



Summary sheet for Discussion Brief 8/2012
Immigration

- **Overview.** Net migration into the UK increased from around 50,000 per year in 1996 to just under 200,000 in 2009, reaching heights of nearly 250,000 in 2004.
- **Education.** Study is the most common reason for moving to the UK, but student visas were used as a backdoor route into Britain under Labour. 62 per cent of all non-EU migrants entered the UK for study reasons in 2011. According to a report by the department of Business, Innovation and Skills the combined total contribution of EU and non-EU residents to Higher Education in 2008/09 was £2,292 million, or 34 per cent of the overall tuition fees contribution.
- **Work.** Work is the second most common reason for immigration to the UK. On average, 16 per cent of all non-EU migrants come for work purposes. In order to decide who gets a visa, the Home Office categorises applications by skill level. Points are gained for criteria such as qualifications and previous experience, or through sponsorship by an employer or educational institution.
- **Family.** In the year ending March 2012, family visas were awarded to 44,565 people or 8 per cent of the total visas awarded. The largest single group of family migrants currently originates from Asia. In 2012 non-immediate family members make up fewer than 10 per cent of all family immigration: most were children or spouses.
- **Asylum.** In 2011 19,804 asylum applications were made to the UK. This is down from the highest point of 84,132 in 2002. Most asylum claims are rejected each year with only 5,648 asylum grants given in 2011. Asylum seekers are entitled to housing and financial support if they cannot provide it for themselves. However, housing will only be provided in areas where demand is low, and the individual will have no choice over where they live. Benefit payments are made at well below the level given to British citizens.
- **Global Asylum.** The UK was the 8th destination worldwide for new asylum seekers in 2011. Britain is 13th worldwide in terms of total number of resident refugees, behind France, Yemen, USA, Ethiopia, China, Chad, Jordan, Kenya, Germany, Syria, Iran and Pakistan. The UK has 193,510 resident refugees and 15,170 pending cases. In 2011, developing countries hosted four fifths of the world's refugees and the 48 least developed countries provided asylum for 2.3 million refugees.
- **Border Control.** The budget of the UK Border Agency was £813.9 million in 2011-12. They spend around £1.5 to £2 billion each year but some of this is offset against revenues such as visa fees and fines.