

Demography and Adult Learning

A Discussion paper for the NIACE Commission of Inquiry

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This is a thematic paper prepared to support the NIACE Commission of Inquiry into a strategy for lifelong learning. It maps out the demographic changes which are taking place in the UK, and makes some suggestions about their implications for the future design of lifelong learning. Respondents are particularly invited to comment on the implications of demographic change for lifelong learning policy and practice, and on the accuracy and completeness of this account of the issues.

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1.	Introduction: the purpose of this paper	5
2.	Executive Summary.....	7
3.	Demography – the context	11
	Understanding the shape of the UK population	11
	How big will the population be?	12
3.1.	Age.....	15
	Dependency ratios	16
	Fertility	18
	Life expectancy	18
	Intergenerational issues	19
	Age and cultural diversity	19
	Implications of ageing	19
3.2.	Ethnic mix.....	21
3.3.	Migration	24
	Inward migration	25
	Outward migration.....	28
	Internal migration	28
	Implications of migration	29
	Occupation and social class.....	31
3.4.	Family Structures.....	33
3.5.	Gender.....	34
3.6.	Cohort experiences.....	36
4.	The demographic future: what might we expect?	41
5.	The new shape of the lifecourse.....	43
	Childhood	44
	Adolescence.....	44
	Young adults: initial labour market entry and adult identity.....	45
	Family formation.....	45
	Mid career.....	46
	Labour market withdrawal	48
	Retirement	48
	Dependency	49
5.1.	How learning participation changes across the lifespan	50
	Participation.....	50
	Access.....	51
	Qualifications	51
	Economic purposes.....	52
	Social and civic participation	52
	Personal development.....	52
	Perceived benefits of learning	52

6.	Implications for learning policy	53
6.1.	Implications for learning: generic issues	56
	The initial education paradigm	56
	Motivation, progression and experience.....	57
	Learning and qualifications	57
	Learning and social cohesion	58
	Learning and role change	59
	Retirement: the growing phase.....	60
	Distinguishing needs and demands	60
6.2.	Participation: the “new clientele”	62
6.3.	Curriculum priorities	64
	Purposes: individual and collective	64
	Economic motives	64
	Social and civic motives	67
	Personal learning motives	68
	Knowledge transfer	68
6.4.	Structural Issues.....	70
	Volume and funding	70
	Location.....	71
	Advice and Guidance	72
7.	Recommendations/ policy proposals.....	73
8.	Reference List	75

1. Introduction: the purpose of this paper

The shape of the British population is changing. It is becoming older, more diverse and, in some ways, more mobile, and its regional distribution is changing.

Some of these changes are predictable: the young adults of 2025 have already been born, and most of them already live here. Other developments are less certain: we cannot accurately predict future patterns of international migration, driven by economic need, social, political and environmental change here and elsewhere. There may also be changes we have not anticipated: over the next half century it is possible that new patterns of disease, and climate change will make an impact.

It is clear that the issues become complex as age and migration interact. The only certain thing is that in 50 years time Britain will be a different place, and being British will have a different meaning. This will make life better for some, and worse for others

Government responses to these issues, in the UK as elsewhere, are complex (and at times simplistic). Population ageing is dealt with through the *Opportunity Age* strategy, which attempts to bring together all aspects of policy on ageing to provide a coherent response across all Departments of State. On migration, a more politically sensitive subject, policy is more complex, involving economic, cultural, citizenship and security concerns, which are not all well integrated. On children and young people, key policy documents are *Every Child Matters*, and *Youth Matters*.

Through legislation and broader policy interventions, the state provides a framework for peoples' lives. It creates definitions of citizenship, a structure of security, and mechanisms to maintain order, so that people know that they belong, and on what terms. Policy also sets a framework of expectations about the lifecourse: when people leave initial education, when they retire, what support they will receive when raising children, or caring for dependents. It also provides the framework of education to prepare people for adult life, and health services, to enable them to lead full and active lives.

The recent extension of healthy adult life well beyond current "working age" raises the prospect that we might evolve very different ways of distributing activity (learning, earning, childrearing, voluntary activity, reflection and rest) across the lifecourse. Some commentators have suggested that the state also has a role in supporting, promoting or guaranteeing wellbeing and happiness. In the emerging demographic context, the question of how far the state extends its remit is one for debate. Conversely, developments in learning affect peoples' expectations of life and work, and of their relationships with their neighbours and the wider community.

Demographic change will, in turn, affect the kinds of learning which people need and take part in. Migration creates new learning challenges for the newly arrived and for host communities. People will need to learn to live in more diverse communities, maintaining their old values and cultures at the same time as coming to terms with new ones, and learning to manage the tensions which come with cultural diversity. If current patterns of migration continue, more serious consideration will have to be given to issues of language learning and intercultural learning. Alongside this, if current patterns of life expectancy continue, most people can expect 20 years of healthy active life without either of the two things which have traditionally provided the core purpose of adult life: paid work and child rearing. What will be the role of learning in providing meaning and purpose to these years? How large a part will caring for a growing number of dependent older people (on a paid or unpaid basis) play a part in this.

Social and technological change will also affect how and where we learn, and policymakers will need more subtle approaches to defining and measuring learning if they wish to influence change. We already know that much of the learning which adults undertake is done outside formal education and training institutions, and is not measured through formal qualifications: what is the role of public policy and the state in helping to shape, or provide access to such activity?

This paper explores some of these questions, asking what the implications of demographic change might be for the kind of education and training “system” we will need in coming decades. The two major issues are ageing and migration. For each of these, the paper explores the history, current and possible future trends. It then considers the implications for what needs to be learned, how and when, and the challenges for public policy and for agencies which provide resources for learning.

2. Executive Summary

A lifelong learning strategy

Britain is becoming older, and more culturally diverse, and these changes are bound to have an impact on what people need, and want, to learn. This paper is concerned with these demographic changes: with how many people there will be in Britain, what sort of people they will be, where they will live and work, and how these factors are likely to change.

It assumes that a strategy for lifelong learning will seek:

1. to support all individuals: providing an environment where every individual is respected and supported in pursuing her or his own aspirations, economic, social and personal.
2. to enable all individuals to contribute to society through formal and informal work and community activity

and that it will do this for all people, regardless of age, social class, gender, ethnicity, or country of origin.

In doing this it will recognise that the purpose of economic success is to enable all individuals to lead fulfilled lives, in work and out of it, and that individuals' learning will need to support both. It will also need to recognise the needs and potential contribution of all those (a majority overall) who are not currently engaged in the labour market, and many of whom will never be. The greatest happiness of the greatest number will only be served by a framework which recognises the importance of economic, social and personal learning for all, and seeks to balance these three.

Demographic changes we can expect

Demographic change will make a significant impact on the shape and nature of the British population over the next two or three decades. As a result of rising life expectancy, fertility remaining below replacement rate, continuing inward migration (driven by economic and political forces), and rising real retirement ages, we can expect to see an overall growth in population, and particularly in the numbers of people who are economically inactive (mainly through retirement). It is virtually certain that we will see:

- **growing numbers of “young old” people**, mainly aged 50-75¹, most of whom will be in good health and many of them still economically active;
- **growing numbers of “old old” people**, mainly aged 75 -100+, many potentially active, but dependent on others for some aspects of daily life;
- **shrinking numbers of young people** entering the labour market;
- **a growing proportion of the population from minority ethnic backgrounds** from 8% in 2000 to around 18% in 2040 (largely from South Asian backgrounds where fertility rates remain relatively high)
- **greater dispersal of ethnic minorities**, both British born and new immigrants, producing a more evenly mixed population;
- **a continuing net inflow of migrants**, with relatively small numbers flowing abroad, mainly in later middle age, being outweighed by, largely younger,

¹ These age ranges are only indicative, since individuals differ widely: some 85 year olds are more healthy and active than some 55 year olds, and vice versa.

people entering, for economic and political reasons.

Changes already taking place

These changes are already having an impact on the shape of the lifecourse. Key changes include:

- **deferred adulthood:** young people are taking longer to establish themselves in adult roles and the labour market;
- **more complex career patterns:** including more job change for many (although many people still have relatively stable employment patterns across their lifespan);
- **more complex family patterns:** with divorce, second families, and lone parent families becoming more common;
- **skills shortages for mid career managers and professionals:** as a result of a significant decline in the number of people in the 35-50 age range;
- **rising real retirement ages:** which are now in the early 60s, and may rise towards 70 over the next decades;
- **improving health and life expectancy:** producing much larger numbers of people in retirement, which will last for much longer, much of it potentially healthy and active;
- **growing numbers of dependent very old people:** reliant on the support of other people for some aspects of everyday life (with a small proportion in residential care).

Areas of uncertainty

The economic and social impact of these changes will depend on a number of unknown factors, including:

- **demand for labour:** will economic growth continue, and with it continuing labour market demand for older people and migrants;
- **employer flexibility:** will employers allow increased flexibility of work, which would make better work-life balance possible for all, and staying in work more attractive to older people;
- **volume of migration:** will Government be able to (or wish to) change patterns of immigration, and will recent migrant groups (especially East Europeans) stay or return to their countries of origin, which will affect labour supply and wage costs;
- **degree of social integration:** how far will migrant groups integrate or develop parallel social structures, which can ease or exacerbate social tensions;
- **regional concentration of work:** will the trend to concentrate high skilled work in the South East continue, which affects regional distribution of work, wealth and wellbeing;
- **development of the housing market:** will developments in the housing market, make population mobility easier or more difficult?
- **climate change:** will climate change, and associated resource issues, result in significant movement of population within the UK or from outside.

Growing groups of potential learners

This will mean a growth in the need for adult learning of all kinds, but particularly from:

- people in the “third age” of active old age, often in some form of employment;
- dependent old people;
- first generation immigrants;
- internal migrants – people moving to new areas within the UK;
- those left behind in declining communities by industrial restructuring;
- people making major career changes in middle or later life.

Learning priorities

The key learning priorities will therefore be:

- maintaining the employability of older people
- developing qualifications systems which enable older people, and people with qualifications and experience from other countries, to have their real skills and qualifications recognised and used to access appropriate work;
- supporting more frequent and more complex life transitions, including changing jobs, and moving home (including country);
- supporting people to find meaning and purpose in post employment life;
- transferring skills, knowledge and experience between generations;
- promoting citizenship and community cohesion: assisting newcomers to integrate, host communities to welcome; and communities to maintain a healthy evolving social life;
- enabling people to maintain rewarding social and intellectual lives.

Preliminary policy proposals

This is a first, tentative, attempt at proposals for policy priority. It will need refining in the light of further discussion and consultation, and the proposals emerging from other parts of the Commission’s work.

The following are the key priorities. To list these does not imply that all will be provided by formal educational institutions, nor that all will be funded from public sources.

- 1. Rebalancing the curriculum:** to support individuals who are experiencing more frequent and complex transitions and change (and especially those who will be spending a much longer period of their lives in active retirement): a significant expansion of programmes and activities which support:
 - a. maintenance of social networks;
 - b. personal development and the exploration of meaning and purpose;
 - c. maintenance of health.
- 2. Supporting social cohesion:** to support all those who are migrating into and within the country: a significant expansion of programmes and activities which support:
 - a. language skills for new immigrants (including access for people at the earliest possible opportunity after arrival)
 - b. interaction between different groups and communities (including

through shared learning activity)

3. **Deploying talent:** to support a better use (for all purposes) of the skills and expertise of all people, and particularly the growing numbers of older people and migrants:
 - a. reform of qualifications systems to provide much stronger recognition of prior experience, and of the issues of qualification obsolescence and skills decay;
 - b. the provision of a coherent service of career advice and guidance, which reflects the importance of social and personal development as well as economic needs, reflects the interaction between learning, work, health and finance, and is accessible to people at all ages
4. **Providing a “neutral space” for learning and interaction.** Public adult education institutions have always played an important part in supporting those most reluctant to learn, or who are nervous about entering unfamiliar territory. Ensuring that opportunities are available to the widest possible range of adults to manage life changes requires:
 - a. the maintenance of a “public space” of education providers which are seen as politically and socially neutral, and can provide space for debate and interaction as well as formal instruction
5. **To provide the underpinning infrastructure** to these proposals:
 - a. an integrated approach to setting priorities and using expertise (teachers, institutions etc) which reflects the full range of learning needs and aspirations;
 - b. a clear agreement across Government about the role of the public sector and of individual Departments of Government;
 - c. a funding model which ensures the strategic use of public money to secure the maximum volume of activity from all partners, and which balances:
 - i. societal, personal and economic purpose;
 - ii. the preparation of young people for adult life with the management of changes across the lifecourse;
 - iii. the education and training interests of all Government Departments.

3. Demography – the context

Understanding the shape of the UK population

A description of the future shape of the English population, calls for an understanding of:

- how many people there will be
- where in the country they will be
- what kind of people they are
- how they move in and out of the country
- how they move within the country

The answers to these questions depend on:

- fertility rates, which are broadly stable over time (these are higher in some migrant and minority ethnic groups, but they tend, over time, to converge on the host community's patterns);
- life expectancy, which has been rising consistently for several decades, and shows no sign of stopping;
- lifecourse changes, with the timing, in particular, of labour market entry, childbearing and family formation, retirement, and the onset of dependency, all changing;
- inward and outward migration, affected by political, economic and social factors worldwide;
- the development of the economy, dependent on good economic management, on a global as well as a national basis;
- factors driving mobility, including the location and attractiveness of employment, housing supply, accessibility of transport, and social aspirations;
- distribution of income and wealth, which makes it easier for some people to take advantage of new opportunities than others.

In examining these factors it is important to recognise that data is imperfect. Some issues, like birthrates, or the total size and location of the population, and the nature of the current workforce are very thoroughly studied, with a lot of data in the public domain. Other issues, like the ethnic mix of the population, and the numbers of migrants, are less clear, because data is more difficult to collect, and terminology more uncertain. Some issues will remain a matter of informed estimates, like the size of the informal, voluntary, grey and black economy where work is hidden because it is illegal, or undertaken on a voluntary basis, and therefore not treated as “countable”.

It is also important to recognise the margins of error in any projections, over the long or the short terms. For example, the “leisure society” predicted in the 1960s turned out to be unemployment for some and over employment for others, not leisure for all. Similarly, the labour shortages predicted for the first decade of the 21st century as a result of the ageing workforce have been filled (at least for the time being) by an unpredicted large scale migration from Eastern Europe. Furthermore, Government has limited ability to control either the size or location of the population. It can restrict some kinds of entry (though attempts to do this are not always successful), and can encourage some kinds of internal movement of population, but the continuing growth of London and the South East, at the expense of the rest of the country, demonstrates the power of market forces,

despite Government efforts to distribute work more evenly across the country.

The implications of ageing for economic and social change are significant. For most of the 20th century, a very large proportion of public expenditure was devoted to children and young people, who constituted the largest dependent group. Government was effectively transferring resources from the working population, through taxes, to young people. In the 21st century this pattern is likely to change, with resources being transferred from the working population to older people.

The last twenty years has seen a rise in the gap in both wealth and income between richest and poorest. This is particularly striking in relation to older people. The incomes of people past retirement age are entirely dependent on the functioning of the pensions system (whether public or private²). Many currently retired people have benefited from a society with a large young workforce able to pay for a relatively generous pension system (since there were few pensioners). As a result, a substantial proportion of the current retired population are prosperous (some more so than ever before in their lives). However, changes in pensions systems, driven by other economic pressures, have undermined the pensions of another large group, who now live in relative poverty (although Government safety net measures (tax credits) have reduced the numbers in absolute poverty). While some people choose to stay in work longer because of the intrinsic attractions of the job, or the social contact and status, for a sizeable group, staying longer in work is a necessity to accumulate savings to supplement shrinking pensions and extended retirement.

Some of the changes we see with an ageing society are the product of ageing itself, but others reflect cohort changes, which may happen only once, or may be reversed. This is most striking in relation to the generation now approaching retirement. The steady rise in living standards across the last half of the 20th century created rising expectations of both physical wealth and life satisfaction, led by the generation born immediately after the second world war, who came to adulthood in the period of economic expansion in the late 1950s and 1960s, and who are now in their 50s and early 60s. This generation has consistently overturned the social attitudes of its predecessors, and it is now contributing to redefining “retirement” and the transitions into it. Some evidence on participation in learning suggests that there may be other cohort effects in train, with the traditional age related decline in participation in learning halting for those now in their 40s³.

How big will the population be?

The UK population at the 2001 census was almost 60 million, 84% of whom were in England (49 million). This represents a growth of 17% since 1951, which is lower than the European average of 23% and much lower than the USA’s 80%.

Nevertheless, the population continues to grow, and is expected to do so for the foreseeable future. As a result of improvements in health and increasing life expectancy, and of net inward migration, the next 17% growth (10 million) is now expected within 25 years, effectively a doubling of the rate⁴.

The main driver of this change is increased life expectancy, with the main growth being

² In global terms it makes little difference whether the state pays pensions out of taxes on the workforce, or individuals save funds which are then invested in the current economy. In either case it is the earning capacity of the current workforce which pays the pensions. For individuals, of course, it may matter a great deal.

³ The shape of cohort differences is discussed below.

⁴ ONS revised projections October 2007

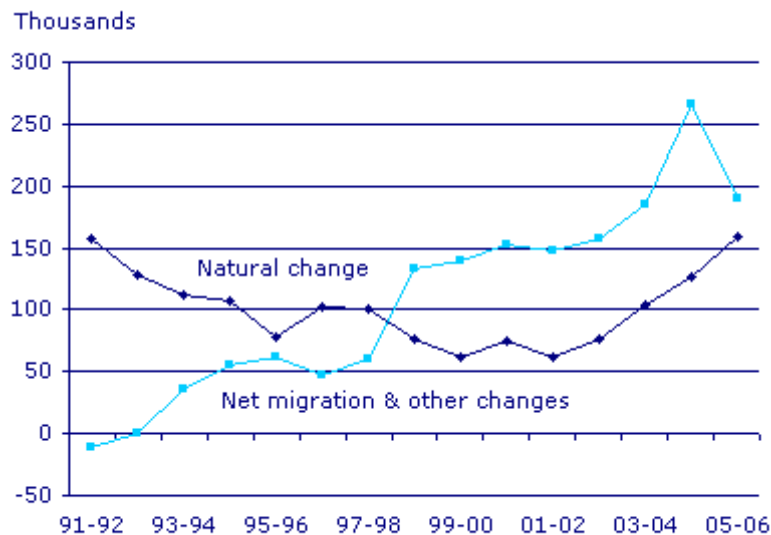
among older people, as a result of reduced birthrates and increased life expectancy. In the 20th century the number of people aged 55-64 increased from 1.94 million to 5.5 million, and in 2001 the number of people over 59 was higher than those under 16 (21% against 20%) for the first time. There are now 11.3 million people over state pension age, and in the last year, the number of people aged over 85 grew by 6% to 1.2 million (1.9% of the population).

Unsurprisingly, growth is not evenly distributed across the country. Over the last 20 years the North East and North West have seen progressive shrinkage of population, while the South West, South East and Eastern regions have grown by over 10%. At local level, change can be much more rapid: in 2006, four Local Authorities saw growth of over 10% (two of them London Boroughs) and four saw declines of over 2% (three of them in the North West)⁵.

Changes in life expectancy also vary greatly by locality and region. At the extreme, life expectancy is 10 years longer for someone living in Glasgow than for a similar person living in Kensington and Chelsea.

While most of the population pattern for 2030 can be predicted reliably from known factors (since most of them are already born, and living in the country), migration is much less predictable and could alter both the total numbers, and the age profile, since immigrants tend to be younger than the population average age, and a substantial proportion of outward migrants at present are older people. Figure 1 shows the effects of natural change arising from fertility and life expectancy and of net migration since 1990.

Figure 1. Components of Population Change



ONS 2006⁶

⁵ ONS 2007

There is debate about the economic impact of this scale of population growth, and especially of migration at the level which it implies. In 2000, the United Nations proposed that high levels of migration into developed countries would be essential to maintain economic growth, but these arguments have been challenged by demographers and economists. While it is clear that there will be a short to medium term need to increase the workforce, to replace a large cohort of retirees in the next decade, it is not clear that large scale immigration will or can meet this need, and if migration continues at the level proposed by the UN, it creates its own problems as the migrant communities themselves grow old.

⁶ These figures do not incorporate changes in migration data published in October 2007.

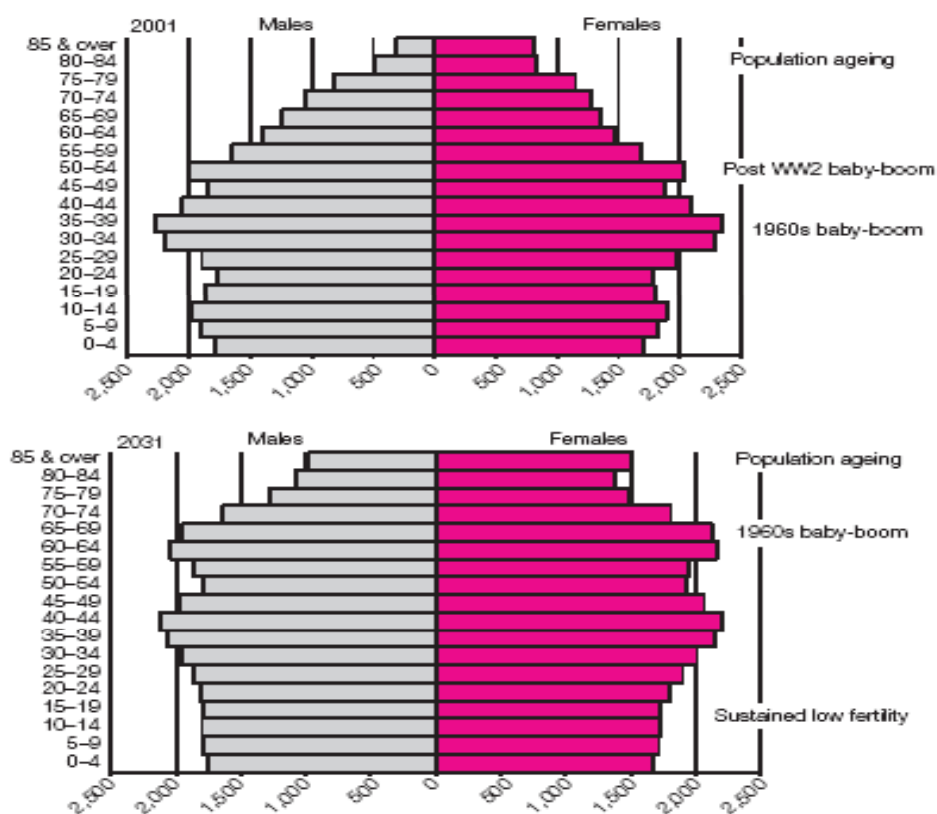
3.1. Age

The overall age profile of the population is determined mainly by fertility rates and life expectancy. These two factors in turn influence the kind of opportunities which individual will have at various stages of the lifecycle

Figure 2 shows the actual age profile of the population in 2001, and the predicted profile for 2031. The striking thing is the two bulges in population: the first born immediately after the second world war, and the second their children, born in the mid and late 1960s. However, the availability of contraception and changing social attitudes and expectations mean that there is no third bulge of the children of the second wave: it is entirely possible that there will never again be an age cohort as large as that currently between 35 and 45.

The size of this gap also partly explains some of the social changes of recent years, including the lengthening of the period young people take to enter the labour market, and housing problems (simply because there were more of them).

Figure 2. UK Population: by age and sex, 2001 and 2031



Source: Office for National Statistics, Government Actuary's Department, 2005.

Population growth is a common pattern across Europe. Figure 3 shows the scale of population increase between 1950 and 1990 across most of the countries of the EU15⁷.

⁷ Netherlands data is not in consistent format and has been omitted.

Figure 3. Population growth across the EU

Population size and population growth			
Country	Population (millions) 1996	Annual % increase 1950-1990	Annual % increase 1980-1990
Spain	39.2	0.66	0.29
Greece	10.5	0.59	0.53
France	58.2	0.57	0.42
Luxembourg	0.4	0.56	0.54
Finland	5.1	0.44	0.5
Sweden	8.8	0.4	0.31
Italy	57.3	0.39	0.14
Denmark	5.3	0.37	0.04
Ireland	3.6	0.35	0.24
Belgium	10.1	0.32	0.13
Portugal	9.9	0.31	0.03
Germany	81.8	0.29	0.17
UK	58.7	0.27	0.23
Austria	8	0.23	0.31

Eurostat

The ageing population is a global phenomenon, most conspicuous in the developed world, but increasingly a feature of other countries, as family size falls, sometimes dramatically in one or two generations. In time it is possible that this will lead to a decline in the flow of inward migration to the UK.

Dependency ratios

A key indicator of the economic impact of changes in the age structure is the Dependency Ratio: the relationship between the economically active population and those who are dependent on them (children, the retired, full time carers, the unemployed etc). Directly or indirectly, the latter are dependent on the former for support, through the family, pensions systems and returns on savings⁸. If the ratio deteriorates then either the dependents become poorer, or the workforce contributes more, through taxation, or by increased unpaid work, especially caring roles. The current crude "Potential Support

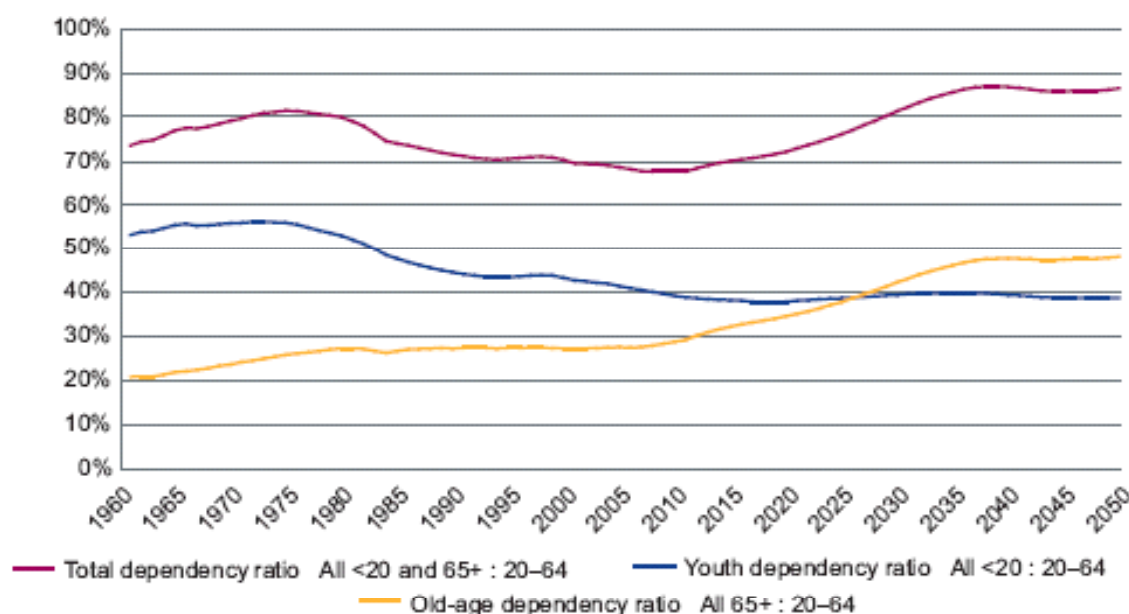
⁸ In global terms, it makes little difference whether the dependent population is paid for by the state from taxes paid by the working population, or from personal savings, since savings only produce a return if invested in profitable economic activity, which is itself generated by the working population.

Ratio⁹ is around 4:1, but the Government Actuary estimates that on current trends it will fall to 2.5:1 by the end of the century. Some European countries, where fertility rates have fallen faster, are anticipating rates as low as 1.5:1 (Spain) and under 2:1 (Germany). Over time, these trends may have an impact on patterns of internal migration within Europe.

In the medium term, this only exerts modest economic pressure, because the youth dependency ratio is improving (because of falls in fertility) to offset the deteriorating old age dependency ratio. Figure 4 shows how these factors interact, with the overall dependency ratio remaining stable until around 2010, when the youth rate ceases to fall and the old age rate begins to rise more steeply. It is for this reason that the Government commissioned the Turner report on the future of pensions¹⁰.

Figure 4. Dependency ratios

Figure 2: Old-age, youth and total dependency ratios, 1960–2050



Source: Pensions Commission Report

Current projections suggest that a combination of high net immigration and improved fertility might keep the ratio by the middle of the century as high as 2.8:1, but lower levels of net immigration and continuing low fertility could result in a drop to under 2.1:1. OECD estimates suggest that developed countries would need to double their current inward migration rates, and sustain that level, if they are to meet their economic expectations.

⁹ This is the simple ratio of people under 20 and over 65 to those 20–64. It makes no allowance for those between 20–64 who are not in employment, nor for those outside that range who are employed. The real ratio in the UK after adjusting for these effects, is currently closer to 2.5:1.

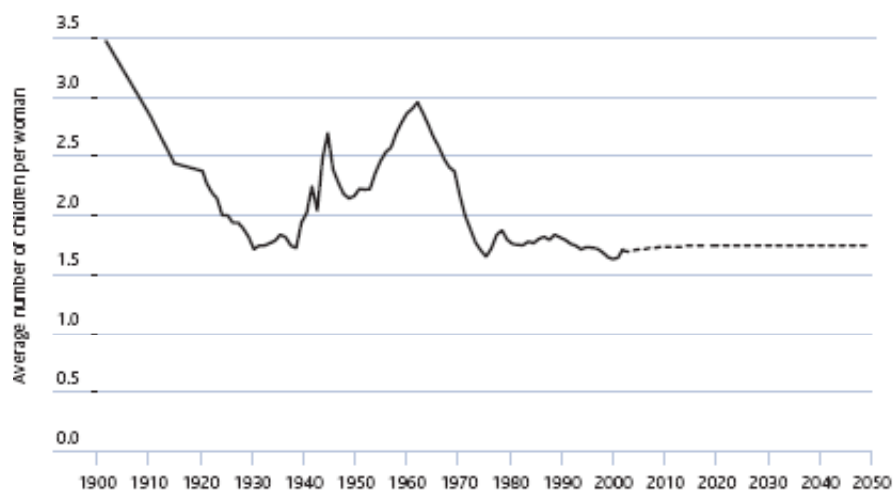
¹⁰ HM Treasury (2005)

Fertility

For a population to remain stable without significant migration requires that the average woman produces around 2.1 children¹¹ (the “replacement rate”). Figure 5 shows that while the fertility rate began the 20th century well above this, it fell below by 1925, reaching around 1.7 through the 1930s, a level at which is stabilised, apart from the prolonged “baby boom” of the 1950s and 1960s. After this boom, when the birth-rate peaked at 2.95 children per woman, it returned to the 1930s norm, probably reflecting the availability of accessible contraception and changing patterns of women’s employment. There is no reason to expect it to return to population replacement levels in the foreseeable future, despite some recent rise, reflecting delayed childbearing and the higher fertility rates of some (but not most) minority ethnic communities.

As a result, the predicted growth in population is entirely the result of extending life expectancy and inward migration. This pattern is mirrored, sometimes more severely, in all European countries. It has been argued (e.g. Coleman) that all countries will reach this position during the 21st century.

Figure 5. Total Fertility Rate 1900-2050: England and Wales



Source: ONS Birth Statistics Series FM1

Note: The definition of Total Fertility Rate, and the way in which it is influenced both by completed family size births and by decisions as to the timing of births is explained in Appendix E, which also sets out the argument for believing that a repeat of the 1945-1965 reversal of the downward trend is unlikely.

Data from birth registration on age of mother at birth is only available from 1938. Figures for the years prior to 1938 are ONS estimates.

Life expectancy

Estimates of life expectancy have been rising steadily at about 20% pa since the 1950s. (i.e. every five years the estimate is raised by around 1 year). This is primarily a result of improvements in health over a sustained period. The pattern of constant upward revision of estimates is remarkable, and extends across all developed countries over the last 80 years. The one consistent pattern is that every adjustment has been upwards, and there

¹¹ This is above 2.0 to allow for deaths in childhood and among young adults before they reproduce.

are, to date, no indications that the trend will reverse. Although it has been suggested that changes in diet and lifestyle may slow or reverse this trend at some future date, it is unlikely to affect mortality rates for several decades. It is therefore reasonable to expect that the total number of older people will continue to rise.

The length of the period of life (sometimes referred to as the “fourth age”) when people are in poor health and physically dependent on carers has not increased as rapidly as life expectancy. As a result, the numbers of seriously dependent older people is rising, but not as fast as the numbers of healthy potentially active older people, who might, all other things being equal, be expected to make increased demands for learning (especially since they have more discretionary time).

Intergenerational issues

Changing patterns of childrearing and life expectancy are changing relationships between generations. Growing numbers of older people are taking on childcare responsibilities on behalf of working parents. Management relationships in the workplace sometimes become more problematic as the age gap between managers and managed grow wider, and longer working older people find themselves being managed by the contemporaries of their children (and even grandchildren).

Most seriously, perhaps, is the issue of intergenerational distribution of wealth. Directly or indirectly, pensions are funded from the economic activity of the workforce. If the latter shrinks, the burden of taxation or pension contributions on the young increases to pay for the pensions of their parents and grandparents. In countries like Germany, where State pensions are much more generous than in the UK, this has already led to political tensions and protests.

Age and cultural diversity

Different ethnic groups have different age profiles, reflecting traditional patterns of fertility and family structure, and the history of migrant communities. In most cases family size converges within a generation on the norms of the host community. However, this process has been slower in two of the largest minority ethnic groups, people of Bangladeshi and Indian origin, where fertility rates have not yet fallen below replacement levels. As a result, the proportion of the population of South Asian origin will increase for some time. In communities where family sizes have fallen rapidly since migration to England, the traditional expectations that children will provide substantial informal support to elderly parents may be strained.

Implications of ageing

The most comprehensive account of Government policy on age is the White Paper *Opportunity Age*. This lays out policy priorities for all relevant Government Departments. A key focus was a campaign to actively encourage people to stay in work longer, by banning age discrimination in the workplace and in training; by financial incentives (enhancing pensions for those who defer retirement; by allowing people to draw an occupational pension while continuing to work for the same employer); and by harmonising male and female state pension ages, and then progressively raising both. Historically the behaviour of the older workforce has not been much researched, since older workers tended to be seen as a reserve pool of labour, with early retirement as a routine tool for responding to economic cycles or structural change in the labour market.

As a consequence economists and sociologists have paid little attention to older workers, and gerontologists little attention to work. However, as the implications of an ageing society have been understood and begun to influence public policy there has been a growing body of research into older people and work.

This work has revealed important perspectives on work across the lifespan. Key issues are:

- the widespread experience of age discrimination in the workforce, closing career opportunities and barring older (and some young) people from promotion and new jobs. This particularly affects those who are seeking to re/enter the workforce after 50 (it is much easier to stay in than to get back);
- regret about premature career decisions, with people feeling that they had become locked into particular careers too early in life;
- regret at the inability, or failure, to manage work-life balance;
- a majority of those in work after 50 would like to work longer than they expect to be allowed to do, but mainly on a flexible basis;
- poor support to manage health issues, which tends to drive people into Incapacity Benefit (and effectively into retirement) before they would wish, or is necessary with a more adaptable labour market

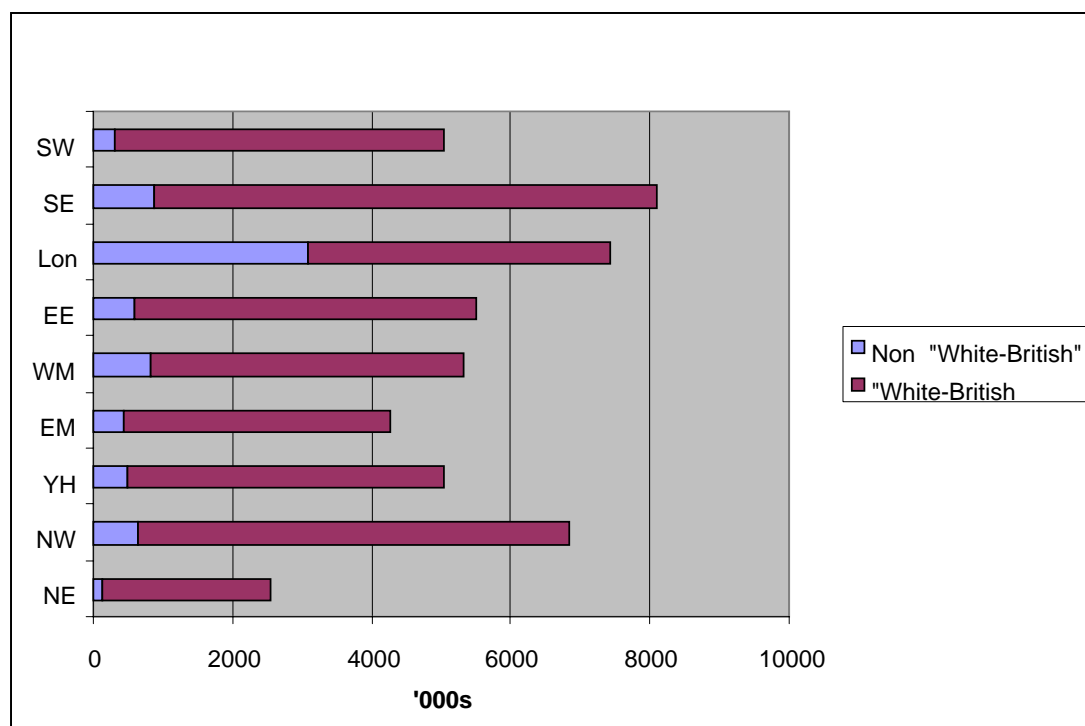
3.2. Ethnic mix

A key element of demography is the ethnic mix of the population. Different groups bring different expectations of life, education, work and retirement, and different expectations and experience of education and training and different notions of gender roles. They also have different fertility and mortality patterns.

Understanding the changing ethnic mix of the population is hampered by problems of data quality. The register of births and deaths does not record ethnicity, definitions have changed over time, there is substantial resistance to providing information, because of fears of how the data might be used. Significant numbers of minority ethnic people enter illegally, or remain as “overstayers”. The proportion of people of “mixed” ethnicity is also rising¹². In general population surveys most of the sub groups are too small for detailed analysis (except when sampling is enhanced specifically to examine this issue).

Population growth is heavily driven by immigration, and the higher fertility rates of British South Asian groups, since the white-British and white-Irish populations are shrinking steadily. Since 2001 the most rapidly growing groups are black African, resulting from political instability in Somalia and Zimbabwe, and Other White. There are also substantial inflows from China and the Philippines.

Figure 6. Ethnicity by Region 2004



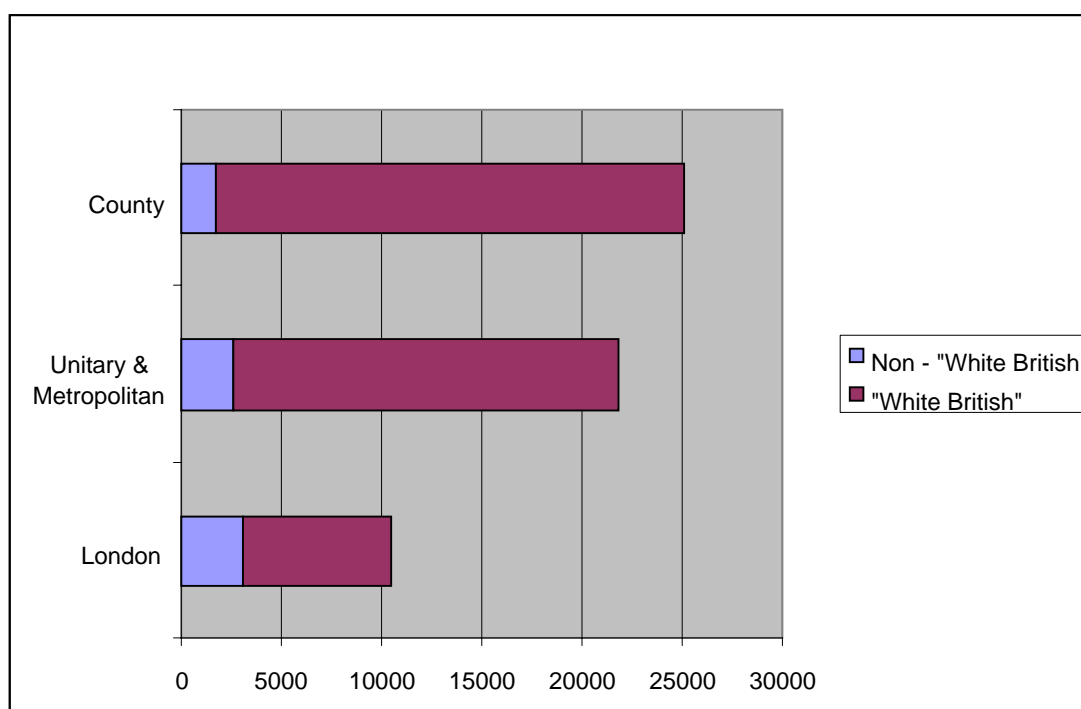
Until recently minority ethnic groups were heavily concentrated in London (45% of the non White British population was located there in 2001), but substantial dispersion has been taking place, with high growth rates in the regions and localities with the lowest minority ethnic populations. Figure 6 shows the balance of “white-British” and “non

¹² ONS now includes categories like “white and black Caribbean”.

“White-British”¹³ population by Region.

London appears to be increasingly a through route for non White-British people, with the flow into London from abroad being matched to the flow from London into other Regions. Only the North East now has significant numbers of “non White-British” immigrants entering directly from overseas. In all Boroughs of London the White British population is growing more rapidly than the non White-British population, as a result of the relative youth of the population, and migration into London from the rest of Britain.

Figure 7. Ethnicity by Local Authority Type 2004

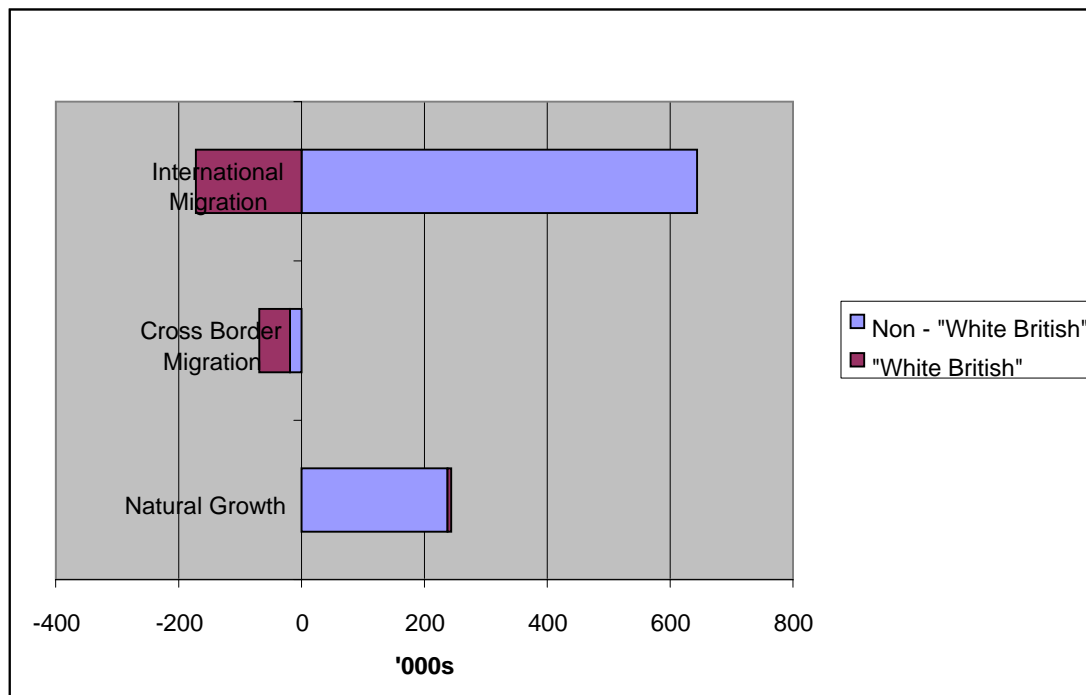


ONS

Fertility rates of the non White British groups tend over time to converge on the White British norm. Fertility rates of people from East Africa, the Caribbean and the Far East have been close to the White British rate (a little below 2 per woman) since 1980. By contrast the Bangladeshi population's rates have fallen from a high of 8 to under 5 during that period, but has stabilised at that level (matching the rate for the Pakistani population) leaving them well above replacement level. The Indian population's rates have dropped from above 3 to above 2.

¹³ Terminology here is complex and confusing. “Non white-British” (i.e. those who are not “white British”, including non-white people and white people of other nationalities) must be distinguished from “non-white British” (i.e. those who are British, but not white).

Figure 8. Causes of population change by ethnicity 2004



ONS

The implications of these changes are (assuming continuing of past trends) that the White population will shrink slowly and age, offset by inward migration (especially from the expanded EU), while the South Asian population will grow.

By international standards these changes are not unusual, with the UK's proportion of residents of immigrant or foreign origin broadly in line with Denmark and the Netherlands, and substantially lower than Germany or the USA.

3.3. Migration

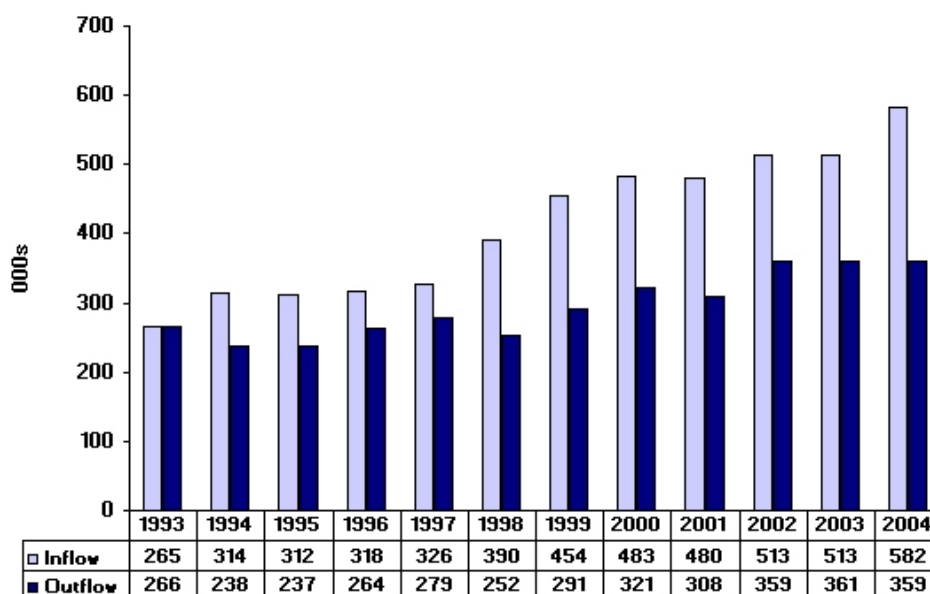
Immigration in its various forms has been a consistent feature of British history as far back as records exist. After the very large influx of Huguenots in the 17th century, the key groups were Irish people in the mid 19th century (driven by famine) and European Jews in the late 19th and 20th centuries, (driven by persecution).

After the second world war, in response to labour shortages in Britain, the government encouraged Europeans who had sought refuge during the war, or served in the forces, to stay, including a very large group of Poles (157,000). In 1948 the government began the systematic encouragement of immigration, actively recruiting people from the West Indies to fill vacant jobs, and during the 1950s some firms, especially in the North and Midlands, actively recruited workers from India and Pakistan, as well as the Caribbean. In the early 1970s, 28,000 people of Indian origin were expelled from East Africa and were resettled into the UK. In the 1970s there were also 22,000 refugees from South East Asia. However, until the 1980s, the UK was a net exporter of people, mainly to the “white commonwealth”.

In the 1960s, concern about racial tension led to the first legislation restricting immigration, and by the 1980s there were strict controls on entry to Britain. These disproportionately affected non-white countries, and thereafter the largest immigrant groups became white Commonwealth citizens from the, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia, and from the United States.

Figure 9 shows the growth of net migration, from 60,000 in 1994 to 223,000 in 2004.

Figure 9. Total International Migration UK 1993-2004



ONS, *International Migration 2004*

Since the mid 1990s the pattern has been affected by two major developments:

- a surge in refugee flows across Europe resulting from political instability, especially in Africa and the Middle East;
- a large influx of East Europeans, following the enlargement of the EU. These

have added larger numbers than any previous immigration, and have, among other things, helped to manage growing skills gaps and shortages in many industries.

In 2000, the United Nations proposed that sustained, large scale, international migration might be the only way in which developed countries with ageing populations could avoid population decline, shrinking workforces and deteriorating support ratios. However, these projections were challenged by demographers, who suggested that the levels of migration required to preserve the dependency ratio would be extremely high, and have to be sustained over a long period – particularly since the young immigrants who enlarge the workforce in the short term, swell the retired population in the long term. This debate continues, and the issues are politically highly contentious.

Inward migration

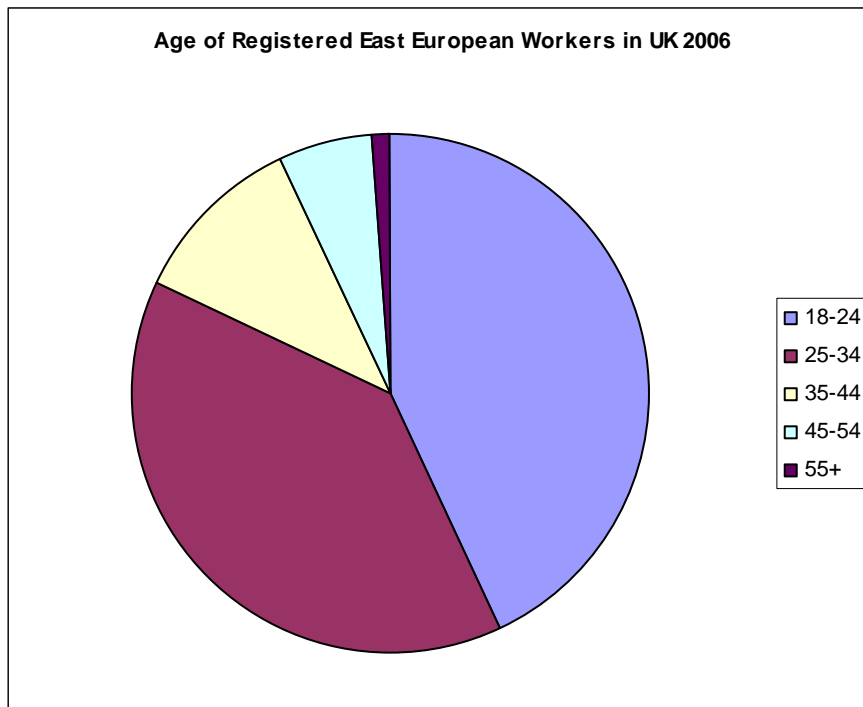
The last decade has seen two major changes in patterns of inward migration.

- East Europeans. This, much larger, group have come from Eastern Europe, following the expansion of the EU. Since May 2004, when the “A8” countries joined the EU, the number of such migrants registered to work in Britain was 683,000. The rate of inflow is thought to have now reduced significantly, and anecdotal evidence suggests that some are now returning home, although the precise numbers are not known, since neither entry nor exit from the EU is monitored on a comprehensive basis. The pattern is also complicated by the ease of travel, which means that some are alternating periods of living (and perhaps working) in two countries.
- Asylum seekers. This is very much the smaller of the two groups. Numbers surged in the late 1990s, peaking at 85,000 in 2002 but have now fallen as low as 28,300 in 2006. The principal countries involved were Eritrea, Afghanistan, Iran, China and Somalia. In 2006, 44% of applications considered in 2006 were granted¹⁴, with just over 31,000 granted leave to stay under one of the various provisions.

These two groups differ substantially: refugees tend to be predominantly male, with no dependents when they arrive. European migrants, on the other hand, are more mixed in gender, and much younger. Figure 10 shows that this group is overwhelmingly young, and of childbearing age (an important factor in projecting population growth). However, only 3% (20,000) of Registered European Migrants were known to have children, although numbers have been rising, and numbers registered for child benefit (68,927) and tax credits (38,578) suggests that the true figure is larger (including people who may not be working, or working without registration).

¹⁴ ONS

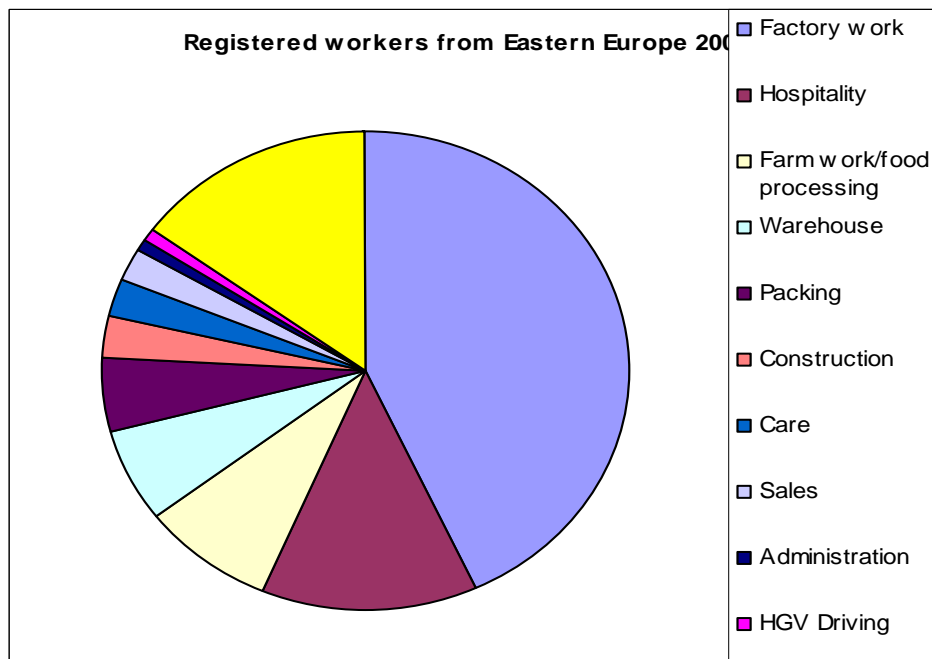
Figure 10. Age of Registered European Migrants 2004-7



ONS 2007

Although migrant workers can be found in all types and levels of employment, the highest numbers are employed in manual occupations, where language and cultural skills are less important than physical strength. Figure 11 shows the occupational pattern recorded by ONS at entry, although there is anecdotal evidence of people beginning in low skilled manual work and moving rapidly into more skilled occupations as they become familiar with the labour market and their language skills improve.

Figure 11. Occupational distribution of European Migrants 2004-7



ONS 2007

Monitoring of the number of new national insurance numbers issued to foreign nationals, gives some indication of how the pattern of origins is shifting. The total number in 2005/6 was almost double than of 2002/3, and foreign born workers made up 6% of the workforce in 2006. Table 1 shows the three largest groups of immigrants in 2002-3 and 2005-6.

Table 1 Largest immigrant groups issued with NI numbers 2002-2006

2002-3	Nos.	2005-6	Nos.
India	25,000	Poland	171,400
Australia	18,900	India	46,000
South Africa	18,600	Lithuania	30,400

Adult migrants come to the UK with a variety of work and professional experiences and academic and vocational qualifications. The highly skilled migrants whose expertise and qualifications are recognised in the UK, especially from the white Commonwealth, and some parts of Europe, have a very high rate of employment. However possessing good work experience and good qualifications from their home countries is no guarantee of gaining well paid skilled jobs in the UK, unless the experience and qualifications are recognised and valued by employers and the migrant has high level and relevant English language skills.

The majority of recently arrived migrants in employment (excluding those from the USA, Canada, New Zealand, Scandinavia, the Netherlands and Belgium) are in low paid occupations. Gaining any sort of employment is especially difficult for new migrants from some countries. Those from Somalia, Iran, Iraq, Bangladesh, Pakistan, former Yugoslavia and a range of other counties are more likely to be unemployed than in employment.

Outside the workplace, the integration of new migrants into the host community is strongly gendered, with women building links through school and family, while men's links more usually develop around religious, sporting and social clubs.

In addition to the groups identified above there are also some 260,000 people who enter Britain each year for short periods (more than 1 month and less than 12), about 80,000 come for work and 170,000 for study. They are heavily concentrated in London (40%). At any one time there are around 43,000 such people in the country.

However, neither the Audit Commission's Report nor the TUC one examined the impact or circumstances of refugees who have migrated to the UK. Their position is different since they have come to seek humanitarian aid, rather than for economic reasons, and their legal and employment status is very different. As asylum seekers, while their claim is being considered, they are ineligible to seek or gain employment and are therefore dependent upon state assistance or their own resources. They also have very limited access to integration activities such as further or higher education.

Once an asylum application is successful, the individual has only 28 days to find alternative accommodation and income support. A report by the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion estimates that the budget for providing support and services to asylum seekers is approximately £880 million, while the budget for refugee integration is only £6 million.

A range of studies have indicated that refugees' work experience in and qualifications from their countries of origin are at equivalent or higher levels than those of the host population. However the unemployment rates of refugees in the UK are much higher than average, estimated to be between 30% and 50%. The barriers to employment include:

- lack of proficiency in English,
- lack of UK work experience,
- lack of recognition of overseas qualifications,
- problems with documentation to establish the right to work.

Some of these barriers are explored in greater depth below. The report from the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion argues that there should be more specific and targeted programmes to assist refugees to integrate in the UK labour market.

Outward migration

Although the total population is growing, a substantial number of people each year migrate to other countries. In 2005-6 this number totalled 385,000, almost evenly divided between British citizens (194,000) and "long term migrants" who are returning to their countries of origin after living in the UK for some years (189,000). The largest numbers go to Australia, Spain, France and New Zealand.

Internal migration

Around 10% of people move house within the UK in any one year, but of these, two thirds move less than 10 km and a large proportion of the remainder are students and members of the armed forces. Nevertheless, ONS argues that the residual group can have a significant effect over time on the distribution of population.

Table 2 shows the Local Authority areas with the largest growth and shrinkage of population over the 1990s, taken from 1991 and 2001 Census figures.

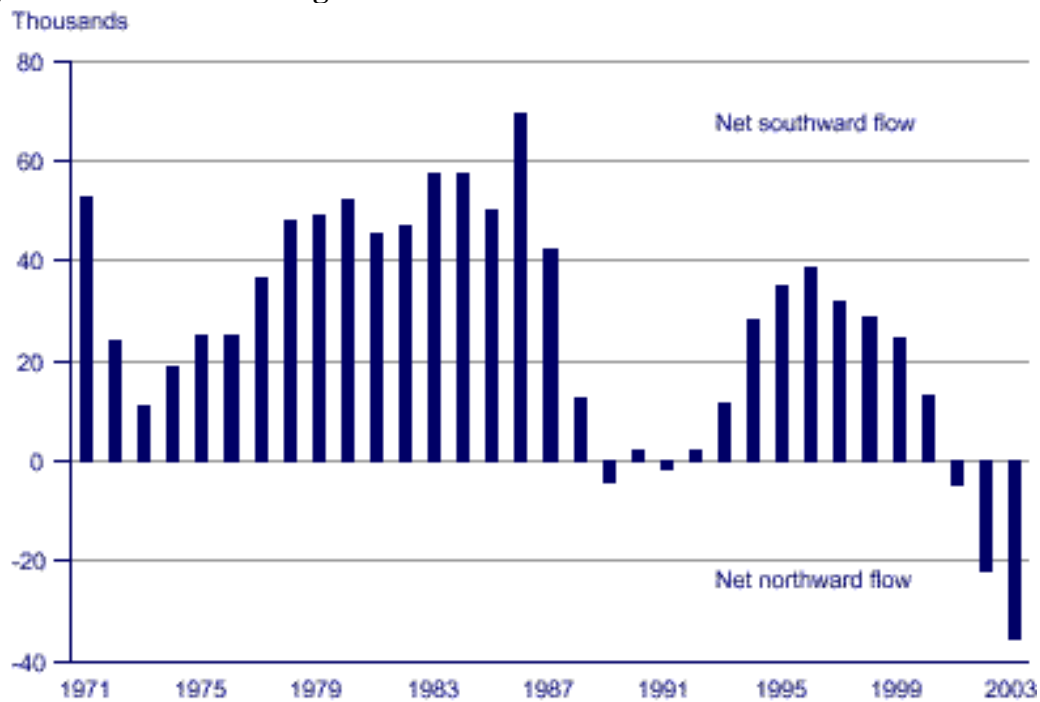
Table 2. Local Authorities with highest and lowest population change 1991-2001

	000s	% change 1991- 2001
Growth over 15%		
City of London	1.8	33.3
East Cambridgeshire	12.5	20.5
Tower Hamlets	30.3	18.2
North Kesteven	14.4	18.0
Milton Keynes UA	29.3	16.4
North Dorset	8.4	15.7
Shrinkage over 5%		
Sunderland	-15.1	-5.1
Gateshead	-10.5	-5.2
Halton UA	-6.6	-5.3
Merseyside (Met. County)	-76.3	-5.3
Newcastle upon Tyne	-15.4	-5.6
Merthyr Tydfil	-3.6	-6.0
Salford	-14.9	-6.5

Wirral	-22.1	-6.6
Middlesbrough UA	-9.9	-6.8
Kingston upon Hull, UA	-19.9	-7.6
Liverpool	-36.4	-7.7
Manchester	-39.8	-9.2

This table indicates the broad long term pattern of regional movement, but does not reflect changes since 2001. Figure 12 shows the general North-South movement since 1971, showing a recent (and possibly temporary) reversal of the long term trend for population to move southwards. This southwards trend is strongest for young people moving into London and the South East, while people in middle age tend to move out from cities into suburbs, shire counties and smaller towns¹⁵. There is a marked, and recent, trend for minority ethnic groups to disperse from areas of high concentration to places which have not previously seen them¹⁶

Figure 12. Internal migration



Net migration between the regions of the UK, 1971 to 2003 (ONS)

Implications of migration

Reports from the Audit Commission and the TUC in 2007 explored the impact of the recent migration to the UK from Eastern Europe, drawing on a range of research and Government data. Both concluded that:

- migrant workers are net contributors to the economy;

¹⁵ ONS analysis of 2001 census

¹⁶ ONS 2007

- they have helped to keep wage inflation down in areas of shortage;
- migration has not resulted in higher levels of unemployment;
- migrant workers are welcomed and valued by UK employers;
- migration to the UK benefits developing countries when migrant workers send remittances back to their home countries.

Migrant workers are filling vacancies at both end of the skills spectrum. They tend to be single adults who are younger than workers from the host community and, in part because of their age profile, they are less likely to be drawing on public services such as health and children's services.

Although the overall impact of migration may be positive, negative consequences were also noted in specific areas and at local and grass roots levels, which could, the reports authors suggest, be solved by National and Local Government intervention and planning.

- Displacement. A 2005 study by CIPD found that some employers are rejecting the long term unemployed in favour of migrant workers¹⁷
- Exploitation. There is evidence of exploitation of migrant workers, especially those who are undocumented, in certain sectors.

The Audit Commission report *Crossing Borders- Responding to the local challenges of migrant workers*, explores the impact that new arrivals from the A8 have had upon local areas which have experienced rapid unplanned changes in population, increasing the demand for housing, ESOL, school places and support services for new arrivals. This report and that of the TUC indicates that some Local Authorities need improved planning mechanisms and greater financial support from central Government to meet the needs of the settled and newly arrived communities. This debate has been aggravated by the lack or reliable data on the size and nature of migrant populations at local level.

The social consequences of migration.

The changing pattern of migration to the UK in recent years has created new local challenges for social integration. While London and the South East are still magnets for new arrivals, the geographic dispersal of migrants is now much wider. The opening up of cheap flights to regional airports has led to a considerable number of European migrants moving directly to regions where they find employment. Since 2000, Government has adopted a dispersal policy for asylum seekers which has resulted in them being accommodated in towns and cities across the country, and those who are given permission to remain in the UK frequently stay in these dispersal locations. Most recently, newly arrived economic migrants have been moving directly into areas of the country where employment is readily available. These are sometimes areas with little previous experience of inward migration. Although there is little national research into the social consequences of these new patterns of migration some small scale studies have been undertaken by researchers commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

These have found that:

- Economic migrants from central and Eastern Europe suffer from a lack of practical information and advice in the early days after arrival, which delays their ability to participate fully in the labour market or socially at an early stage.
- Only one third of migrants studied had attended, or were attending, ESOL classes and those with the poorest English were the least likely to participate in

¹⁷ CIPD, and McNair et al (2007)

such classes.

- Many of the migrants had few British friends and they tended to socialise with other migrants.
- Many also felt that they suffered as a consequence of prejudice by some British people. In turn the migrants themselves were not prepared for living in a multicultural Britain.
- Very few Eastern European migrants felt that they could influence decisions at a local level; acted as volunteers or joined neighbourhood social organisations.

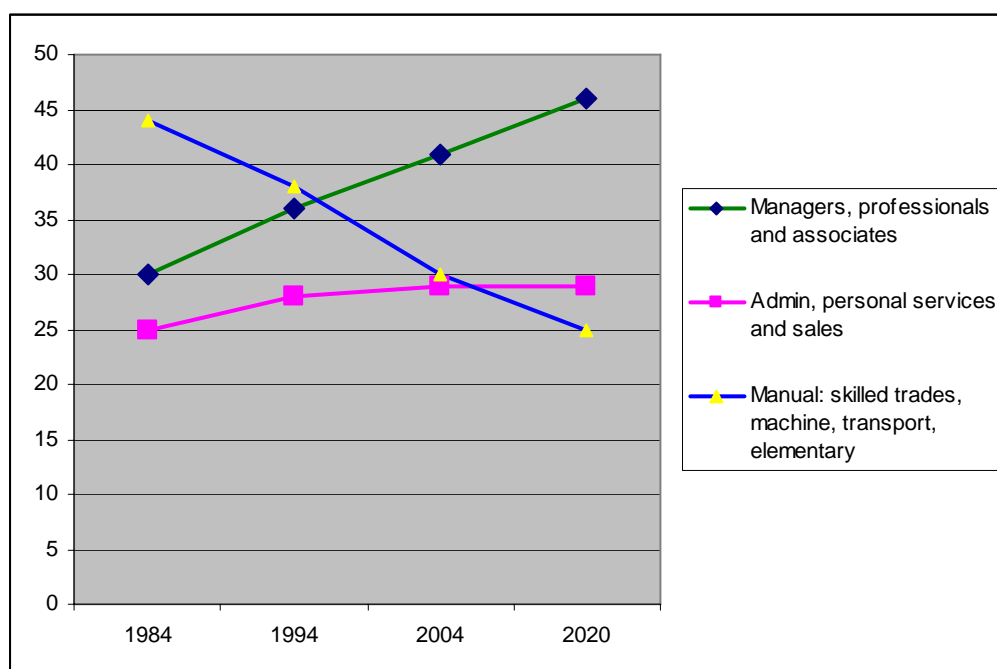
However the study of migrants from central and Eastern Europe found that the longer the migrants stayed in the UK and the better their English the more likely they were to feel a sense of belonging and a wish to remain in the UK. Levels of income, housing and employment are also related to aspects of community cohesion and a sense of belonging. This suggests that the likelihood of such migrants staying in the long term may be underestimated where they are based on attitudes at the time of entry or during the first months of their stay. The ease of travel from the UK to Eastern Europe also makes the flow more fluid, with some migrants alternating periods in both countries.

The Rowntree studies present a complex picture with tensions between new migrants and long established communities, and between different migrant groups in communities often already under stress. Conflicts over housing were prominent, with some residents from existing communities believed that the new arrivals were receiving more favourable treatment. Negative media stories about asylum seekers and refugees fuelled this resentment. However the reports also provide positive examples of community cohesion, and put forward recommendations to allocate and target resources and build connections between people from different ethnic and cultural communities.

Occupation and social class

Class structure continues to have a major influence on life chances, and on demography, but technological and economic change in recent decades has had a substantial impact on the class structure of the UK. Figure 13 shows clearly how over the 25 years from 1984 manual work will fall from 45% of jobs to 25%, while professional and managerial jobs will rise in from 30% to 46%.

Figure 13. Change in occupational distribution 1984-2020



Increasingly wealth is generated by a growing elite of highly skilled workers, whose wealth is used to employ a substantial number of relatively low skilled people in “support” roles. The decline of traditional manufacturing employment¹⁸, and Government attempts to streamline skills and qualifications policy, have led to the disappearance of many traditional working class elite roles (associated with apprenticeship and skilled craftsmen status, and with a long period of professional induction). With them have gone a framework for setting expectations of behaviour and aspiration.

These developments have created a number of casualties, with two particularly prominent groups:

- young people unable to establish themselves in employment, where employers believe they can find more motivated and pliable workers among older people and migrants.
- older people, with backgrounds in manual (albeit sometimes highly skilled) work, left behind by industrial change, whose industries, and the communities around which they were based, died too late for them to relocate or retrain for new roles.

Social class also has a major influence on health and morbidity. There is a difference of some 10 years in life expectancy at birth between people born in upper and lower social groups, even if born in the same area. This remains true whether the measure of “class” is based on education, income or financial wealth.

¹⁸ It should be noted that although employment in manufacturing has declined, output has not. We have experienced largely “jobless growth”. The manufacturing workforce age profile now comprises a large proportion of older workers (in their 50s and 60s), and much smaller, and more highly skilled cohorts in the younger age groups.

3.4. Family Structures

Family structures are important, not only in terms of how many children will be produced and supported, but also in the way people organise their lives and activities.

The most common family pattern is still of a married couple (70% of families are still headed by a married couple) with 1.9 children, with the father the main wage earner and the mother in part-time employment.

The current childbearing cohort is less likely to marry (the proportion of cohabiting families has risen from 9% to 14% over the last decade)¹⁹ and cohabiting is becoming more common at all ages, including people in their 50s and 60s. However, childbirth appears to precipitate marriage, with a third of those cohabiting when their first child is born marrying before that child is 3.

Over the last 35 years the average number of children per family has fallen from 2.0 to 1.8, and families with a single child are much more common than in previous generations.

Single parent families have become more common, heavily concentrated among younger mothers (43% of mothers under 24 are single parents, as are 20% of mothers 25-29).

The divorce rate has ranged between 12 and 14 per thousand married people since 1981, and currently stands at 12.2. The average age of divorce has risen, to 43 for men and 41 for women. Since 1981 the proportion of divorcing people who have already experienced a divorce doubled from 10% to 20%. At age 3, 82% of children are living with both parents²⁰.

As a result of these changes one child in 10 lives in a “step family”, sometimes with step-siblings of very different ages, either by their parents combining two sets of children, or by producing a new set of children in the new relationship.

Arrangements for childcare have changed significantly, with the rise of the two earner household, and with Government interventions to improve early years education for the most deprived groups. Thirty percent of mothers of 3 year olds have formal childcare (on average of 21 hours per week), 28% are cared for by grandparents, 22% by father, mother’s partner or mother (usually while working at home). Formal care is most common among the most qualified parents, and among those on lowest incomes (reflecting Government interventions aimed at the latter group).

Grandparent care is most common among working mothers, and at the age of 3, one child in 4 has been cared for at some stage by a grandparent (usually grandmother), and 4% of children are living with a grandparent. Grandparent care is much higher in some ethnic minority communities where three generation families are much more common (Indians, 28%; Pakistanis, 19%; and Bangladeshis, 17%).

Young people are leaving home later, with 58% of men and 39% of women aged 20-24 still describing themselves as “living with their parents” (though some of these will be students, living elsewhere for much of the year).

¹⁹ BBC “The UK Family: in statistics”

²⁰ Millennium Cohort Study Briefing 4

3.5. Gender

Gender is a major issue in adult learning, and is being addressed in other papers for the Review. However, although gender is not itself a demographic issue (since the proportions of men and women in the population are not likely to change significantly), changes in gender roles do have an impact on patterns of activity across the lifecourse.

The most striking change since 1970 has been the rise in the proportion of women in the workforce, rising from 59% in 1971 to 74% in 2006. Women are now much less likely to leave the workforce permanently on marriage or the birth of the first child. However, pay remains heavily biased in favour of men (women in full time work earn on average 17% less than men, and in part-time work 38% less²¹) partly reflecting their concentration in low paid sectors and the impact of career breaks for childrearing, which have a lasting impact on career progression and earnings.

Patterns of childbearing have also changed, with average age of first birth rising as women defer childbearing for financial or career reasons, but alongside this there is a growing group of very young, usually single, mothers. Teenage pregnancy rates remain high by international standards.

Recent evidence from time use surveys suggests that over the lifecourse, men and women spend equal amounts of time working, but work in very different ways and at different stages. Women have a very heavy peak of work at the time of childrearing, combining this with major domestic roles and employment, but work fewer hours later in life. Many older women in their 50s and 60s find themselves under pressure from paid work and caring responsibilities for older relatives, which often drive them, unwillingly, out of the workforce.

Career patterns are heavily gendered. In recent history, the most common career pattern for men has been a period of initial career development, followed by family formation, a career peak, and then either a sudden or gradual transition to retirement. For women, on the other hand, the typical career pattern has involved a succession of less “career” oriented roles, interspersed with caring roles (childrearing and caring for elderly relatives). Women have been much more likely to be in part-time employment, and in relatively low status roles, and recent evidence from the EOC confirms that this pattern has not changed radically. Women’s State Pension Age is being progressively raised to match that of men, but real retirement ages are already converging, with a growing proportion of women remaining in the workforce after 60. There remains, however, a distinct pattern of difference in retirement, which is far more likely to be a single “cliff edge” event for men than for women, whose interrupted, flexible working lives make the experience of entering and returning intermittently much more familiar. For the generation now in their 50s and 60s the picture could be summarised as “men climb higher, and fall faster: women have fewer chances, but smaller disappointments”.

Increases in life expectancy are paralleled by increases in caring needs, and caring responsibilities continue to fall mainly on women. This includes:

- Caring for elderly dependents. Although the length of time which most people spend in severely dependent old age has not increased as rapidly as life expectancy itself, people in their 50s (and many in their 60s) are now much more likely to have some caring responsibility for older relatives;

²¹ Equal Opportunities Commission (2007) *The Gender Agenda*

- Caring for one's own children. The rise in the age of childbearing, the rise of second families, and of combined families following remarriage, means that more women are still caring for children as they approach, and sometimes after, retirement;
- Caring for grandchildren. Two earner families are now the norm for most people between the early 20s and 40s. This has produced an expansion of various forms of childcare, one of which is grandparental care

A small, but growing, number of women find themselves caring simultaneously for two or three of these groups.

The impact of gender varies greatly among minority ethnic groups. At the extremes, Bangladeshi women are much less likely to be in paid employment than any other group, while Afro-Caribbean women are more likely than any other group to be in work.

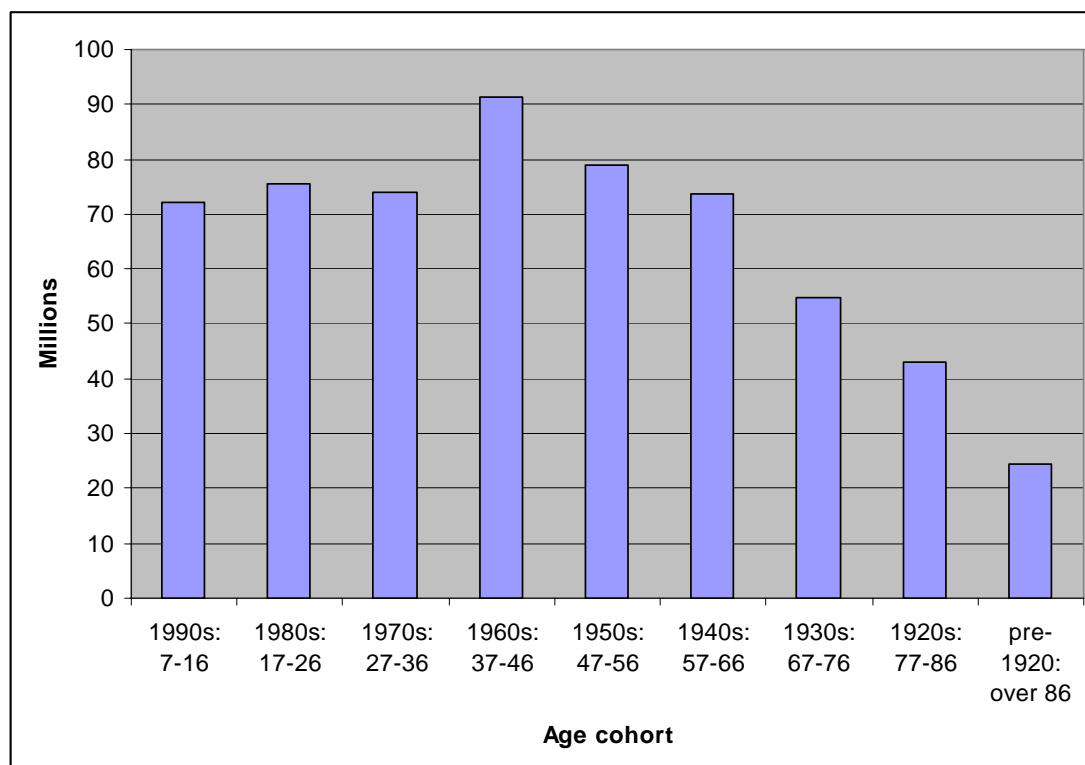
3.6. Cohort experiences

Some of the differences between young and old people relate to change in age, but many reflect changes in cohort, resulting from the different environment in which they grow up and live. The following factors are particularly important in distinguishing population cohorts from each other:

- developments in initial education, which affect people mainly between 5-20
- economic growth and recession, which have particular impact at the point of labour market entry (15-20) and exit 55-65)
- international developments, which affect patterns of migration and labour supply mainly affect those in the labour market (20-60+)
- broader social context – conservative v liberalising, collective v individual trends in public policy, which affects people at all ages

If we are to understand patterns of individual expectation and aspiration we need to be aware of the nature of these broad differences. The following brief analysis highlights some features which might affect the demand for learning across the lifecourse for different age cohorts, broken down into broad decades by date of birth. Figure 14 shows the relative sizes of each cohort.

Figure 14. Sizes of Age Cohorts



Pre 1930 cohort – now aged 77+

This group was brought up a very different education and labour market context. Most will have taken active part in the second world war, with the attendant social, economic and psychological disruptions to labour market entry and early careers. A large proportion spent their whole working lives in physically demanding (and often

damaging) work with little formal training, and their expectations of retirement have been of a brief period before illness and death.

The large majority retired more than 10 years ago, and half live alone. They are now entering or in a period of dependency. Between 75-84 about one in 20 is in residential care, but this proportion rises to nearer one in five for those over 84. However, even among those over 90, fewer than one in three is in residential accommodation.

Their experience of education and training is unlikely to have predisposed many to participate now, although individual projects have had some success.

1930s cohort – now aged 67-76

This group experienced a disrupted initial education as a result of the second world war, but were too young to participate in it. Access to secondary education was limited and selective, relatively few acquired formal qualifications, and participation in work based training was also limited. However, National Service provided men with a unifying induction to adult life, and the apprenticeship tradition was strong, creating a highly skilled “working class aristocracy”, alongside a large proportion of people in semi and unskilled jobs. Career patterns were relatively stable. For the majority, work was physically demanding. The labour market was heavily gendered, with most women leaving the labour market on marriage or the birth of the first child, and most never returning (leaving work at marriage was a contractual requirement of many occupations in the 1940s).

This cohort entered the labour market in the 1950s when there was a high demand for relatively secure work for low and semi skilled workers, as a result of which there was significant immigration from the Caribbean and South Asia. They were particularly badly affected by the economic restructuring of the 1980s, when many (including skilled and unskilled manual workers) were forced into early retirement or onto incapacity benefits. As a result, this group’s real retirement ages were substantially lower than their parents, but a proportion of this cohort are still in employment, particularly at the highest and lowest ends of the labour market. The reasons for this include personal choice, anxiety about retirement and economic necessity (although economic necessity is not the commonest reason cited in surveys).

The educational needs of this group over the next 20 years will focus on learning in retirement, and some are beginning to enter the dependency phase of life, although a majority will still be living largely independently in 2020.

1940s cohort – now aged 57- 66

The formative feature of this generation was the second world war, which resulted in the population bulge after 1946. Child health was relatively good, as a result of rationing and the development of the NHS; social stability was strong under the emerging welfare state, and those born later in the decade benefited from the impact of the 1944 Education Act, with liberalising reforms in primary education, and universal, though selective, secondary education, which tended to strengthen social class divisions.

As a generation, they were affected by the consumer boom of the 1960s and they are more energetic consumers than their thrifty parents. A proportion were radicalised (directly or indirectly, and in varying degrees) in early adulthood by feminism, the Civil Rights movement and the Vietnam war. The easy availability of reliable contraception changed family patterns, and women’s’ labour market participation rates went up, especially after marriage and childbearing (though sex discrimination remained powerful). They had higher expectations of life than their parents, and they have been a

driving force behind social change at all stages of their lives. They are now more likely to identify in aspirations and lifestyle with their children than with their parents

This cohort entered the labour market in the late 50s and 1960s, during a period of economic growth, when jobs were easy to get, affecting ongoing perceptions of employment relations. A significant minority suffered heavily from industrial restructuring in the 1980s, but not as severely as those younger (and not yet established in the labour market) and older (and vulnerable to “early retirement”).

Their attitudes to work in later life are much more positive than their parents, and for this group retirement ages have been rising, partly because of positive attitudes to work itself, or to the social networks associated with it, and for others through financial necessity arising from the restructuring of company pension schemes in the last decade. Their life expectancy has risen significantly, and most (though not all those in lower social classes) can expect more than 20 years of active retirement.

Educationally, this cohort benefited from the first large expansion of higher education with the creation of the “new” universities of the early 60s, and the Polytechnics, although HE youth participation rates were still below 10%. The launch of the Open University played a significant part in expanding second chance HE access for this group. A larger proportion of this cohort probably have positive memories of education, and are more predisposed to participate.

This group is now in or approaching retirement, and many have higher expectations of retirement than their parents. Some are more likely to be interested in learning generally, and particularly learning for active citizenship, as well as learning related to health, culture and lifestyle. However, for this cohort participation is likely to remain strongly associated with previous participation and qualification, reflecting the strongly divided initial education system which they experienced. Learning in dependency will not affect most of this cohort until 2030.

1950s cohort – now aged 47- 56

This group were the first to benefit fully from the post war economic expansion and the maturing of the welfare state. The arrival of widespread efficient contraception reduced fertility rates, and further embedded women in the labour market.

Their entry to the labour market coincided with a period of deteriorating industrial relations, the decline of much manufacturing employment, and uncertainty about the sustainability of the welfare state model following the oil crisis of the early 70s. As they entered their 30s, the economic and social changes of Thatcherism were radically changing social values, stressing individualism and enterprise, rather than collective solidarity.

This cohort reached their forties in the mid 1990s, when confidence in free market reforms was weakening, but they were exposed to privatisation of public services, and disruptions to pensions systems in their 40s and 50s, leading to widespread disillusion with the ability of government and the public sector to guarantee economic security.

Educationally, they experienced the full effect of the 1950s reforms to primary education; the early stages of comprehensive secondary education; the raising of the school leaving age to 16, with accompanying disruption to labour market entry patterns. They also experienced the introduction of GCSEs, to replace the former parallel systems of GCE and CSE, bringing with it for the first time the notion that all school leavers might be expected to have some formal qualification.

The NIACE adult learners survey suggests that this group is more likely than previous

cohorts to participate in learning in adult life. At every age their participation rates have been higher than their parents.

A high proportion of this group might be expected to seek continuing education and training, in order to keep pace with workforce change, and as a result of positive previous experiences of learning. However, they remain unconvinced of the relevance of formal qualification bearing courses to employability in later life.

1960s cohort – now aged 37-46

This cohort went through their initial education during a period of growing concern about the performance of state education. The post war educational and social reforms had become established, but without delivering the degree of social progress or educational achievement hoped for by many. Although they entered the labour market at the height of Thatcherism, the formative influences on attitudes to work and lifestyle were shaped by the post-Thatcher culture of New Labour. During their early working lives they experienced a number of economic shocks which raised anxieties about financial security and trust in Government (withdrawal from the ERM, the “dotcom boom” and the “collapse” of pension funds) when they were on the rising slope of career progression.

This was the last generation before the massification of higher education, although many, especially women, benefited from the expansion of mature access programmes in higher education.

During the next decade most of this cohort will enter the “retirement zone”, where the option of early retirement begins to be real. Their willingness, or need, to remain in work, and to maintain their employability, will be critical in shaping the older workforce of the next 30 years. It remains to be seen whether the positive attitudes of the previous cohort will be replicated here.

1970s cohort – now aged 27-36

This cohort experienced the final stages of initial education before the reforms of the 1980s. Comprehensive schooling was near universal, but public anxiety about education was rising. This group was the first to benefit from the rapid expansion of higher education in the late 1980s, which gave very large numbers access, initially to the Polytechnics/or “new” universities, and later to the full range of institutions. However, education was not delivering increased social mobility, which was slowing.

They entered the labour market in the early 1990s at a time of some economic and political turbulence as Thatcherism came to an end, and New Labour Government took over from Conservative.

Their learning needs are primarily focused on employability – acquiring skills and knowledge for career progression and maintaining these in the face of rapid industrial and technological change.

1980s cohort – now aged 17-26

This group were the first to experience the full National Curriculum, introduced in the late 1980s. Their experience of education has therefore been much more structured, and formal testing has played a much larger part. There has been some improvement in literacy rates among school leavers, and an increase in the numbers of school leavers with formal qualifications.

However, concern remains about the proportion of young people who fail to engage successfully in either further education or the labour market (the “NEETs”). As a cohort they are taking longer to establish themselves in the labour market, with higher HE

participation rates, gap years and periods in “trial jobs”. This cohort has experienced competition in the labour market from the large influx of migrants from Eastern Europe, and from the rise in retirement ages, and employers report disappointment at the “work readiness” of school and HE leavers.

It remains to be seen whether this cohort will, in middle age, revert to the more traditional career patterns, or remain less firmly attached to the labour market and lifelong roles and careers.

1990s cohort – now aged 7-16

This cohort is just beginning to enter adult life. The large majority are likely to do so with some experience of higher education, and in jobs requiring relatively high level skills, although a substantial proportion will be needed in skilled manual occupations if the economy is to be sustained (a high proportion of skilled manual workers will retire in the next decade).

4. The demographic future: what might we expect?

Some demographic changes over the next few decades are fairly predictable, while others are much less certain.

Likely changes

These reflect established trends, and are unlikely to change unless there is a major disruption to society (e.g. a large impact from climate change, a major disease outbreak or a war fought in Europe). It seems reasonable to assume that:

- birthrates will remain below replacement level for the foreseeable future, and over time birthrates for people from South Asia will fall to around replacement rate;
- life expectancy will continue to rise, by about 20% per year;
- there will be continuing net inward migration, documented and undocumented;
- as a result, the overall population will grow by about 10M over the next 25 years, fed by both migration and extending lifespan;
- this growth will be made up primarily of growing numbers of older people,
- average real retirement ages will rise from the early 60s to the mid 60s in the foreseeable future (partly as a result of the harmonisation of male and female State Pension Age in 2020 and subsequent raising for both);
- emigration of people in mid life will continue, but not on a sufficiently large scale to affect overall numbers, although it may skew the nature of the remaining population.

Areas of uncertainty

These are areas where future patterns are uncertain. In planning for the future it is necessary to make some assumptions about:

- **demand for labour.** The current trend has been upwards for more than a decade and this has driven an unprecedented expansion of employment and wealth (for most people). In historical terms this is a most unusual event, and the likelihood of it continuing indefinitely must be slim. An economic collapse would inevitably increase unemployment, with the consequent social stresses we have seen in the past. This would bear particularly heavily on traditionally marginal groups in the labour market – the young, the old, ethnic minorities, and immigrant groups;
- **employer flexibility:** whether initiatives to improve work-life balance, and increase flexible working produce changes in the distribution of work across the lifespan, or between genders, which could have a major impact on levels of labour market participation for women and older people, and whether flexible work will continue to be associated with low status work and career penalties.
- **volume of migration:** how far Government can and seeks to, change patterns of immigration, by controlling overall numbers, or limiting admissions to particular groups (and whether access to ESOL is extended to all those in need). It is also necessary to make assumptions about how far recent migrant groups from within Europe will stay or return to their countries of origin, as they themselves grow older, and their countries of origin develop;

- **degree of social integration:** how far migrant and minority ethnic communities integrate or develop distinct parallel social structures, attitudes and aspirations;
- **regional concentration of work:** whether the long term trend to concentration of high skilled work and workers in the South East will continue or be reversed (Government has intermittently attempted to distribute such work more widely, but with little success);
- **development of the housing market:** how far housing policy develops to enable greater mobility of workers, and especially to make housing affordable in regions of high demand (notably London and the South East)
- **climate change:** how soon predicted climate change, and associated resource constraints (on food, water and fuel particularly) begins to drive significant population movement, either within the UK or globally.

5. The new shape of the lifecourse

This chapter examines of the way in which demography is changing the various phases of the lifecourse, and the educational implications of this.

The individual lifecourse is punctuated, for most people, by a series of major life events, each of which leads to changes in lifestyle, expectations, and attitudes, and generates its own learning needs. Over recent decades the importance of some of these changes has altered, and their timing has become less predictable. It is possible that at some future date we will see a change in the distribution of work across the lifecourse, and recent developments in the legal rights to flexible work, to policy on childcare, and rising real retirement ages suggest that this may actually happen. Already we can see the trend in relation to the time spent in retirement: in 1950 the average man spent 17% of his life in retirement, by 2005 the proportion had risen to 31%²²

It should also be noted that the lifecourse pattern outlined below does not necessarily apply to those who undergo major upheavals like migration. Migrants have, to varying degrees, to replay some of the earlier stages of lifecourse to establish themselves in their new location.

The key lifecourse stages are:

Childhood	dependent on parents and the formal education system
Adolescence	establishing independence
Young adult	forming a stable adult role and identity
Family formation	establishing long term relationships and child rearing
Mid career	peak economic activity, for most people, the point of highest earnings (and, for many, of outgoings)
Labour market withdrawal	a period of withdrawing from paid work and establishing a new "retired" identity
Retirement	a period in which paid employment is no longer dominant (and is probably absent)
Dependency	a period in which individuals are dependent on others for some elements of daily living.

²² DWP (2006) *Security in Retirement: towards a new pensions solution*

In all cases it is important to remember that generalisations about large populations can mask very great differences in individual experience. At every stage we must remember to ask who is benefiting and who is being left out by the changes described, and what might be the role of education in overcoming such exclusion.

Childhood

Government education policy has focused strongly on improving the quality of childcare and early years education, in response to the large body of research evidence showing that children's educational and life chances are heavily influenced by their experiences before entering school. Childcare provision has been expanded, as has support to enable those on low incomes to afford it. Government's *Every Child Matters* strategy seeks to integrate the support provided by all parts of Government to ensure that every child can:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well being

In school the National Curriculum, and monitoring of individual and school performance have sought to guarantee the quality of education received by all children, and to identify and support those most at risk of failure. As a result, the school experience of today's children is much more uniform than previous generations, although performance has not improved as rapidly as hoped.

Outside school, children are tending to lead less healthy lives than their predecessors. Declining physical activity, childhood obesity and stress are growing concerns, and although levels of absolute childhood poverty have reduced, a significant group remain in very poor circumstances.

Adolescence

This is the period where young people begin to establish an independent identity, traditionally associated with leaving education and the family home, and with first jobs. However, some aspects of this life phase are now extending into the 20s, among 20-24 year olds, 58% of men and 39% of women are still living with their parents.

One group which has particular difficulty in establishing adult roles is the "NEETs" – young people who leave school without any formal qualifications and who do not engage in education, employment or training. The figure of unqualified 16-18 year olds has remained at around 10% for a decade, and the proportion lacking a full level 2 qualification (the normal expectation of school leavers at 16) is 25%. Furthermore, most of the latter group still do not have such a qualification when they reach 25. Government has sought to address this problem, through the Connexions service and other initiatives, an integrated support for individuals in managing the transition from school to work

Government is also reforming qualifications with new vocational Diplomas which aim to increase the vocational relevance of education for those less motivated by academic courses, and it has also been rapidly expanding formal apprenticeship programmes (from 75,800 in 1997 to 252,300 in 2004).

In 2007 UNICEF published an analysis of international comparative data on children's

wellbeing²³, which showed very low levels of wellbeing among British children, by comparison with their peers in other countries (although the choice and weighting of indicators is disputed). UK children scored lower than their peers in most countries on: family and peer relationships, risky behaviour (including smoking, being drunk, using cannabis, fighting and bullying, and sexual behaviour); subjective well-being; and material well-being.

Government's overall strategy for young people seeks to tackle unemployment; to engage the NEETs; improve achievement overall; and improve skills development for a changing labour market. Outside the world of work the *Youth Matters* Green Paper proposed to address a number of these issues through imposing a duty on Local authorities to address availability of activities; opportunities to contribute to the community; provision of relevant advice and information; and support for serious personal problems. In 2007 it published its strategy *Aiming high for young people* to implement these proposals.

Young adults: initial labour market entry and adult identity

For most people, the transition from initial education to the labour market has become longer and more diffuse. Although a majority of young people experience paid work (usually low skilled and low paid) while still in full time education, the expansion of further and higher education means that most people remain in initial education longer. In addition "gap years" have become much more common, as have a variety of kinds of "trial jobs". The decline of traditional apprenticeship has also meant that young people do not become locked into a particular industry of career route as early, or as firmly as in the past (although the recent expansion of apprenticeships hopes to reverse this). As a result, many young people do not become established in what may be seen as "permanent" employment until much later than their parents or grandparents.

A sizable group (the NEETS) become disengaged from education and work in the late secondary stage, and have difficulty entering either education/training or work at all, and some have real difficulty in establishing any form of adult identity. This particularly affects some minority ethnic groups where the problems are compounded by discrimination and racism. Some of the low and unskilled jobs which such people have traditionally taken up are disappearing, or employer expectations of them are rising. As a growing proportion of young people are going into higher education rather than into entry level jobs from school, employer dissatisfaction with the capabilities and attitudes of the remaining school leavers has been rising, and some are turning to other sources for labour, including older people and migrants, who are perceived to have better working attitudes and motivation²⁴.

Government education policy has placed a particular focus on ensuring that young people achieve what is regarded as the threshold qualification for labour market entry or further education – a full Level 2 qualification.

Family formation

Alongside later labour market entry the average age of family formation has risen. Formal marriage has become much rarer and the average age of childbearing has risen (which is one of the reasons for the declining birth-rate). With the growth of women's

²³ The UNICEF definition of "child" extends through adolescence.

²⁴ McNair et al (2007)

participation in the labour market, increasing numbers are deferring childbearing in the interests of career progression. This produces a larger age gap between parents and children (with its own social implications), and a rise in demand for childcare services. It has also been argued that these new patterns put increased stress on individuals (and especially women), to balance domestic, employment and personal priorities. Although legislative measures have sought to improve support for people in this situation through access to childcare and statutory leave entitlements, social and employer attitudes have not yet fully adapted.

This is a life phase where traditionally work based training has been focused, where time pressures may make take up particularly difficult, and where career gaps between women and men open up.

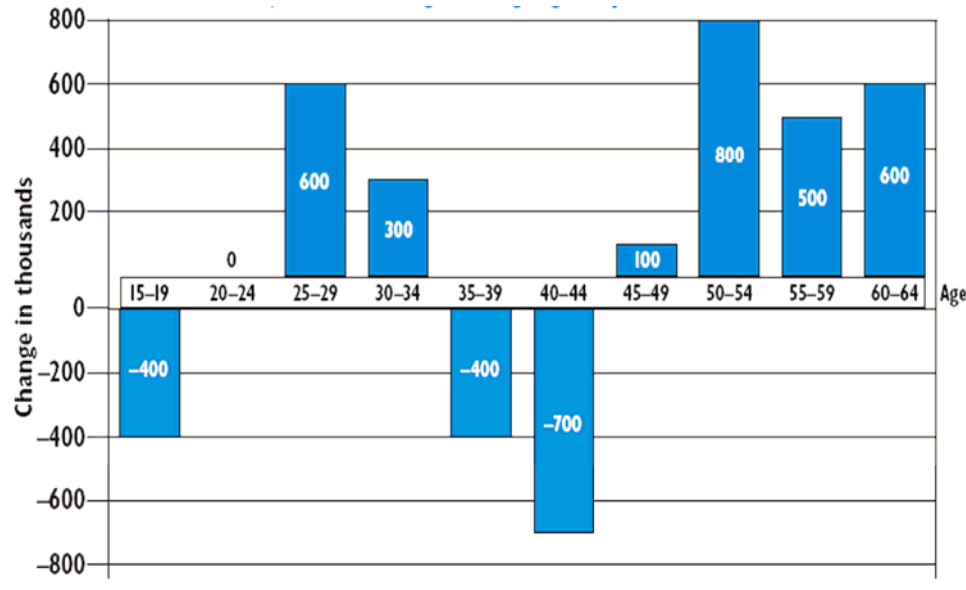
Mid career

The mid-career phase has traditionally been a period of relative stability. People were married and established in jobs or careers, and bringing up children. However, this is now the period when divorce is most likely (the average age of divorce is now in the early 40s for men and women), with attendant disruption to family patterns, sometimes leading to starting second families, and sometimes to changes of job, career or financial circumstances.

In this phase, most people have caring responsibilities for children, sometimes with a very large age span, but increases in life expectancy have also produced increasing caring needs for old people. Although the length of time which most people spend in severely dependent old age has not increased as rapidly as life expectancy itself, many people in their 50s (and many in their 60s) now have some form of caring responsibility for older relatives. The combination of later childbirth, a longer age spread of children and caring needs of older people means that a growing (though small as yet) number of people are simultaneously caring for children and older relatives from mid life into retirement. This bears particularly heavily on women, who continue to be the principal carers.

This is also a phase where employment patterns are likely to change. The most notable decline in population over the next two decades will happen in the age range which corresponds to the career peak phase – between 35-50. Figure 15 shows how the age profile of the 15-65 workforce will change between 2004 and 2020, showing the large increase in the working population aged 45-65, but showing clearly the large gap in the mid career age range, the age at which people traditionally take on managerial and leadership roles. Demography is thus likely to force some reshaping of career patterns, and promotion systems: either less management will be done, it will be done by people who are older or younger than we are accustomed to, or by people from “non-traditional” managerial groups – migrants and ethnic minorities.

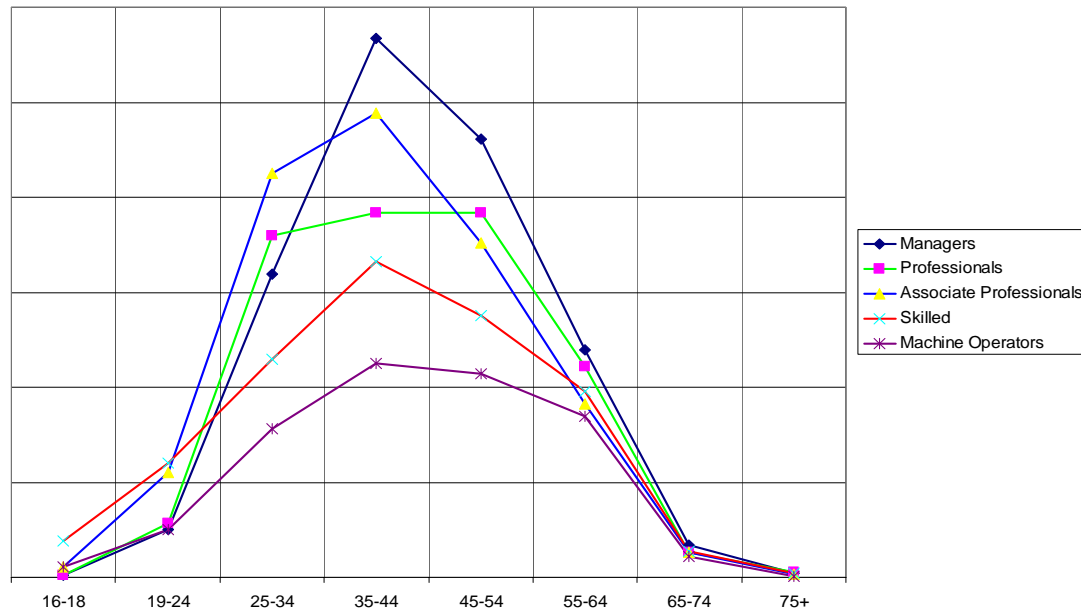
Figure 15. Change in size of age groups 2004-2020



Government Actuary's Department

The age profile of different kinds of occupation also differ. As Figure 16 shows, managers and professionals are heavily concentrated in the 35-44 age range, while manual workers are more evenly spread (though skewed upwards for historical reasons). Some sectors have extreme age profiles, like hospitality where almost 40% of the workforce is under 25.

Figure 16. Age profiles of occupational groups



Labour Force Survey data

Labour market withdrawal

The largest demographic changes in the coming decades will be those affecting older people and the timing of retirement.

During the last quarter of the 20th century average retirement ages fell across all developed countries, driven by the desire for early escape from physically strenuous work, the availability of relatively generous occupational pensions, and large scale industrial restructuring, where large number of people were forced into unemployment late in life, or were offered advantageous terms to retire early.

More recently, the UK Government – like those of all developed countries – has been seeking to encourage people to stay in employment longer. Reasons for this include: concern about the deteriorating dependency ratio, the rise of labour shortages created by continuing economic growth; and concern that employment provides many people with a means to engage in society with the attendant social and emotional benefits, in addition to the financial ones.

The downward trend in average retirement age began to flatten out in the early 2000s, and ONS now believes that it has begun to reverse. One factor driving this is financial: with the falls in share values in 2002 which led to the collapse of some pension funds, the fall in the value of personal savings, and the decline in the value of the state pension (Britain has one of the least generous state pension schemes in Europe).

However, there are also more positive reasons: the majority of older people report liking work (in principle, if not their present job), and wish to stay in work longer than they expect to do. However, they want to work on a more flexible, and often part-time basis. Some recognise that the idea of retirement as a long holiday is no longer tenable when it may extend for decades, and fear isolation or loss of purpose to life.

One further change is that the “retirement” transition is being spread over a longer period. The traditional “cliff edge” approach of a sudden move from full time employment to full time retirement is less common, as more people phase out gradually or take on new paid or voluntary roles after leaving full time work. A large proportion of older workers say that they would prefer some form of phasing out, although there is some evidence that this tends at present to mean reducing hours before the retirement date, rather than staying longer on a part time basis.

Although pre-retirement education has existed for at least 30 years, the volume remains small and access to it remains uneven. Outside large organisations, few people receive any substantial provision. It is particularly critical because it may be the only time that people are provided with integrated support to review the relationship between their later life work aspirations, health and finance. Without good support on these issues (and especially finance) many make decisions about retirement which they subsequently regret.

Retirement

Since rising life expectancy has not been accompanied by a proportionate rise in retirement ages, the phase of life after paid employment has, for most people, extended significantly. This raises a range of issues for individuals, including how to maintain (and sometimes create) social networks to replace those associated with paid work; how to find constructive activity; and how to make sense of one’s life and purpose – the “meaning of life” question.

All these are functions which adult education has traditionally addressed, sometimes overtly, and sometimes indirectly. Older people join classes to meet other people (including younger people) on neutral territory, to develop and pursue interests, to keep healthy or to confront the questions of meaning and purpose of life. However, participation in such courses has declined steeply in recent years as a result of Government decisions to prioritise public funding for young people, basic skills and for basic vocational qualifications. Government policy is not that provision should diminish, but that learners should pay a larger contribution towards the costs. However this does not appear to be happening, and while there is evidence²⁵ that some older people have found alternative ways of learning, independently and informally, and in the private sector, it is likely that such a shift will disadvantage those with least educational experience and lowest incomes, whose learning needs are not less important.

Dependency

The most striking feature of demographic change is probably the extension of healthy old age. Although a degree of dependency in later life is unavoidable for most, a large proportion of people are still relatively independent into their 80s. Between the ages of 75 and 84 only one person in 20 is in residential care, and even after 84 the proportion is only one in five. However, many receive high levels of support in their homes, from partners and children (themselves likely to be retired); a much larger proportion require support to carry out some normal tasks in their own homes; and many will be unable to participate in educational activity without assistance with transport or mobility.

Project work has demonstrated that educational provision in day and residential centres can improve health and wellbeing, but this practice has not been widely developed, partly because of the complex interactions between health, social care and educational agencies and their differing priorities.

²⁵ Aldridge & Tuckett (2007)

5.1. How learning participation changes across the lifespan

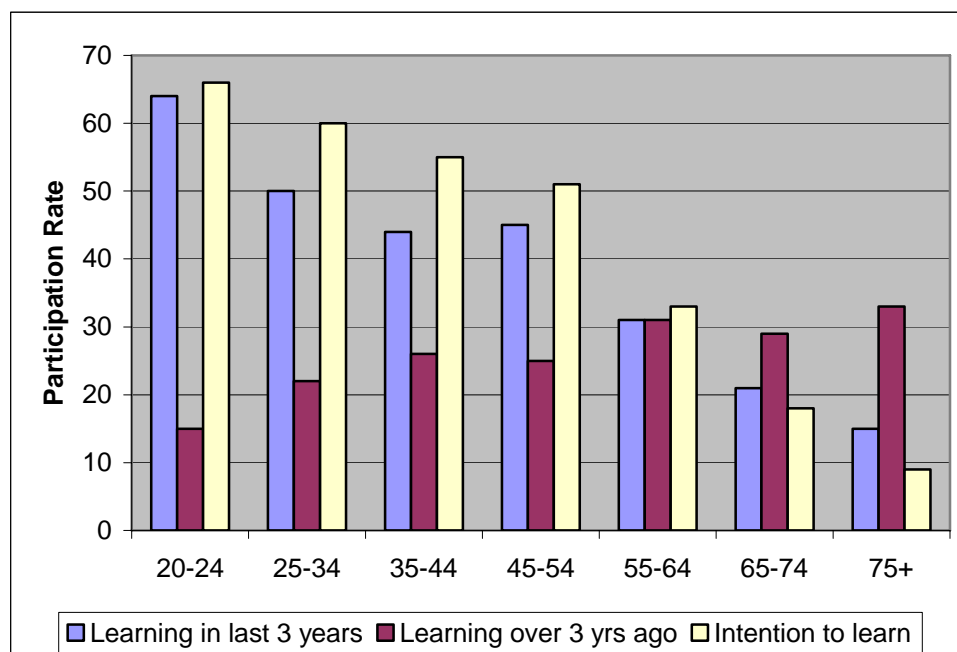
Older people's engagement with learning is different from younger people's in a variety of ways. This section summarises some of these differences, based mainly on the work of Aldridge & Tuckett in *What older people learn* (2007)²⁶. However, it is important to bear in mind that some of the differences identified here probably reflect cohort effects (discussed earlier) rather than directly age related ones.

Participation

Forty percent of all adults describe themselves as current or recent learners (in the last 3 years). This declines with age, but in recent years the decline appears to have stopped for people aged 45-54, perhaps suggesting some cultural change affecting this cohort.

Figure 17 shows current and recent participation by age, alongside past participation and intention to learn in the future. It is striking that reported past participation is higher for people over 55 than for all younger groups, and that as people age, their intention to learn in the future falls more rapidly than their current/recent participation.

Figure 17. Learning participation and age

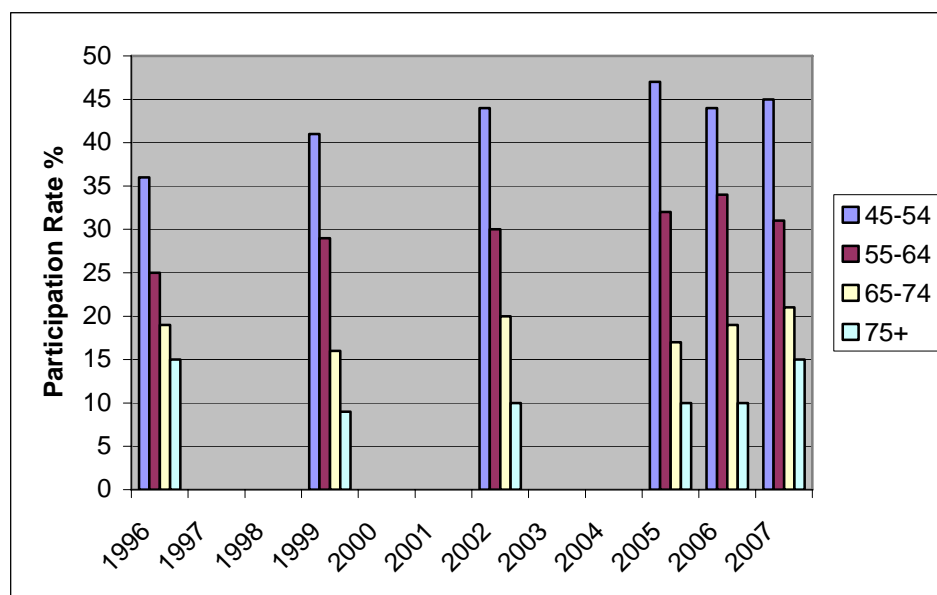


Over the decade to 2006 the overall participation rate remained broadly stable, while the rate for 45-64 year olds grew steadily. However, in the last two years their participation rate has begun to fall. The most striking change has taken place among older people: between 2004/5 and 2006/7. The number of learners over 65 in LSC funded vision fell dramatically (partly, at least, reflecting changed Government priorities). 65+ enrolments in FE Colleges fell by a half, and in Personal and Community Development Learning by one third. However, this is not reflected in the broader measure of participation used in

²⁶ The definition of "older" used here is over 54 unless otherwise stated

the NIACE survey, which shows a smaller drop, suggesting that provision is being displaced from the public to private, voluntary or informal sectors. On this broad definition of learning, participation by people over 75 has actually risen.

Figure 18. Changes in older learners' participation 1996-2007



Older people are more likely to have been studying the subject for less than 3 months or more than 3 years. Women were more likely to have been learning for a long time.

Access

Older people are more likely to find out about learning from family and friends than younger ones.

They are twice as likely as younger people to be learning at home (especially the most and least affluent and the retired), or an adult education centre (especially classes C2,D and E including the retired). As people age they are more likely to be in “free” courses (probably publicly funded) or pay fees themselves (39% in each case) The commonest reasons for not studying are “lack of interest”, and “feeling too old to learn” (37% and 24%)

Physical access is not seen as a problem by most older people, with two thirds of people saying that it is “very” or “fairly” easy to access learning locally. Access was more difficult for women, and for the highest and lowest social groups.

Increasingly opportunities to learn, or support for learning, are being offered electronically, through computers and the internet. Access to all kinds of learning related technology declines with age, but most strikingly in relation to computer and internet access after 65 (29% compared to 59% for the adult population as a whole) .

Qualifications

Although participation in qualification bearing courses falls with age, a significant proportion of older people are on such courses. However, far fewer older participants in such courses actually achieve a qualification (44%/12% of 55-64 year olds and 31%/7% of 65-74 year olds). This may suggest that they are motivated by the programme content more than the qualification itself, and that they can only access the learning by joining a

course with this explicit purpose. Those on qualification bearing courses are skewed heavily towards lower social classes.

Economic purposes

Motivations based on work, qualifications and personal development fall with age. The biggest change is “to get a recognised qualification” where the proportion halves between the 45-54 and 55-64 groups (21% to 9%).

However, in recent years there has been some increase in demand for work related subjects among the 55+ group, which probably reflects the growing proportion of the age group in employment

Social and civic participation

Those not in employment are much more likely to cite “meeting new people” as a benefit from participation.

There is little quantitative evidence on the extent of learning specifically for civic engagement, or explicitly to encourage community cohesion.

Personal development

Motivations based on the subject itself, self-confidence, social contact and pleasure in learning increase with age.

- Computer skills: by far the largest number of learners were studying computer skills (41% of those over 55 a proportion which rises progressively with age, and highest among the retired). It is likely that the motivations here are particularly complex, including some developing communication/literacy skills, and pursuing social contact through a socially acceptable “subject”.
- Foreign languages: The second largest group of older learners are studying foreign languages, probably associated with greater leisure in retirement, holidays and homes abroad. This group is skewed towards higher social classes.
- Health and medicine: Numbers studying “health and medicine” increase after 45, but fall after 55.
- Culture and meaning: The older people are, the more likely they are to be studying “cultural” subjects, associated with personal development and meaning (22% of all 55+ learners study arts, history and religion, skewed 3:1 in favour of women).

Perceived benefits of learning

Work related benefits fall in importance as people age. “My work has become more satisfying”, and “I have got a promotion” both fall progressively after 45; “I have got a recognised qualification” falls rapidly after 55.

Overall one learner in 4 identifies “developed myself as a person” as a benefit of learning. This peaks in the 55-64 age range (at 27.5%), probably reflecting the uncertainties of identity associated with the retirement phase of life. It is also more commonly cited by women than men.

“Meeting new people” as a benefit rises with age to 28% of people aged 65-74.

“Improving my communication skills” rises progressively to 25% of people aged 65-74

6. Implications for learning policy

The previous chapters of this paper have set out the broad shape of demographic change. The key points are:

- in an ageing, and a more geographically mobile, society people will need to cope with change of roles, in and out of work, more often than in the past. Learning how to carry one's previous learning forward into new roles and environments, and even new countries, and to cope with more frequent change, will be a priority.
- Some phases of life, especially retirement, will extend, increasing the volume of demand and perhaps the nature of learning needs.

The section which follows considers the implications of these changes for adult learning. To what extent do they imply a change in what is provided, for whom and on what terms? What should be the priorities for public and private resourcing?

Table 3 outlines the key issues which emerge from the previous discussion, identifies some learning issues which arise from them, comments briefly on current Government policy for each, and identifies some key policy documents.

Table 3. Policy issues and learning needs

Demographic change	Policy issue	Learning needs	Current policy
Aging	Extending working life	Maintaining employability	Strong policy commitment, but weak on education
	Third age /second careers	Retraining – specific and generic	Little overt attention. Needs better models
	Phased retirement	Managing transitions, negotiating skills	Strong policy commitment. Learning issues underdeveloped
	Longer active post work period	Meaning and community engagement	Traditional adult education role in steep decline
	Longer fourth age	Activity, meaning and concluding	Little policy commitment, and unclear responsibilities divided among Departments. Some good project work, little disseminated
	Intergenerational	Tools and skills	No policy,

	knowledge transfer	for knowledge transfer	scattered practice
Migration	Reception of newly arrived migrants	Orientation and learning about living and working in the UK	Sunrise programme for new refugees to be rolled out nationally in 2008. No provision for other migrants.
	Integration of external migrants	Citizenship education, including (but not only) preparation for citizenship tests. ESOL at all levels, including higher and entry levels and occupationally specific courses. Flexible provision	Free ESOL classes to end in 2007. Provision varies – some providers include the citizenship test. No national programme of citizenship education for immigrants
	Employability	Adapting existing skills and learning new ones appropriate for the UK labour market.	JCP operates the ‘Refugee Employment Strategy’ but only refugees are eligible. Access to appropriate employment training is limited.
	Internal migration	Establishing networks and community engagement	A traditional role of adult education, in steep decline
	Recognition and updating of overseas (and older) qualifications, and of uncertificated learning.	Assessment of overseas vocational and academic qualifications. APEL.	For overseas qualifications NARIC can be used but cannot provide equivalencies for all academic or most vocational areas. APEL provision is patchy across

			levels and the country.
	Community cohesion	Intercultural learning	Govt funding for very deprived neighbourhoods could be used for this purpose. Not available in most areas.
Minority ethnic groups	Overcoming exclusion		Patchy, project based provision

6.1. Implications for learning: generic issues

The initial education paradigm

The first implication of demographic change for learning is that the initial education paradigm, which proposes that most of an individual's learning takes place in the early years of life, is no longer adequate. This argument has been part of the policy rhetoric since the 1960s, featuring in documents from OECD, UNESCO, and the EU, but it is still not embedded in public policy.

Our education and training system has grown up around the notion that learning precedes practice. Schooling, further and higher education exist to prepare people for something which they have not yet encountered, and despite the great growth of adult student numbers in FE and HE, this model continues to dominate. Curriculum and qualifications systems are designed on the assumption of linear progression, from level to level, and then into work. Adults who enter this system after their early 20s are still largely expected to conform to this model, leaving their experience and knowledge at the door, and beginning again.

This model was never a good reflection of the reality, but it made some sense when most people entered the labour market in adolescence, and remained in the same role, firm or industry, and usually in the same location, for their whole working life. From school, college and university, people were inducted into their adult roles, and any professional updating required was organised in or around the workplace, much of it informally, as technologies and practice changed. People who changed roles radically were exceptional, as were those who chose to undertake adult learning for non-work purposes.

Even if the initial model had been appropriate in the past, changing demography provides a new challenge: of change which is more radical, more common, and more widely distributed across the lifecourse. Although a proportion of the population will remain relatively immobile, both geographically and in employment terms, the majority will be more mobile than in the past, and even for those who remain in the same place, migration will bring contacts with new cultures and expectations, and industrial and technological change will bring new kinds of work.

In the world of work, people are likely to change jobs in more radical ways than in the past, with older people and migrants seeking new kinds of employment at different stages of life, bringing with them experience and skills from other contexts, and seeking learning to adapt existing skills, and fill gaps, rather than to begin learning ab initio. Outside the world of work, mobile populations need opportunities to learn how to adapt to new communities and expectations, whether the change is from one country to another, or from a city to a village. For people encountering extended retirement, there may be an increased need for learning to maintain social engagement and find meaning in extended life without work and the social networks which go with it.

The consequence of these changes is that people will be experiencing transitions, including entering and leaving work, more often and at less predictable points in the lifecycle, and that kinds of support traditionally associated with particular ages need to be available throughout the lifecourse.

In Government policy adult learning needs are often overlooked or misunderstood because of inappropriate use of initial education models, while they may be recognised by other Departments in relation to specific groups, but not linked to any overall educational strategy, agencies or expertise.

Motivation, progression and experience

It is traditional to classify educational opportunities in terms of “level” and “subject”. However, for adult learning, and especially for the groups this paper is concerned with, these concepts have serious limitations.

While most formal courses have a “subject”, and this is commonly the overt reason which learners give for enrolling, research with learners repeatedly demonstrates that real motivations, and learning are much more complex. The commonest finding is that learners experience, and value most, what they describe as “increased self confidence”: a sense of the ability to take control of some aspect of their lives, to feel a mastery of a body of knowledge or a skills which they have previously thought beyond them.

Similarly, most formal courses are assigned a “level”: a notion which rests on an assumption of linearity in learning which derives from the learning of young children, where patterns of progression are well established and understood, and where work progresses from simple to complex, easy to difficult, gradually building one piece of knowledge on another. However, as adults accumulate experience, the foundation for such notions becomes increasingly unclear: skills learned 20 years ago resurface, and an adult who is a beginner in one field may find she has a body of previously acquired knowledge comparable to a much more “advanced” learner. Older people are commonly able to offset lack of recent formal learning with experiential learning, which explains why, despite lower levels of qualifications, older workers are not, in general, less productive. Similarly, a graduate migrating from an Eastern European country has linguistic, social and cultural learning needs far “below” his formal qualifications, while a refugee from central Africa may have advanced survival skills, but no formal education at all.

Motivation to learn varies substantially between groups. It appears to:

- decline with age in relation to work related learning
- rise with age in relation to non-work related learning (though perhaps mainly by increasing the amount of learning undertaken by the same people, rather than by bringing in large numbers of new learners)
- be high for new migrant groups, some of whom are not permitted to, or funded to, participate, because of their nationality status.

Learning and qualifications

Traditionally, the qualification system has served three purposes:

- to measure individuals’ progression along a linear route from novice to expert;
- to enable educators to select “the best” candidates for further study;
- to certify that people entering the labour market have appropriate entry level skills.

In response to the growing pace of industrial change the latter purpose has been extended to include people entering the labour market, or changing roles later in life, and the systems refined, most notably by the introduction of competence based qualification models.

The system has also been used in a secondary sense, to measure the performance of education and training systems and policies, with a powerful (and not always positive) effect on public policy. In the effort to improve economic competitiveness, Governments have come to use qualification levels as a proxy for human capital, and for international

comparisons. By these measures, the UK does, as the Leitch report points out, perform poorly. However, the evidence is that the human capital in the British economy is actually much stronger than this would suggest. As one commentator observed “if the UK’s skills base is so seriously behind that of our economic competitors, why do we have the strongest economy?”. The reason is that qualifications are, at best, a poor proxy for the capacity of the population²⁷. This is demonstrated by the evidence that older people can be as productive as their younger colleagues in the workplace. They compensate for lower qualifications by drawing on wider experience and networks of contacts built up over time. In reality, people learn many things which are never accredited, and many of the skills they use in work are acquired informally in ways which few would even recognise as “learning”. This did not matter when people remained in stable environments where they, their strengths and weaknesses, were known: it matters a great deal when they begin to move between very different environments and need to demonstrate what they know and can do in unfamiliar contexts. The problem is compounded if they are themselves unaware of, or value inappropriately, what they have learned.

The issue is particularly important in the context of an ageing workforce. Current policy is driven by qualification measures which overvalue the measurable, and pay almost no attention to qualification obsolescence or decay. Qualifications become obsolete as technologies and working cultures change over time, and any educator knows that a skill taught but not practiced, decays. Thus two individuals with the same formal qualifications acquired 20 years ago may differ greatly in their actual capacity, when one has been practising the skills continuously in a working environment since qualification and the other has been doing something else. Furthermore, older adults bring a great body of knowledge, skills and experience to new roles, which can provide a foundation for new learning and employment. An efficient system for managing this would recognise and build on such learning, not ignore it.

The issue is also important to a globally mobile workforce. Some migrants bring with them high levels of formal qualification, or extensive work experience, but from qualification systems and cultures which are unfamiliar to educators and employers in the UK.

The consequence of both these problems is that older people, and migrants, tend to be employed in jobs which do not make full use of their skills and knowledge. Both have difficulty demonstrating their capacities, and for both groups, change tends to mean a drop in occupational status. Although some older people deliberately choose to scale down their work commitments by choosing a less demanding, lower status job, for many, the only option is to accept employment at a lower income, in a market which systematically discriminates against older candidates. For migrants, the trade off is to find better (though not well) paid, but unstimulating, employment. In both cases, the result is an under use of skill and knowledge which is a waste for the economy and the individual. Whether the qualifications shortfall of older people (by comparison with their younger peers) actually represents lower capability, is by no means clear.

Learning and social cohesion

In a more mobile and culturally diverse world traditional channels for establishing the rules of social engagement, become less reliable. Traditional family, community and

²⁷ Leaving aside the larger problem of how comparable qualifications are across national, cultural and linguistic barriers.

employment structures teach people what is important, how to behave and what matters. As people move, most dramatically between countries, but also between areas, industries and individual communities, they need to learn what is expected in the host community, what is regarded as “normal”, where the boundaries of tolerance of difference lie, and how to negotiate these and influence change.

Although much of this is learned through observation and advice from others, education can play an important part. This extends across a spectrum: from formal courses explicitly aimed to develop language, citizenship and culture, to less formal kinds of education which allow people to interact with others and develop networks of acquaintance and friendship. Adult education has traditionally served an important purpose for people moving to new areas, or people who have gone through some form of life change like retirement, divorce or bereavement, enabling them to meet others on neutral ground, around shared interests, where the social interaction may be as important as the subject ostensibly studied. In maintaining the social capital which enables a complex society to function such activities are vital.

Diversity is not only an issue for those who move into a community, but also for the host community itself. This may be particularly important as the patterns of migrant settlement change, with greater dispersal to areas where immigration has traditionally been low. Badly managed, such change can lead to social tensions, where the host community feels that benefits are being given to immigrants unfairly. Educational responses to this need to be more subtle, since the proportion of people likely to take up education explicitly to welcome their new neighbours is very small outside those areas with a very strong tradition of social commitment.

Learning and role change

Everyone changes roles during the lifecourse, and learning of some kind is inherent in the process. Much of this has always happened, and much takes place without external support, or through informal support from relatives, friends, workmates. However, formal education and training has also always played a part in many of the transitions.

As such transitions become more frequent, and perhaps more dramatic, the potential for education and training services to provide useful support increases.

Table 4 identifies transitions which are sometimes supported through formal education and training, and some of the risks of failing to respond to such needs.

Table 4 Learning and role change

Transition	Learning implications	Implications of no/poor provision
Becoming a carer	Some support through social services departments and voluntary sector	Poor quality care. Stress on carers, sometimes resulting in greater demands on public services
Becoming a parent	Some support through health based educational programmes, and through growing family education provision	Poor outcomes for children
Becoming a volunteer	Very developed programmes in some organisations, patchy	Poor quality services

	elsewhere	
Becoming dependent	Happens through disability and ill health, in mid or later life. Practical and psychological adjustment issues	Increased dependence – and associated social costs
Divorce, widowhood and relationship breakdown	Many people take up adult education to establish new social networks and identity after relationship breakdown	Social isolation, mental health problems
Establishing an adult identity	Apprenticeship, induction, some forms of FE and HE, Youth Work	Low productivity, social disorder
Retiring	Mainly employer based, rare except in large organisations	Reduced independence, and quality of life.
Taking on formal citizenship roles	Learning expectations and skills for civic roles in public, corporate or voluntary sectors	Inefficient governance
Moving to a new country	Language and cultural understanding	Poor social cohesion. Reduced employability
Major career change	Often dependent on initial education models of “retraining”	Underemployment and inefficient use of skills and knowledge

Retirement: the growing phase

The growth of retirement as a life phase is perhaps the most dramatic change taking place. It is effectively adding a new phase to life for most people, raising questions about purpose and meaning of life without child rearing or paid employment and the social networks which develop around them.

Most people can now expect 20 years of potentially healthy active life after leaving the workforce. What used to be seen as a short holiday at the end of working life is now a major life phase, and the question of what this phase of life is for, is a real one for many people. One of the reasons some people defer retirement is a fear of isolation and a lack of purpose to life without employment. Education provides not only a meaningful activity in itself, it can also provide social networks to replace those of the workplace, and enable people to develop and adapt skills to play a constructive role in society, whether in formal voluntary activity, returning to paid employment, or to the processes of study and reflection which make meaning for the individual. For some the social engagement is as important as the “subject” studied. For others the subject itself is, or can become, a consuming passion, itself giving meaning to life.

Distinguishing needs and demands

Demand and take up of learning opportunities, formal and informal, rarely reflects theoretical maps of potential need. Individuals do not always perceive the needs which policymakers, employers or providers think they have. This partly reflects the way in

which provision is offered, and perceptions of agencies and services as well as the traditional access barriers of time, place and cost. It also reflects perceptions of what “learning” is, and what being a “learner” says about the individual. For significant numbers of older people, education means an unhappy and unproductive formal schooling many years ago. This is something they are deeply resistant to returning to. For some, the word “learner” itself has overtones of incompetence, especially to people who feel that they have coped adequately with the demands of life and work for decades. For many older people, young people, immigrants and members of minority ethnic groups the experience of discrimination has had a negative impact on self confidence, reducing expectations or capacity to learn, and to obtain the benefits which can derive from successful learning.

For people coming to the UK from different cultures there may be quite distinct expectations of what learning is, and while many migrants strongly welcome the opportunity to learn, their expectations of what this means may not always match well with British expectations of adult learning.

Research into need therefore needs to be sensitive to cultural expectations, and the attitudes of particular groups and age cohorts. It also needs to be sensitive to whose views are being sought. While it is very proper to consult about needs and ways of meeting them, the current adult learner population is a small and self selecting group, and is becoming more so as overall numbers fall. It is therefore important to ensure that views on what older people or migrants want takes an inclusive approach. The needs of people entering formal post-school education for the first time in later life may be very different from those, in the same age group, who are already effective lifelong learners.

6.2. Participation: the “new clientele”

Differential participation is always a key policy issue in all adult learning policy, and learning opportunities and take up are not evenly distributed across the population. A critical issue is therefore who learns, and who does not.

Table 5 shows seven broad groups which are likely to expand.

Table 5. Expanding client groups

“third agers”	older people (principally aged 50-80) who are still healthy and capable of independent living, either in the final stages of their working careers, or retired from paid employment
“dependent old”	older people who have become dependent on others for some physical support, many living in institutional settings. The onset of dependency is very variable by age, and can be deferred by education, among other things
first generation immigrants	coming from a wide variety of circumstances. Some will come from developed countries with high levels of education and skills, others from developing countries with little or no formal education. Their motives will be a blend of economic, social and political, from those seeking career development in a global professional economy, to asylum seekers seeking safety and survival. This group is most likely to be in young middle age
children of first generation immigrants	people coming to terms with the conflicts between their parents’ cultures and expectations and those of an evolving and complex “host community” ²⁸ . Experience of education and the labour market varies greatly between different origins, with some groups outperforming their White British peers, and some seriously underperforming. Some groups are particularly likely to experience discrimination in the labour market.
internal migrants	people moving within the UK for economic or social reasons and needing to establish themselves in new locations and communities. This includes younger adults flowing into London and the South East, mid career people dispersing into the broader South of England; minority ethnic groups dispersing more widely across the country
the “left behind”	people in industries and areas in decline, left behind in

²⁸ Terminology here is difficult: the words “host” and “migrant” imply the insertion of an alien group into a stable community. The reality is that the “host” community is itself in constant evolution (though at different speeds in different places), partly as a result of migration itself.

	communities which have lost their economic <i>raison d etre</i>
career changers	people who choose in mid life to transfer to a new occupational path, who need both formal qualifications and assistance to enter a field which may well be configured mainly to accept. Entrants only in early life. This applies both to those who change careers in their 40s and to mid life migrants, although their specific needs may be different. Some of these will be financially and socially secure, some much less so.

6.3. Curriculum priorities

Purposes: individual and collective

Many kinds of learning are demanded, in one way or another, by individuals or their employers. However, there are also kinds of learning which serve a social purpose, although individuals may not demand them. Learning for social cohesion is an example of the latter: few people, and an eccentric sample of the population, are likely to choose to enrol on a programme in “Understanding your Muslim neighbour”, yet encouraging learning which crosses the boundaries of faith communities is clearly socially desirable, increasing understanding, and thereby reducing social tensions. Such objectives may often be better met by programmes which address a common issue or problem, be it addressed to improving local housing, or understanding local history, and actively seeking to recruit a mixed cohort of learners – increasing understanding through learning together, rather than through explicitly learning about each other. However, such opportunities are relatively rare.

It is therefore important that policymakers do not make the mistake of assuming that all that needs planning for and evaluating, is linear progress in the subject, and progression “upwards” through a qualifications hierarchy.

For this reason we analyse motivation here in terms of three broad dimensions: economic, social and personal.

Economic motives

The fundamental economic need is to secure an adequate day to day income, and to accumulate wealth. This dominates the lives of most adults from the mid teens to around 60, and is probably the principal motive for learning during those years. As retirement ages rise, and participation in voluntary activity post retirement rises, the demand for learning of this kind is likely to rise. As life expectancy rises, the need to understand how to manage money in retirement (for many, a different skill from managing earned income) will increase. Policy success in this domain is continuing economic performance, but the linkage between particular kinds of learning and economic output remains elusive, and poorly measured by the data currently available.

There is no reason to doubt that the trends towards increasing pace of change in work will continue, driven by technological change, and globalisation. However, the volume of work which will not change must not be underestimated. While some, especially high skilled, work can move freely around the world, much remains firmly rooted in place, and much of this requires relatively low skills. Unless labour becomes very scarce, it will not be economic to mechanise such skills, and recent employer skills surveys have revealed a continuing healthy demand for low skilled workers.

It is also important to recognise the importance of social capital in the labour market. Most job change happens within organisations and through recruitment on word of mouth, and this is known to be particularly true for older workers (career moves for people over 50 are almost invariably “downwards” unless they are the result of personal contacts and negotiation). This puts people who lack such contacts – because they have spent years in a single role or organisation, or they are unfamiliar with the country or area, at a severe disadvantage. Providing skills without the infrastructure of networks, work placements, and in work support may not be very effective.

Many of the qualities which make people employable are generic, and for many roles in many sectors, these factors are as important as specific technical skills. Some of these are developed by experience, and can, with a limited amount of support, be transferred between industries. When employers speak of preferring older people, or overqualified immigrants from Eastern Europe, to young native British applicants, it is often these skills they are seeking: customer care, flexibility, a strong work ethic, the ability to communicate, a degree of numeracy, and generic computer skills.

However, while many older people and migrants can offer these qualities, this is not universally true. For many migrants, language is a serious barrier to employment, although less so for some groups than others. Some older people, who find themselves redundant or unemployed after spending all their working lives in a single organisation, may find the processes of seeking work, and the expectations of unfamiliar organisations difficult to manage.

Although generic skills are important, most employment also calls for job specific skills. These are often better described in formal qualification systems, and in some areas developed mechanisms exist for testing and accrediting them, without full formal course attendance. Here the problems for older people are often a matter of skills decay over time. It is well established that if a learner acquires a skill and is not given the opportunity to practice it, it decays. Thus a qualification acquired years, or even decades, ago and not practiced, does not represent a real capability, and should not properly be included in any measure of human capital, nor in any policy for assessing entitlement to public support for training. Furthermore, technical and professional practice moves on. Those working in the industry will continue, to an extent, to update through everyday encounters with new technologies, machines and processes: those without such opportunities will not.

For migrants, the issues are rather different. People with very sound professional or craft qualifications and experience in another country may find difficulty in gaining recognition, either because the qualification is unfamiliar to an employer or accrediting body in the UK, or because the environment of occupational culture is thought to be different (as indeed it may be). For others, what is needed is the more sophisticated language skills to talk to patients, clients or professional colleagues.

Migrants learning for employment.

The diversity of migrants generates a diversity of learning needs: notably a need for recognition of their existing skills and qualifications, and for some, the language, cultural and social basis for basic employability

Not all groups have equal access to the labour market, and equal opportunity to progress within it. While migrants in general gradually improve their labour market position the longer they remain in the UK, some groups, especially those born in Bangladesh and Pakistan, show little improvement in their rates of employment over time. Other groups, (including 30% of settled Polish workers) seem trapped into low paid occupations , earning less than half the median wage).

One of the main barriers to migrants gaining employment and progressing in the labour market, which has been identified by employers, is the lack of appropriate English language skills. Some jobs do not require more than basic English and many migrants, including those from the A8 countries are concentrated in sectors where knowledge of English is seen as less important. These include work in the agriculture, horticulture and

packing sectors. An understanding of health and safety requirements and of basic instructions is necessary, but much information can be provided in the workers own language or by colleagues who speak the relevant languages. However without English language skills the migrants in these occupations are unlikely to advance their careers.

In most occupations however, even migrants with skills, qualifications and experience find gaining access to and progressing in the labour market requires an ability to read, write, understand and communicate in English. Different sectors have different requirements with the medical and other professions requiring high level IELTS²⁹ qualifications. Access to appropriate ESOL courses related to vocational needs can be problematic, as the NIACE ESOL inquiry documented. Vocational ESOL classes are not available in all geographic or vocational areas. Potential learners face barriers to access to ESOL classes if their shift working patterns prevent regular attendance and if the fees, as with some IELTS provision, are beyond their means. Few employers provide ESOL classes for migrant workers.

A further barrier to access and progress in the labour market for some groups of migrants, specifically refugees, has been identified by employers as a lack of specific cultural and social knowledge relevant to the UK workplace. A lack of familiarity with the norms and customs of the workplace, in relation to interactions with fellow workers and customers, knowledge of rights and responsibilities, timekeeping and flexibility are cited as drawbacks. These problems can be overcome by enabling migrants to gain work experience and orientation placements and by providing diversity training for both new arrivals and the mainstream workforce. However these opportunities are not routinely provided by all employers, particularly those in low skilled sectors.

In addition to the disadvantages migrants face in the UK labour market caused by poor English skills and a lack of familiarity with workplace norms and cultures, even those with academic, vocational or professional experience or qualifications can face difficulties in gaining recognition for and building upon qualifications and experience acquired overseas. Two NIACE studies amongst many others have identified this as a major problem, which can lead to migrants taking jobs, which are well below their capabilities. A study of nearly 700 asylum seekers and refugees in the East Midlands indicated that their levels of experience and qualifications were higher than that of the host population. However they faced considerable difficulties in gaining recognition for past achievements, even when using the services of NARIC³⁰. Many required conversion courses to enable them to update their qualifications or experience for the UK, but relevant courses were not available in all areas or fields. Employers also stated that they did not understand the value of overseas qualifications or experience and did not know where to go for validation. Jobcentre Plus staff face similar difficulties when seeking to assist migrants to gain employment, since they do not have a specialised knowledge of qualifications and experience acquired outside the UK and there are few organisations which can be called upon to assess these and draw up training plans for skilled migrants from several countries of origin.”

²⁹ An internationally recognised set of qualifications in English language, which define levels of competence.

³⁰ The National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom (UK NARIC), is the official National Agency providing comparison information and advice on international education and training systems and overseas skills and qualifications.

Social and civic motives

Social learning involves finding and maintaining an appropriate social context, embracing issues of citizenship and social interaction, and a sense of where one fits within a culture. Learning here relates to membership of:

- geographical communities – the neighbourhood, town or region;
- professional communities (which extends beyond a particular geographical location);
- religious communities (with allegiances which are supra national);
- the nation, expressed through citizenship,
- supra-national entities like international political and single issue movements.

Social learning is a particular concern for children and young people, and for individuals at all ages as they pass through transitions – childbearing, moving job or house, redundancy and retirement. For those who are geographically mobile, social learning is important, across a range from making new friends after moving house, to learning a new language and the norms of an unfamiliar culture for immigrants. Since for most adults paid employment is a central part of identity, finding a new social role is particularly important for those who lose or change their jobs. Policy success in this area would be seen in cohesive communities which successfully balance a commitment to shared values and culture with tolerance of diversity and change.

Voluntary work plays an important part in “social” learning, since its motive - to make a contribution to the community, rather than to generate personal wealth – by definition offers opportunities to engage with community life. However, it also plays an important part in economic activity, as a route into and out of paid employment for some people. It is also important for many people as a way of defining identity and demonstrating a commitment to personal values.

Everyone coming to live in a new country, whether they intend to stay for a temporary period or permanently has to learn about how that society works. They need to understand how to find their way in a new social, economic, linguistic, geographic and cultural environment; how to communicate with the people who live around them, how to gain access to goods, services and an income; how the labour market operates; and what is expected of them as newly arrived residents. The UK unlike some other European countries such as Sweden³¹, does not provide a standard voluntary or mandatory learning programme for new arrivals to the country, although the Sunrise Programme for refugees which has been piloted in 5 areas is soon to become rolled out across the country. This will give all new refugees (i.e. those who have been given the right to remain in the UK), a personal advisor, who will help them manage the transition from asylum seeker to refugee, to produce a personal integration plan, and assist in meeting basic needs for housing, income, education and other requirements for up to a year.

In some towns and cities in the UK, Local Authorities or Voluntary Organisations provide a variety of information for new arrivals, but at present, most migrants learn about the UK from members of their own communities who arrived before them. The diversity of the migrant communities and the partial and incomplete nature of information services available suggests that while some new migrants may receive adequate

³¹ All Swedish Local Authorities are required to provide Swedish language tuition for all new immigrants within 3 months of arrival. This provides oral and written communication skills for everyday living and work and prepare them for further study.

opportunities to learn about living, working and integrating in the UK, many will receive inadequate information which will result in them taking a longer period to find their feet in a new environment. They may also be more exposed to exploitation as a result, or particular communities can come to be isolated from the mainstream society around them.

Beyond these generic needs to learn about how the UK works, which are common to all new migrants to a greater or lesser degree, there are a diverse learning requirements reflecting the diversity of the migrant population. For the purpose of this paper these have been divided into two main categories; that is learning for employment and learning for integration.”

Opportunities for and barriers to learning for personal development, community participation and citizenship. This will include information about community based ESOL, family learning, citizenship courses etc and the role of the voluntary and other sectors

Personal learning motives

Personal learning involves the need to establish a sense of self in relation to the wider world, including learning based around curiosity and identity, and the notion of “recreation” and “regeneration”. Policy success in this area would be seen in a rise in measures of happiness, life satisfaction and wellbeing. Tools exist for measuring such things, but are not commonly used in evaluating the impact or value of educational programmes.

One consequence of extending life expectancy is that growing numbers of people are experiencing an extended period of dependent living at the end of life. This is an area which has been relatively neglected by adult educators. However, where projects have offered education, both physical and mental, there have been clear benefits in terms of improved quality of life, health and activity. While education for people in this stage does not deliver economic benefits, it can contribute not only to the quality of life of the learners, but also reduce the costs of health and social care support.

For many people retirement is a time when they take stock of their lives, of where they fit in the broader world, and what it has all meant. This probably accounts for the steady rise, as people age, in the proportion of adult education students enrolling in the arts, history, religious studies (documented in the NIACE annual surveys of adult learning).

Much of traditional “non-vocational” adult education has addresses these needs, and has sometimes been dismissed because of its apparent economic irrelevance. Apart from the role it plays in encouraging social interaction, enabling people to build new friendships after disruptions to their lives or careers, it is clear that it plays an important part in helping people to understand themselves and the world around – a part of the “meaning making” activity which concerns many people in retirement.

Knowledge transfer

One key issue for an ageing society is how to make best use of the knowledge and experience of older people, both during an extended working life and after their retirement. Research shows that many older people feel a deep anger at the sense that their hard won expertise and knowledge is thrown away when they retire (and often before).

This is likely to become an increasingly important issue in the workplace, as the numbers

of people in the mid career age group shrink. Traditionally strategies for organising such knowledge transfer have been ad hoc, and under theorised. There have been projects which have sought to develop tools and techniques for this, and there is likely to be increased demand for this expertise in the future. What needs transferring is often as much tacit skills and knowledge as the explicit processes and systems which can be well described in manuals and formal training courses. Strategies for fostering intergenerational learning of this kind in the workplace are important, and underdeveloped.

There is also an issue about how to manage knowledge transfer in management and organisation. The pace of change in organisations means that frequently new structures or schemes are similar to (and sometimes identical to) those tried in the past. Older workers often report frustration that their experience of “why it didn’t work last time” is overlooked. There are many reasons for this, some of them legitimate, but educational strategies which make such dialogue easier could reduce the substantial wastage involved in endlessly reinventing the wheel.

But the issue extends beyond the workplace. The intergenerational transfer of knowledge has always been one of the major functions of “non-vocational” adult education, where people come together to develop and extend knowledge, in fields like local and family history, or the passing on of old craft skills and techniques.

6.4. Structural Issues

Our concern in this paper is with the implications of these changes for adult learning. This calls for an understanding of the way in which age, ethnicity and migration affect current patterns of learning, and current trends, as well as informed speculation about how those trends might accelerate, continue or reverse over the coming decades. Key factors will include:

- the total volume of need and demand
- the expansion and contraction of particular groups
- the subjects which those groups choose to study
- the modes of delivery – formal, informal, institutional, work or home based, and the extent of distance and online learning

It is, of course, important to distinguish need from demand, and to balance the two in any policy proposals. Demand needs to be articulated and recognised: commentators and policymakers may believe that particular circumstances generate particular learning needs, but it does not follow that those concerned will perceive this, nor that they will respond to encouragement. On the other hand, leaving supply to respond to expressed demand will undoubtedly lead to a lack of appropriate skills and knowledge for the needs of society and the economy, and the wellbeing of individuals (as the history of vocational learning demonstrates).

Volume and funding

The first, and most obvious factor is that the proportion of older people in the population will rise, which implies that the allocation of educational resources should be rebalanced in their favour. This is reinforced by the fact that the pace of change in technologies, knowledge and social change makes the idea of equipping individuals with all the skills and knowledge for their lifetime needs is increasingly absurd.

A key issue is the allocation of public expenditure on adult learning in terms of economic and social priorities, and the extent to which the state should facilitate, regulate or limit access to provision made by other bodies.

Funding for many of the purposes of lifelong learning identified in this paper comes from sources outside the formal education and training system. In addition to the Department for Industry, Universities and Skills, Departments with a direct interest in education related to the issues of this paper include (at least):

Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform
Communities and Local Government,
Culture, Media and Sport
Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Foreign and Commonwealth
Health,
Home Office,
International Development
Justice
Work and Pensions,

Further resources come from commercial, charitable and individual sources. One issue

for a Lifelong Learning strategy is the extent to which it seeks to engage all these, especially where the priorities of different Departments are in tension. While it may be important for DIUS' focus on skills policy to concentrate resources on labour market entry and formal qualifications, the health benefits derived from "non-vocational" programmes for older people are vital to the Department of Health, in reduced healthcare costs and to Communities and Local Government, in reduced social care expenditure by Local Authorities.

A key issue for a strategy is thus how to ensure maximum synergy between all the agencies involved, without impinging on their proper policy concerns. Here, one issue is the extent to which institutions, agencies or services whose core funding comes from one Department, can contribute to the priorities of others.

A further issue is how funding is best channelled. The Leitch proposal that a large proportion of public funding for skills education should be channelled through users, rather than providing institutions, (through Train to Gain and Learner Accounts) may result in a service more responsive to those users, but only to those who understand the systems, and can see the relevance of the provision to their needs. This can be improved by access to good quality advice and guidance, but is not likely, of itself, to widen participation to groups who do not currently participate, especially if constrained to fit with specific Government funding priorities. Older learners in particular, are likely to lose. Furthermore, in the short term, the nearer it gets to genuinely diverting money to users, the greater the risk of destabilising the institutional structure, which could result in the disappearance of provision which is socially and economically necessary.

Location

In recent years data on where people learn has improved, but it is still uneven and relatively unreliable, particularly because of problems with definitions of learning, and individual perceptions and memory. Since the 1980s there has been a widespread assumption that a growing amount of adult learning will be done remotely, using both formal online and distance education, and through informal processes

Current evidence would suggest that there has been a shift of learning from the formal to informal, and from public to private/voluntary sectors in recent years. There is good reason to believe that, for those with internet access, the amount of knowledge being accessed (which may or may not involve "learning") has increased dramatically in the last decade.

However, a large proportion of most structured kinds of learning continues to be provided through formal institutions, with a high proportion still in public sector ones. In relation to demographic change, the preservation of this public space may be particularly important. Those managing life and career transitions are less likely to be able to access private sector provision (which is often linked to employer support), and such provision is less likely to address the collective learning needs of social integration than public sector agencies (unless it is paid for by such agencies).

However, recent policy developments have tended to concentrate resources on young people and on a narrowly defined group of people with low skills. The effect of this is to encourage public sector providers to concentrate on only one segment of the population. Groups who have lost out in this development include those seeking to learn for personal and civic purposes, or for work related non-certificated ones.

Advice and Guidance

In recent years there has been growing recognition of the importance of information, advice and guidance in enabling people to make effective use of educational opportunities to meet their individual needs. A number of attempts have been made, since at least the mid 1980s, to produce a coherent structure of education/careers guidance for adults, with varying degrees of centralisation, sometimes involving complex partnerships between public, private and voluntary agencies. The remnants of many of these remain, forming an incoherent collection of agencies and services with overlapping remits. The Leitch proposals for an Adult Careers Service aim to bring the whole system into some coherent framework, but historical experience suggests that this may not be a simple matter.

For settled communities the key guidance issues concern how learning can be related to the needs of work and social roles, which are fairly well understood (but not always well provided for). For older workers, there are additional issues, especially guidance about the options for work and retirement. Here education and employment issues interact very directly with financial and health issues, and guidance services need to be sensitive to these, and configured in ways which provide appropriate support without breaching statutory and ethical constraints on the provision of financial or medical advice. For people who have already retired, the service is probably least adequate, unless they are seeking only simple information about location of programmes. Older people who seek more in depth guidance about how to construct a coherent learning plan related to their interests and aspirations are unlikely to find much support. As the length of retirement increases, the need for such in depth guidance is likely to increase.

For migrants, the guidance issues also include complex issues about rights to work, about citizenship status, language and recognition of qualification. Again a range of agencies, with varying degrees of expertise and impartiality, exist, but provision is patchy at best.

Access to advice, and then to formal courses is important, but for those seeking employment, they are not sufficient. One of the principal ways in which jobs are filled is through word of mouth and personal contact. Here both older workers (and would be workers) and migrants are at a disadvantage. Both are likely to lack such networks, and to experience discrimination (direct and indirect) which keeps them excluded from work appropriate to their skills and experience. Good careers guidance, linked to employer brokerage functions to provide work experience may be essential to get people into good quality jobs.

7. Recommendations/ policy proposals

This is a first, tentative, attempt at proposals for policy priority. It will need refining in the light of further discussion and consultation, and the proposals emerging from other parts of the Big Inquiry.

The implications of demographic change are that some kinds of learning will need to expand, to enable people to manage more frequent transitions and change; and to reflect the growing numbers of people in some groups.

The key drivers for policy change include:

- more provision for people not economically active, to support social engagement, and mental and physical health;
- more provision to assist a more mobile population, both immigrants into the country and those moving within it, to adapt and become part of their new communities;
- More opportunities to acquire, maintain and develop skills and knowledge for employment across the lifecourse, in response to more rapidly changing economic circumstances;
- More opportunities for those in declining occupations to acquire the skills needs for the emerging economy.

The following are key priorities. To list these does not imply that all will be provided by formal educational institutions, nor that all will be funded from public sources.

1. **Rebalancing the curriculum:** to support individuals who are experiencing more frequent and complex transitions and change (and especially those who will be spending a much longer period of their lives in active retirement) : a significant expansion of programmes and activities which support:
 - i. maintenance of social networks
 - ii. personal development and the exploration of meaning and purpose
 - iii. maintenance of health
2. **Supporting social cohesion:** to support all those who are migrating into and within the country: a significant expansion of programmes and activities which support:
 - i. language skills for new immigrants (including access for people at the earliest possible opportunity after arrival)
 - ii. interaction between different groups and communities (including through shared learning activity)
3. **Deploying talent:** to support a better use (for all purposes) of the skills and expertise of all people, and particularly the growing numbers of older people and migrants:
 - i. reform of qualifications systems to provide much stronger recognition of prior experience, and of the issues of qualification obsolescence and skills decay;

- ii. the provision of a coherent service of careers advice and guidance, which reflects the importance of social and personal development as well as economic needs, reflects the interaction between learning, work, health and finance, and is accessible to people at all ages

4. Providing a neutral public space for learning and interaction: to ensure that opportunities are available to the widest possible range of adults to manage life changes:

- i. the maintenance of a “public space” of education providers which are seen as welcoming, politically and socially neutral, and able to provide space for debate and interaction as well as formal instruction.

5. Providing an appropriate policy infrastructure: to provide the underpinning infrastructure to these proposals:

- i. an integrated approach to setting priorities and using expertise (teachers, institutions etc);
- ii. a clear agreement across Government about the role of the public sector and of individual Departments of Government;
- iii. a funding model which ensures the strategic use of public money to secure the maximum volume of activity from all partners, and which balances:
 - 1. societal, personal and economic purpose;
 - 2. the preparation of young people for adult life with the management of changes across the lifecourse;
 - 3. the education and training interests of all Government Departments.

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