or greater is the more likely to assist the new immigrant quickly into gainful employment, and it may be that some full time intensive provision may also need to be considered.

It may also be necessary to consider adjustments in the location of provision, and possible adjustments to the timing of provision - eg. it may be helpful, or become a requirement, for

large employers of immigrant labour to have work-based ESOL immediately before or immediately after a shift change.

Concerns have been raised elsewhere (in a Leicestershire project) that the use of technical English is not sufficiently addressed in current ESOL provision, which has potential implications for an immigrant's ability to undertake a job satisfactorily, and on his/her comprehension of health and safety issues. As a precaution, it is suggested that this aspect is therefore reviewed with employers.

#### **5.4.9 Possible Variations in Demand**

The number of immigrants assumed per year into the local economy forming the basis for this calculation is based on the proposition that the number required can be targeted. A total of 15,000 over the period to 2021 (ie a little under one third of the BLEDP draft consultation expectation of a 50,000 increase in jobs in the Bedfordshire and Luton economy) is assumed as a reasonable basis for the purposes of this assessment, and this is considered in the Conclusions and Recommendations in Section 7.2.

When considering the possible demand for Skills for Life (predominantly ESOL) over the period to 2020/21, consideration however also needs to be given to the possible impact were re-emigration and replacement immigration to occur.

There is no evidence on this one way or the other at this stage, but anecdotal comment in the press suggests that many immigrants (Polish are generally used as the example) expect to return to their home country at some time in the future.

Using the basic assessment of net 15,000 immigration over the period to 2020/21, the impact on demand were this to occur is considered in Appendix 2 attached, for situations of:-

1. No re-emigration;
2. 100% re-emigration and replacement immigration after 8 year stays;
3. 100% re-emigration and replacement immigration after 5 year stays;
4. A 50% re-emigration and matching replacement immigration after 5 year stays;

In this example, the number of EU immigrants needing consideration under the Skills for Life programme, expected to be predominantly ESOL, ranges from the basic 15,000 in example 1 above; to 24,000 for example 2; to more than double the basic 15,000 at 33,750 for example 3; to 22,500 for example 4.

The likeliest answer is of course a mixed position, but it would be reasonable to suggest that examples 1 and 3 represent the two extreme ends of the demand spectrum. If the basic premise of a net 15,000 immigration from the accession territories is deemed reasonable, realistic and manageable on the broad range of considerations, then this would put the likely incremental planning for ESOL services over the period to 2020/21 in the range between 15,000 and 33,750.

#### **5.4.10 Recording of Outputs by LSCs and Learndirect**

The present targeting, recording and scoring systems applicable to LSCs are somewhat biased towards completion of qualifications. While this may be appropriate to the circumstances of existing UK residents, it will not necessarily result in adequate reflection of the work which has to be committed by LSCs, FE providers and Learndirect to immigrants from the accession territories needing ESOL assistance. The customer requirement in this

instance may be, in many cases, to exit from the programme because of obtaining a job (a success), rather than proceeding to successful completion of the formal qualification, which if completed at all, may come much later.

LSCs, FE providers and Learndirect may therefore wish to consider negotiation of a modification to the scoring systems so as to adequately reflects the successes of addressing the needs of this group of customers.

**5.5 EMPLOYMENT**

This section of the report covers:-

- The implications for Skills and Employers
- Recognition of Overseas Qualifications and Experience
- The implications for Self-Employment
- The implications for Business Start Ups

**5.5.1 Skills and Employers**

The Focus Groups identified major existing skills shortfalls in Bedfordshire and Luton, across all areas featuring in the BLEDP draft plan, relative to BLEDP’s forecast of job creation requirements to 2021, and these are detailed in Section 6 below.

Shortages of construction skills unsurprisingly featured significantly in the focus group discussions. By way of comment, it should be noted specifically that shortages here are likely to have to be resolved within each locality, as it should not be assumed that these skills can be imported from elsewhere in the UK. For example, nearly all authorities will have to cope around the same time with a Building Schools for the Future programme, many health trusts have major infrastructure spending in the pipeline, urban regeneration companies will be adding to the demand, as will transport infrastructure and housing projects across much of the country, etc.

The overall perception of the two focus groups was that EU immigration could only serve to assist in getting to attainment of the economic objective. This is especially true if targeting the filling of specific skills shortages from the new accession territories, which is recommended for consideration, were to become a realistic option.

This approach would provide the basis for capacity planning, under various scenarios identified of permanent immigration, or immigration followed by re-emigration and replacement with further immigration.

This approach could then constructively use the information from the BLEDP Draft Plan to 2021; eg deliberately target say 15000 jobs in the 16 financial years from 2005/06 to 2020/21 (the exact number would obviously be for local consultation and agreement). Recognition of the existing skills shortage could therefore give rise to front-loading the targeting, eg:-

2005/06	1000
2006/07	1500
2007/08	1500
2008/09	1250
2009/10	1250
2010/11	1000
Thereafter	750 pa for 10 years

This would give some perception of incremental demand as the basis for ESOL planning (cf. Section 5.4.9 above), although it would need to be recognised that there would still need to be some flexibility in the planning assessments due to potential arrivals of non-targeted immigrants either directly from an A8 country or by movement around of A8 country of origin immigrants within the UK.

The BLEDP draft plan identifies business sectors targeted. If targeting of immigration is accepted, it would equally be possible to bias the targeting for EU immigration towards capturing these skills. This targeting would of course have to be kept under constant review because of movements within Bedfordshire and Luton's economic priorities to 2021, and movements in the timing of the developments in question.

While, at this early stage after EU accession of the A8 countries, there can be no firm data as to the length of stay of an immigrant, it is considered worth attempting to assess the knock-on impact on incremental demand for ESOL provision, compared to the above indicative profile, if the average length of stay in the UK before leaving for another country or returning home to the immigrant's country of origin turned out to be only 5 years or 8 years. If the emigration were to be replaced from the same sources then the revolving demand for ESOL capacity would be significantly higher than that involved in the basic proposition above. This is illustrated in Appendix 3, and commented on at Section 5.4.9 above,

It should be noted that the skills levels encountered so far by major employers (eg Amazon, Asda Distribution, Exel Logistics for Argos Distribution) - appear to be satisfactory for the need. The company participants on the focus groups identified clear benefits and satisfaction with the immigrants taken on in their specific circumstances. For economic reasons, immigrants appear to be down-skilling to gain quick employment to secure earnings and therefore their place in the UK official systems.

A trend towards later movement of employment could therefore be encountered as immigrants either:-

- Up-skill again as opportunities become available, or
- Attain overseas qualification and / or experience recognitions in the UK via UK Naric, which would then lead to transfer to jobs more in line with their original qualifications, and a later demand for some upskilling of qualifications to match UK requirements.

The actual skills encountered therefore fall into two parts:-

- The skills that someone claims to have, subject to recognition by UK Naric, and
- The skill level actually used in attaining their first employment in the UK

There is a natural tendency, imposed by the restriction of access to benefits, for the actual skill levels filled initially by an EU immigrant (or any other immigrant for that matter) to gravitate to the lower end of the skills spectrum, and at the practical level it would be reasonable to project that therefore any skills-related training initially required would therefore be likely to be biased towards the lower end of the skills spectrum.

## **5.5.2 Recognition of Overseas Qualifications and Experience**

One of the principle barriers for an immigrant seeking work in the UK is the need for recognition (conversion) of the qualifications which he/she has gained elsewhere, and the time taken to obtain that recognition.

The qualifications recognition body is UK NARIC (the National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom), and the cost of qualification recognition is currently £35.

Provided that translation has been undertaken, and that original certificates have been brought into the country with the immigrant, then recognition of academic qualifications is almost immediate via NARIC.

Where however these have not been brought, then considerable time may be used up in getting them. For professional qualifications, verifiability is a stumbling block, frequently involving the need to get references from previous employers in other countries. This again can be a prolonged affair.

Research being undertaken on a project in Leicestershire approximately at the same time as this project identified that those needing to access the service were frequently unaware of its existence, or took a long time to find out; without it, the overseas qualifications gained are frequently rated as worthless by potential employers. It is therefore important that immigrants are made aware of the need for qualifications conversion, and that it is essential to access it as soon as possible after arrival.

Two projects exist in the country, only, which address qualification recognition and translation issues, and provide assistance in these matters. These are European Social Fund (ESF) programmes, in which the usual costs of qualification conversion payable by an individual are fully financed. These are so far the only funded programmes of this type in the country. One is the Overseas Qualification Development Programme at Leicester College, covering customers in Leicester City, which has been running for some years, and the other is expected to start in Liverpool.

The Leicester College programme is registered with UK NARIC, the qualifications recognition body, and so assists in resolving recognition issues. There are also arrangements with many of the professional bodies (eg. Law Society, General Medical Council, Nursing Midwifery Council, Teacher Training Agency, the CCAB accountancy bodies, etc) and the higher education sector.

With a need to have immigrants from the ten latest EU accession territories contributing to the economy and fulfilling their own potential as quickly as possible, it is suggested that consideration should be given to investigating the establishment and funding of a similar programme in Bedfordshire and Luton.

### **5.5.3 Self Employment and Business Start Up**

It is anticipated in the Bedfordshire and Luton Economic Development Plan to 2021 that the local economy as a whole will benefit from a balance of:-

- Businesses relocating into Bedfordshire and Luton
- Maintenance of existing businesses
- Growth in existing businesses
- New business start ups.

Similarly, the local LSCs' baseline view on the Roger Tym and Partners consortium study of the future needs and priorities for Milton Keynes and the South Midlands suggests that a significant growth in self employment will be a feature of the period of that study (to 2031).

This requires individuals to have business and management skills over and above the generic skills required by the industry in which they work.

The present target for Chamber Business, excluding SRB funding and New Deal funding, is 120 new business starts (with 150 new jobs) per year, and the actual achievement in 2004/05 by Chamber Business was approximately 150 starts. Inevitably, not all businesses use the Chamber Business Link's facilities for start up advice, so at an assessment of approximately 40% assistance to start ups by Chamber Business, new business starts in Bedfordshire and Luton can therefore be assessed as currently running at under 400 per year.

Additionally, the number of new jobs per business start was found, in a regional survey undertaken in 2001, to fall in the range of 0 to 4 employees for 96% of the businesses started.

The number of new starts, and jobs coming from them, is therefore significantly below the level which would be needed to make a real impact in the context of the BLEDP projections of job increases needed by 2021, and it should be additionally noted that some 8,000 to 12,000 of the new jobs in the BLEDP consultation draft are perceived to come from the growth of new SMEs.

Some Jobcentre Plus areas, not currently including Bedfordshire and Luton, have separate self employment provision budgets in addition to those held at Business Links. Current practice within the Bedfordshire and Luton Jobcentre Plus area is to refer those interested in self employment from Jobcentre Plus to Chamber Business Link, whose advisers can be present at Jobcentre Plus as required. These references therefore fall within the present Chamber Business Links starts level of 120 to 150 new business starts per year. There appear currently to be approximately five times as many references in this way from the Luton office as from the Bedford office.

Some immigrants (from Bosnia, Serbia and Romania) have approached Chamber Business for assistance over the past 18 months; none, however, in that period were noted as coming from the ten most recent EU accession territories.

Many EU immigrants are entrepreneurial enough to start businesses, given a helpful environment, and it is considered that bids for the funding needed to work towards the attainment of a significant increase in the annual number of new business starts in the Bedfordshire and Luton economy need to be going in now, via:-

either all available funding sources, eg.

- Chamber Business
- Jobcentre Plus
- BLEDP
- County,
- Borough,
- etc

or through one mutually agreed funding source.

## 6. Specific Input from the Focus Groups

Attendance at the Focus Groups covered the Learning Partnership, education providers, other public sector bodies, suppliers involved in the delivery of projects to the public sector, the BLEDP, representatives of sizeable employers and trade union representatives.

The participants were invited to give qualitative feedback on their perception of how the system works at present, and on key issues which had emerged during the interviewing stages of the project.

### 6.1 Perception of how the system works at present

The overall perception arising from the focus groups was that immigration from the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004 ten accession territories could only serve to assist in working towards the economic objective for Bedfordshire and Luton of an additional 50,000 jobs by 2021.

It should be noted that company participants on the groups identified clear benefits and satisfaction with the immigrants taken on so far.

Comments included:-

- *System in place to register immigrants;*
- *We have plenty of jobs available;*
- *Many are settled and ready for ESOL;*

However:-

- *Negativity stops the system working;*
- *System is difficult to explain;*
- *Negativity - behaviour of the general public and media;*
- *Some immigrants not prepared for basic test of literacy / numeracy;*
- *Difficulties re recognition of foreign qualifications;*
- *Degree qualifications pre-1991 not recognised;*
- *Reluctance to acknowledge foreign experience;*
- *Funding can be a problem*

### 6.2 Perception of the opportunities and difficulties posed by recently arrived and potential immigrants;

Opportunities were perceived as:-

- Opportunity to close the skills gap;
- Helps to create an interesting and diverse society;
- More diverse workforce;
- Good visibility of potential employers;
- Skilled work available;
- Opportunities to plug skills gaps;
- Increased labour supply;
- Lots of low paid jobs;

- Ability to earn money quickly compared to earnings position in country of origin;
- The immigrants were perceived as hard working and excellent learners;
- Opportunity to make use of their talents and skills;
- Opportunity to improve public services;
- More jobs created

Difficulties were perceived as:-

- Language difficulties, including impact on health and safety issues;
- Attitudes, some unwillingness to break out of own culture;
- New environment and terminology;
- Discrimination, integration into the existing workforce, and vulnerability issues;
- Abilities not recognised;
- Qualifications not recognised, leading to difficulties in recognition of skills and talents;
- Lack of opportunities commensurate with skills levels;
- Competition with local workers;
- Impact on accommodation;
- Lower wage rates;
- Jealousy from a less flexible host community;
- Lack of data about the immigrants and the numbers of them;
- Confusion

It was noticeable that many of the participants in the focus groups who may be described as working “at the coal face” were broadly unaware of the job increase requirements of the BLEDP consultation draft plan, and of the business sectors involved.

### **6.3 Identification of the key skills shortfalls relative to employer needs in Bedfordshire and Luton;**

Both groups identified major existing skills shortfalls in Bedfordshire and Luton, across all areas featuring in the BLEDP draft plan, relative to BLEDP’s forecast of job creation requirements to 2021.

- Managerial skills
- Entrepreneurship and business ownership skills
- Communication skills
- IT skills
- Customer service skills
- Language competencies
- Aviation engineering
- Engineering for technical manufacturing
- The full range of construction skills
- The full spectrum of healthcare staff
- Retail staff
- HGV and LGV drivers
- Fork Lift Truck drivers
- Logistics, warehousing and distribution
- People prepared to take dirty low paid and menial jobs
- Harvest seasonal workers, fruit and vegetable pickers
- Child and adult care, social care services

The question was posed in one group that the skills shortages identified were so wide ranging and numerous that they posed a considerable question mark, independently of anything to do with EU immigration, as to the ability of existing systems and institutions to cope with the needs identified in the BLEDP consultation draft plan.

#### **6.4 Identification of the specific nature of education, training and self-employment provision needed by EU Immigrants;**

- ESOL
- Knowledge of English appropriate to the business sector
- Also some comments on numeracy requirements
- Knowledge of UK regulations
- Knowledge of employment rights
- Easy access to all colleges / other facilities
- Identification of individual training plans
- Knowledge of funding opportunities
- IT skills
- Training in where the skills shortages are
- Participation by employers
- Flexibility of course timings
- Opportunities to upgrade qualifications where required to UK accepted levels

Capacity and availability of qualified tutors was seen as a potential problem.

Re self employment provision:-

- How to get started, understanding the system
- Knowledge of UK regulations and clarification on certification
- Knowledge of employment legislation
- Knowledge of funding opportunities
- Sources of business advice, support, mentoring
- Industry specific skills and qualifications

With the exception of the first of the group above, in reality this list is no different to the needs of any existing UK resident wishing to start up in business.

An opportunity here was perceived in using the diversity brought by EU immigrants to create new business opportunities.

## **7. Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **7.1 Data Sources**

#### **a) ILR**

To establish reliable statistical data in respect of EU immigration, it will become necessary to make country of origin or country of last residence information mandatory as ILR input information, or ensure that all Bedfordshire and Luton education and training providers collect this information voluntarily as a part of their recording systems for this purpose.

#### **b) Use of SIC Codes in the NI system for analysis purposes**

A matching of the new NI numbers, only issued to the new EU immigrants on attaining their first employment, by country of origin to the first employer's SIC code would be capable of providing useful information on the employment sectors into which the immigrants were initially fitting. It is recommended that this possibility is explored.

### **7.2 Take control of the planning by moving to targeted recruitment in the 10 most recent accession territories**

Within Section 6, above, major existing skills shortages have been identified, and the issues involved in addressing this will be compounded by the required rate of jobs increase in the Bedfordshire and Luton economy envisaged in the BLEDP consultation draft plan

It would be possible to take a significant measure of control of the planning of employment and education issues by targeting / advertising the Bedfordshire and Luton area, and the skills required within it, in selected target European locations.

The possibilities are covered in the section of the report dealing with Findings and Key Issues, and it is recommended that this approach is taken.

### **7.3 Regional Aspects**

The issues raised in this report will apply to a significant extent outside of Bedfordshire and Luton, for example in Eastern Region and in the other areas which are the subject of the South Midlands Growth Study, ie. Milton Keynes Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire area, and also in Northamptonshire.

It is therefore recommended that information is disseminated to these areas, and consideration given to possible supplementary investigation into similar issues arising there.

### **7.4 Overseas Qualification Recognition**

It is suggested that agencies could usefully bid to establish a Bedfordshire and Luton service in respect of overseas qualification recognition similar to the one running at Leicester College, which would a) defray the £35 cost of conversion of a qualification, and b) more importantly provide practical assistance in getting through the process in a timely fashion.

## **7.5 Access to Jobcentre Plus Services**

Independently of any other review of access to facilities which may be under way, it is suggested that it may be appropriate for the lack of access to interpreter facilities to be reviewed, since this obstacle merely serves to extend the time taken for EU citizens with rights of residence to get to understand the systems and constraints, as well as the time taken to get to identify the learning opportunities and the employment opportunities available.

## **7.6 ESOL Training**

It will be necessary to review the balance and appropriateness of ESOL provision so as to best meet the needs of the expanding customer base, and it is also suggested as a precaution that the quality of tuition re technical English in ESOL provision is monitored to ensure that it meets employers' needs.

## **7.7 Self Employment and New Business Starts**

The existing rates of Self Employment and Business Start Up are radically below the profile needed to match the economic planning. Many EU immigrants are entrepreneurial enough to start businesses, given a helpful environment, and it is recommended that the appropriate bids for funding for an enhanced service are launched as soon as possible in line with the proposals at Section 5.5.3 above.

## **7.8 Mapping**

There is a need for a comprehensive, iterative mapping exercise of facilities and support available to be undertaken covering all agencies, all categories of immigrant including old EU, new EU, other economic migrants, refugees, asylum seekers.

This would need to cover:-

For each agency:-

- Length of time to qualify for each specific service
- Length of time to qualify for each specific funding stream (eg New Deal, self employment provision via Jobcentre Plus funding or via Chamber Business Link funding streams, etc)
- How to develop a true service whereby any point of access gets you directed correctly to the most appropriate opportunity and agency
- Access to free provision
- Access to paying provision

## **7.9 Consider other aspects of issues around immigration, eg. health, housing**

There are of course other issues related to immigration from the ten EU accession territories (as for any other source of immigrants), for example the provision of healthcare and housing resources, and it is recommended that consideration is given to a review of these related aspects of the economic planning in respect of immigration.

## **7.10 Validation of this Exercise in 2 Years**

It may be useful to validate the conclusions of this study in say two years time, when more specific data on the immigration from the ten EU accession territories may be available, and there will also be evidence of the practical impact upon the Bedfordshire and Luton economy. This time span would also allow for the dissemination to the staff of the various agencies and service providers of the key data from the BLEDP consultation draft plan in respect of required jobs increases by 2021 and sectors involved.

## **7.11 Recording of Outputs by LSCs and Learndirect**

Under the existing scoring structures, there is a considerable risk that less than full credit for effort committed to ESOL programmes for the accession territory immigrants will be recorded.

While the thrust of the present scoring systems applicable to LSCs is directed towards the completion of qualifications, as indicated in Section 5.4.10 above, the EU accession territory immigrants' customer requirement in this instance may be in many instances to exit from the programme as soon as possible because of successfully gaining employment, rather than proceeding to completion of the formal qualification. The formal qualification, if completed at all, may only come much later.

It is therefore suggested that LSCs and Learndirect may wish to consider negotiation of a modification to the scoring systems so as to adequately reflect that the programmes will have delivered real economic benefit, while potentially frequently falling short of the existing success point. If this is not done, the real measure of the success of addressing the needs of this group of customers may be missed.

## **8. Personnel Involved in the Project**

Uday Dholakia (Senior Partner) - responsible for overall management, delivery and evaluation of the project.

Richard Mitchell - responsible for project management and research and for delivery of PinPoint workshops for focus groups. Production of report and recommendations.

Ron Lynch - responsible for design and delivery of PinPoint workshops for the focus groups.

## **9. Acknowledgments**

We wish to record our thanks to the following for their assistance with this project:-

Stephen Ferris - Executive Director, Learning Partnership Bedfordshire and Luton

Sean Perera - Research and Policy Analyst, LSC Bedfordshire and Luton

Sutish Mahrra - Development Manager, Jobcentre Plus

Their help and support was invaluable in helping to progress the project.

We also wish to record our thanks to all those who gave up their time to share their personal views and experiences in the course of the interviewing process and focus groups.