

# **Polish community in Bristol and South Gloucestershire :**

## **Research report**

**(January - April 2007)**

**In partnership with**



**Bristol City Council**



**South Gloucestershire Council**



**The Anglo Polish Society  
(Bristol and the South West)**

# Polish Community Research Report

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## **1.0 Introduction: Purpose of research survey**

The purpose of this project was to gain general understanding of the current situation of Polish people in Bristol and South Gloucestershire, in order to identify needs and gaps in services for Polish people. The project will also provide evidence for future funding bids to assist the development of services to the Polish community.

Migrants including Poles have been settling in the UK for many years due to many different reasons. A Polish minority in this country has existed since the sixteenth century. After both world wars, a lot of Poles remained in the country due to political uncertainties. However, since 2004 when Poland entered the European Union, the number of Poles coming to the UK, including the South West, has increased dramatically. Direct flights from Bristol to Krakow, Poland, four times a week, good bus connections between Bristol and Poland and also the more likely possibility of finding jobs than in Poland, are the main reasons which encourage Poles to come to Bristol and the surrounding area.

The former Honorary Polish Consul for Bristol and the South West, George Peszynski, and the Anglo Polish Society estimate that there are now some 50,000 Poles in the South West region, including approximately 15,000 in the Bristol area. It is certainly true that Polish migrants have much more of a visible presence in the region, for example, Polish shops and restaurants are more noticeable in Bristol. Many Poles settle down well. Unfortunately, for some of them conditions are not so good and they need help and advice with a wide variety of problems.

To assess the needs of Poles in the area a small team with representatives from the partnership agencies was set up to oversee the research project. Partners were Bristol City Council, Community Development, South Gloucestershire County Council, Community Development, and the Anglo Polish Society, with initial assistance from the Bright Project, a voluntary organisation providing support for black and minority ethnic community groups giving advice. Izabela Dallas, the researcher appointed to carry out the survey, is bi-lingual in Polish and English.

A questionnaire was designed which included questions on housing, employment, education, English language skills and advice needs. A minimum target of 200 completed questionnaires was set. More than 2,000 copies in both Polish and English were circulated and a total of 480 were completed.

## **2.0 Polish Migration to the UK**

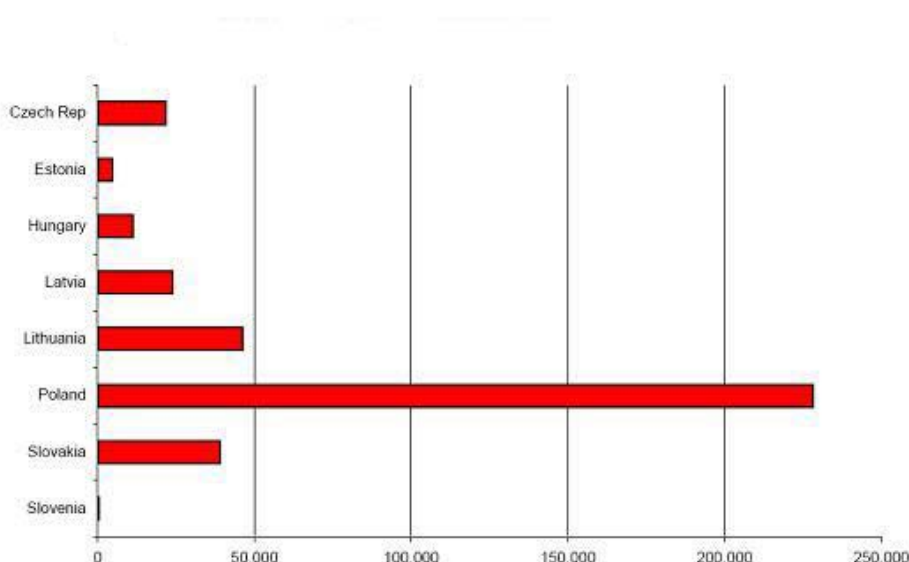
### **2.1 Migration to the UK since 2004**

According to estimates by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), using data from the International Passenger Survey (IPS), in 2004 223,000 more people migrated to the UK than migrated abroad. This inflow has increased significantly in recent years, primarily due to the expansion of the European Union (EU) in May 2004. It is estimated that about four fifths of the increase from 2003 to 2004 was made up from citizens from countries joining the EU, often referred to as the Accession countries or A8. As well as Poland, these are Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and the Czech Republic.

Data made available by Jobcentre Plus on National Insurance Number (NINo) registrations shows that migration from citizens of Accession countries rose from 11,205 in 2003/04 to 88,610 in 2004/05. About three quarters of this increase comprised citizens from Poland. Following Poland's entry into the EU, Poles gained the right to work in other EU countries. While France and Germany put in place controls to curb Eastern European migration, the United Kingdom (along with Sweden and the Republic of Ireland) did not impose restrictions.

The British Home Office originally anticipated an inflow of 5,000 to 13,000 people a year, but by the end of 2005, according to Home Office statistics, 204,895 Poles had registered to work in the UK and pay tax. The number of unregistered Poles working in the 'shadow' economy is probably as large. The Poles are relatively dispersed throughout the United Kingdom but do have some concentrations, for example, making up a sixth of the population in Jersey and Crewe, all arriving in the last two years.

**Chart 1: Nationality of applicants – March 2006**



**Source:** Accession monitoring report May 2004 – June 2006 (Home Office, August 2006)

Migrant workers have always played a key role in the UK economy. From the UK's perspective, a growing economy and record levels of employment have led to a tightening of the jobs market, with the potential for labour shortages and wage demands to build up. Migrant workers are helping to relieve these pressures. The challenge for employers and agencies in the region is to make the most of the skills migrant workers offer, whilst at the same time preventing exploitation. Despite the economic contribution made by migrant workers, they are often victims of exploitation and discrimination by their employers and the wider community. Much of this can be linked to misleading information about migrant workers, their right to work and the contribution they make to economies.

It is hard to establish how many intend to stay in the country, or how many are students trying to gain work and language skills during the summer vacations. Those

who have been employed via agencies and for whom there is little monitoring are likely to stay as they are on long-term contracts, usually with accommodation provided.

## **2.2 Areas of employment**

The most common areas of employment covered by Polish and other Eastern European workers can be described as follows:-

### **Health Service:**

Nearly one in three doctors and more than one in ten nurses is a migrant. Education too depends upon attracting skills from abroad. Health Authorities have recruited nurses in particular from the EU and further afield. There has been a long-running programme managed by the European Employment Services (EURES) that has recruited over 600 nurses in the last few years from within the EU, mostly from Spain. However, this source is now dwindling, and there is some query over the comparison of qualifications with the Accession countries.

### **Care services:**

Care homes face a chronic shortage of suitably qualified workers willing to work for low wages. Migrant workers are often tempted here by the promise of an opportunity to acquire UK nursing or other professional qualifications. The South West has an aging population and an increasing need for care assistants. Qualifications and experience are not normally required but, crucially, applicants must speak good English. These posts are attracting many applicants from the countries of Eastern Europe with good qualifications in other sectors who may have spent some time already working in an English speaking country.

### **Cleaning:**

Foreign workers are often relied upon to clean our homes and offices. A seemingly common practice amongst employers is to pay wages in arrears with some migrants complaining on non-payment for weeks and even months.

### **Agriculture:**

Many foreign workers come from a rural environment. Poles, Slovakian and Czechs may have trained for a different career but come from a village background where the family has a small-holding, so they are competent at agricultural tasks. Many young people, especially from Germany and the East European countries, are keen to work on the land, especially if the vacancy is temporary.

### **Catering and Tourism:**

The other major source of jobs for workers from the EU is working in hotels and the catering and tourism sectors. This is highly important in the South West, but is most typically spread out amongst a large number of small premises. The Bourne Leisure Group, which includes Haven Holidays, and Butlins, have long relied on foreign labour, because these jobs are usually low-paid and low status. However, they offer the chance of temporary work to students and other young people, who are pleased to find work that allows them to travel and practise English.

### **Transport:**

Bus and lorry drivers are in short supply in the region. Where mechanics provide a road-side service, they must be able to speak high-level English, and whereas

Eastern European workers are often skilled, the standard of English amongst blue-collar workers is not good enough. (However, there are a number of bus drivers working for First Bus in Bristol and the South Gloucestershire Bus and Coach Company).

### **General trends in employment**

Most Poles do low-paid jobs in catering, agriculture and construction, as exemplified by the stereotypical 'Polish plumber'. 80% of these workers earn £6 per hour, which is close to the British minimum wage but, according to The Week, current affairs magazine, four times what they would earn in Poland. About 4,000 Polish doctors have also been recruited for the United Kingdom's hard pressed National Health Service although there have been concerns about their relatively poor English.

Most of the immigrants are educated people in the 20-35 year-old age group. According to an assessment by the Ernst & Young Item Club, an independent economic forecasting group, the benefits to the United Kingdom from this influx of cheap labour are an extra 0.2% of GDP growth and interest rates 0.5% lower than they would otherwise be.

### **2.3 Polish migrant workers in the South West**

Between 2002/3 and 2003/4, the total number of migrant workers rose from 15,650 to 23,105. Overall between 2002 and 2005 the South West had a total of nearly 54,600 (4.7 per cent of the total) applications for National Insurance numbers (NINo) from non-UK nationals. In relation to the rest of the UK regional figures (with London accounting for 41.2 per cent and the South East 11.4 per cent of newly registered migrants), this figure is relatively low.

Within the South West, as would be expected, it is the main urban areas and those areas located towards the far north of the region, and hence the M5 corridor and access to the Midlands, that have seen the largest numbers of National Insurance registrations by non-UK nationals. Between 2002 and 2005, the highest number of registrations was in Bristol at 10,700, more than double the number in Bournemouth, the area with the second highest number.

National Insurance number registrations in the South West over the period 2002/5 reveal an upward trend particularly in numbers of Polish workers. By April 2005 they replaced migrants from the Indian subcontinent as the largest incoming group to the region. National analysis of the Workers Registration Scheme (WRS) data shows that, in the period since the accession countries entered the EU in May 2004 to September 2005, the highest proportion of applicants were Polish (58%).

In the South West the WRS data estimates that nearly 70% of those registered on the Scheme with employers in the South West are working in agriculture, hospitality and catering, administrative, business and management. The region has the second highest percentage working within agriculture, 23% compared with 13.2 % nationally. There are marginally higher numbers working within the South West in hospitality and catering, food/fish and meat processing and health and medical than the overall average for the UK, whilst there are marginally fewer within retail and construction.

The data also shows that the majority of registered workers (97%) who applied between May 2004 and September 2005, were working full-time (more than 16 hours per week). Approximately half of those who registered were in temporary employment and half in permanent employment. This does vary by industry with the majority in agriculture (70%) and administration/business (82%) temporarily employed. For hospitality and catering, 76% were in permanent employment.

Migrant workers will often have skills and qualifications from their home countries. Sometimes these are not recognised in the UK and require converting. Most migrant workers want to learn or improve their English. There is a clear need to tackle the exploitation and abuse of migrant workers. They are vulnerable because they fear dismissal, eviction and deportation even in circumstances where this would be unlawful. They lack access to advice and representation.

A key issue across the region is accommodation for migrant workers. There is growing pressure facing all workers in the region who are seeking affordable housing.

#### **2.4. Polish workers in Bristol**

A recent report on Polish workers in Bristol provides information about Poles living and working in Bristol and the South West, and explains why establishing an accurate number is not straightforward. The report states that the 'most recent census figures estimate Bristol's total population for mid 2005 to be 398,300, an increase of 4,400 since mid 2004. It is believed that this increase can be attributed to both natural change (i.e. births minus deaths) of +1,700 and net migration of +2,600. The majority of the net migration is thought to be due to international migration. The largest increase is in the 25-29 age band where the mid 2005 figure is 36,398, an increase of 2,232 (6.53%) compared to the mid-2004 population estimate.

A TUC/Job Centre Plus/Government Office South West (GOSW) paper on 'Migrant Working in the South West' presented at the South West Rural Affairs Forum in 2005 stated that out of some 24,000 migrant workers that had come to the South West since Accession, Poland accounted for 57.5% of the total. It also reiterated the assessment that these migrants are predominantly young people. 'The age range 18-34 makes up 88% of the total incoming workforce'.

The National Insurance Processing Unit (part of Job Centre Plus) has recently provided more detailed information on Polish nationals applying for National Insurance numbers in the South West region. This data for the South West has been recorded monthly since February 2005 and is broken down by nationality, gender and age range. It indicates that between February 2005 and the end of September 2006, some 17,205 Polish nationals applied for National Insurance numbers in the South West region. The total for all A8 (Accession Countries) nationals for the same period was 25,135, indicating that Polish nationals comprised 68.5% of all such applications. Of the 17,205 Polish nationals making National Insurance applications, 10,230 (59.5%) were male and 6,975 (40.5%) female. The data also highlights that the majority of those applying fall into the 18-4 and 25-34 age ranges.' ('Polish Workers in Bristol – A Summary of Evidence', Equality and Community Cohesion Team, Bristol City Council).

### 3. Research survey

The purpose of this survey was to carry out initial general research to gain more understanding of the current position of the local Polish community in Bristol and South Gloucestershire. It was also to identify the advice needs of the community and to provide an evidence base for future funding bids to develop services to meet these needs.

#### 3.1 Methodology

A questionnaire was devised asking for the following information:-

- Name, address and postcode.
- Age.
- Gender.
- Do you live with other Polish people? If 'yes' are they dependents, relatives or friends.
- Do you own your home, rent privately, rent from Council / Housing association, or live with family and friends.
- Are you employed full time, part time, self-employed or unemployed?
- If you are employed please state your employer's postcode.
- What kind of work do you do?
- What is your highest level of education?
- Do you have any disabilities?
- Have you experienced any form of discrimination?
- Where do you go to obtain advice about services, support and rights?
- In what category are you most likely to need advice?
- How would you describe your written and verbal English?

A letter was also written to explain why this information was being requested. The questionnaire and letter were printed in both Polish and English.

Many people were very helpful in distributing the questionnaires in order to reach Poles in the areas of the survey. As well as asking Polish people to circulate the questionnaires, they were distributed in Polish shops, workplaces employing Poles, public venues such as libraries and the Polish Church in Bristol. Questionnaires were also distributed at a Polish information session held in Yate and at the Novas Day Centre for single homeless people in Bristol.

Most questionnaires were self-completed. However, some forms were completed by the researcher during 'one to one' conversations. It was found that some people did not like the idea of filling in a questionnaire due to fears that it might have official repercussions for them in the future. The researcher was able to reassure them that this was not the case and, by talking with them, complete the form with their consent.

The information from the completed questionnaires was then collated and analysed.

### 3.1.1 Survey results: Graphical Analysis

The minimum number of completed surveys requested by Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council was 200. A total of 480 completed surveys were obtained. Below is the graphical breakdown of the statistics obtained through the survey. The charts give both percentage and numerical figures.

### 3.1.2 Numbers of Respondents by Post Code

The minimum target set by Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council was 200 completed surveys. The ratio for this was at two thirds from Bristol and one third from South Gloucestershire area. Questionnaires were also completed from Poles living in Somerset, Gwent and Gloucester.

#### Bristol Area Postcodes

Total respondents for this area = **292**

The highest number of respondents from Bristol live in the following four postcode areas:-

- BS5 - Easton and St George
- BS3 - Windmill Hill, Bedminster and Southville
- BS4 - Knowle, Brislington and Filwood
- BS11 - Avonmouth

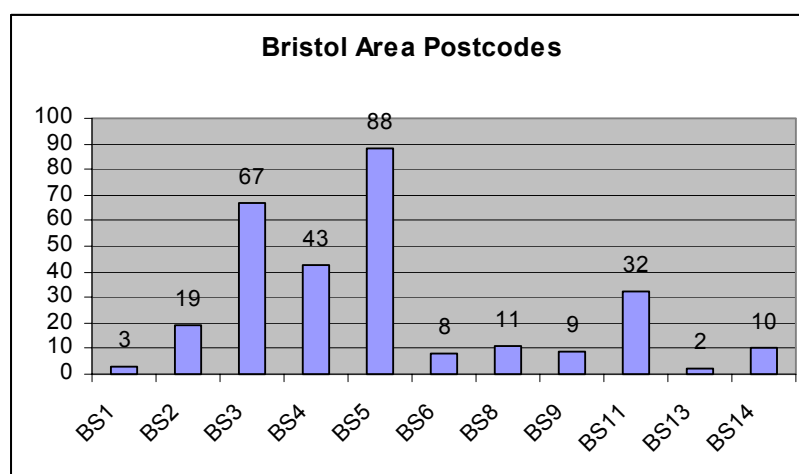


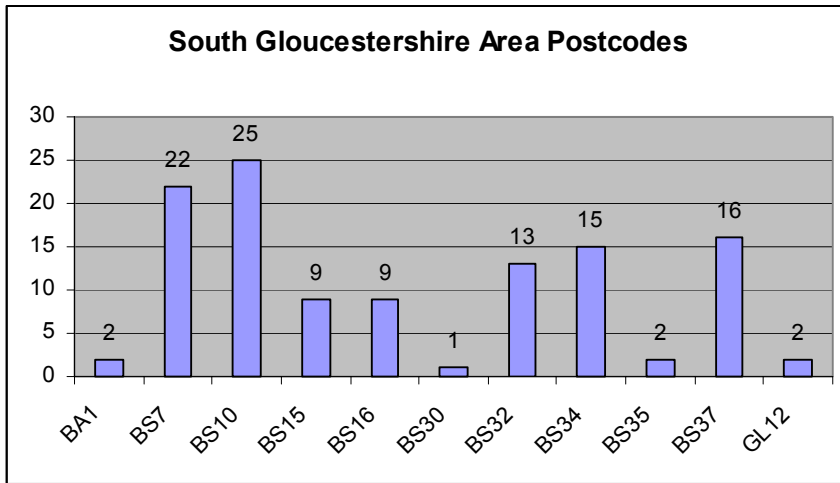
Table 1a: Numbers of respondents by Bristol area post code (actual figures)

#### South Gloucestershire Area Postcode

Total respondents for this area = **116**

The majority of respondents live in the following postcodes:

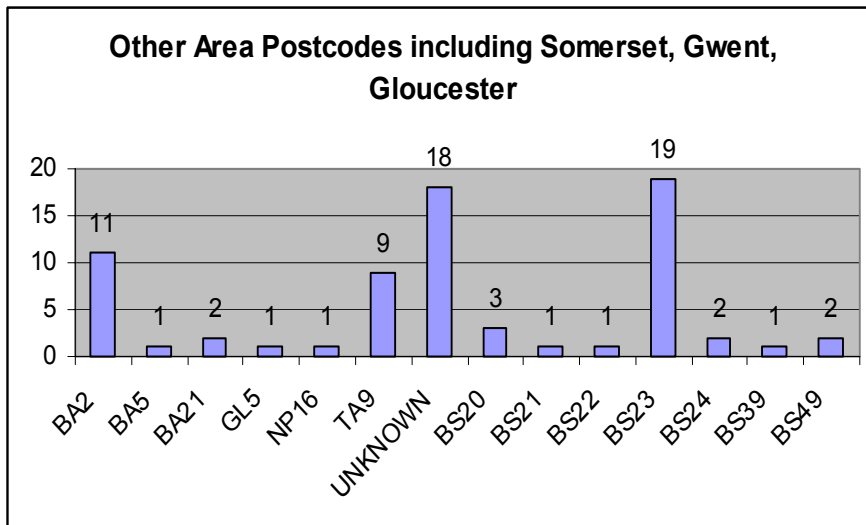
- BS10 - Almondsbury
- BS7 - this postcode covers districts within Bristol ward boundaries but also includes the area of Filton in South Gloucestershire.



**Table 1b :** Numbers of respondents by South Gloucestershire area post code (actual figures)

### Other Area Postcodes

Total respondents for this area = **72**



**Chart 1c :** Numbers of respondents by other area post codes (actual figures)

### 3.1.3 Age Groups

The most noticeable age range is between 26 & 35 with 44% (205) respondents falling within this category. The next largest age group is 18 to 25 with 32% (151) of respondents.

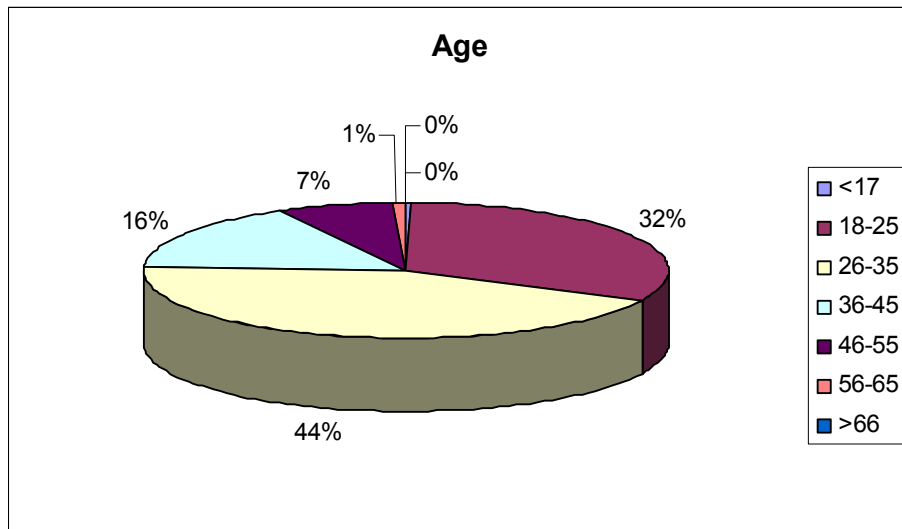


Chart 2a: Age (percentages)

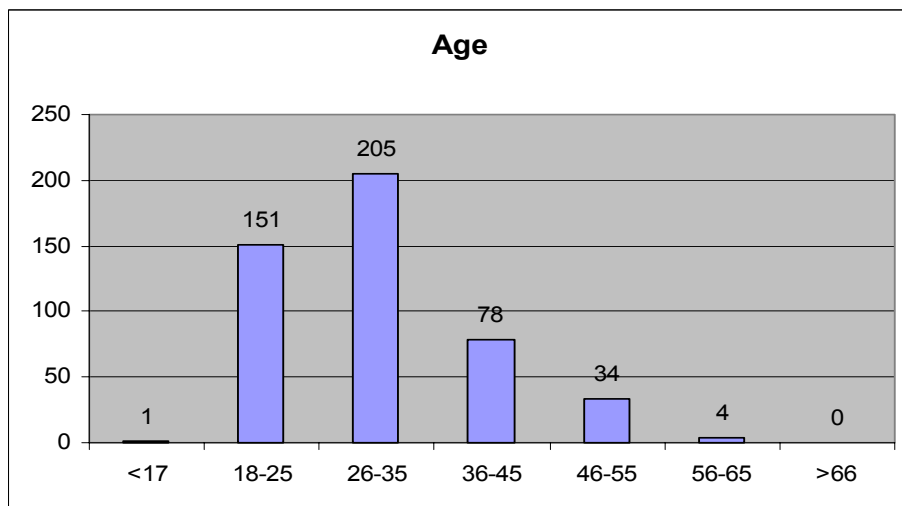


Table 2b: Age (actual figures)

### 3.1.4 Gender

The majority of respondents were male (61%). The researcher's own understanding as a result of carrying out the survey is that most of the female respondents had come to the UK either with or to join partners.

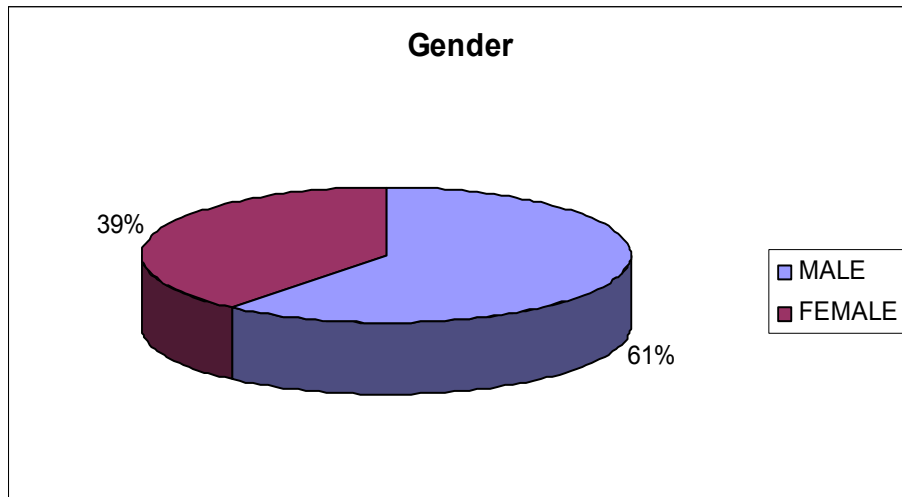


Chart 3a: Gender (percentages)

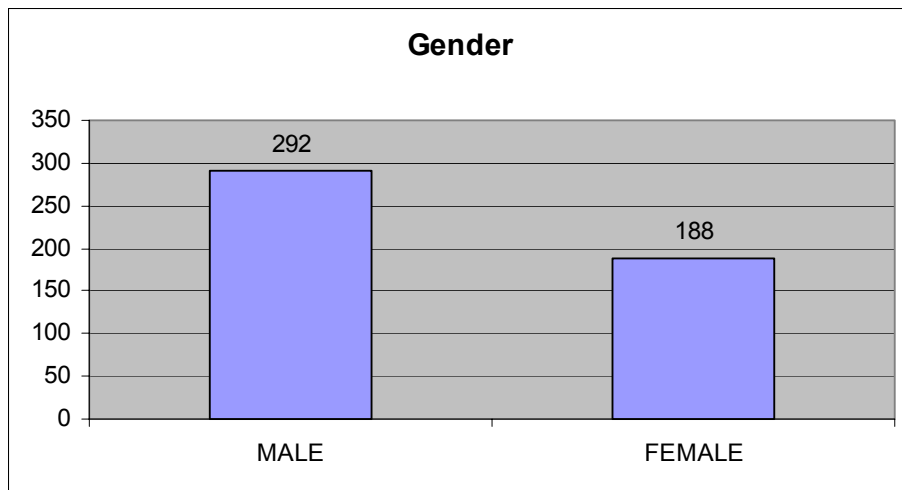


Table 3b: Gender (actual figures)

### 3.1.5 Accommodation Status

409 people (86%) rent their home privately. This includes renting through a private letting agency. One person who completed the questionnaire rents from the Local Authority and 55 people live with family or friends. Ten people (2%) own their own home. (The graph shows a 0% figure for 'Rent from Council' because it was only one person).

Migrant workers are not making demands on Council housing: predominantly they are finding their own private sector accommodation or are having accommodation provided for them by their employers. Recent migrant workers are therefore vulnerable to possible exploitation by landlords and may be unaware of their rights as tenants. There can also be issues around substandard and overcrowded living conditions.

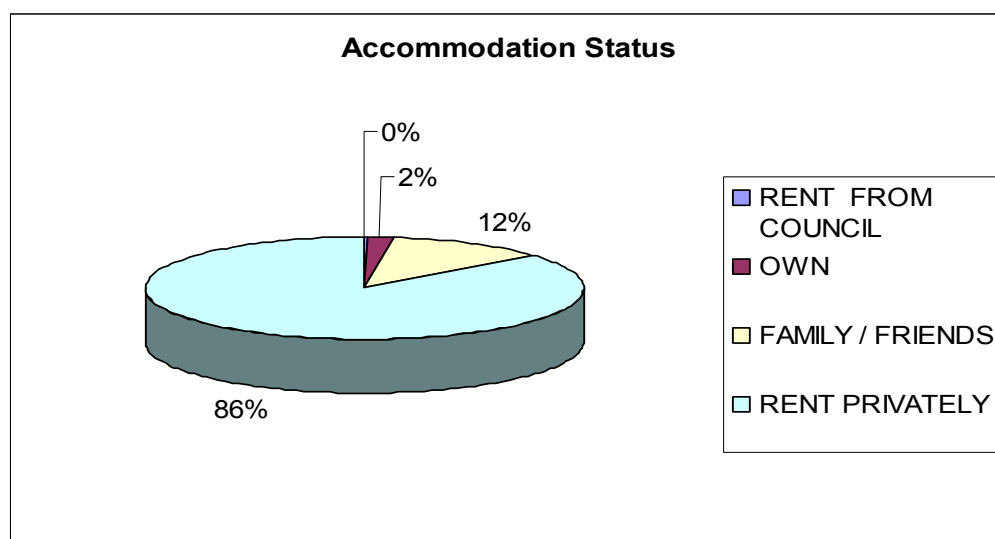


Chart 4a: Accommodation status (percentages)

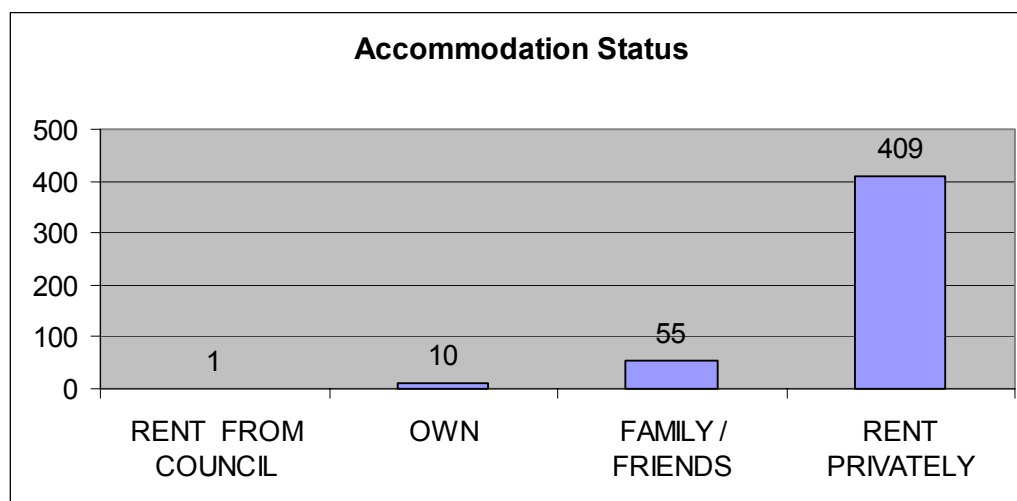


Table 4b: Accommodation status (actual figures)

### 3.1.6 Living With Other Members of the Family or Friends

66% of the respondents share their home with relatives, 22% with dependants and 12% are living in the same house with friends.

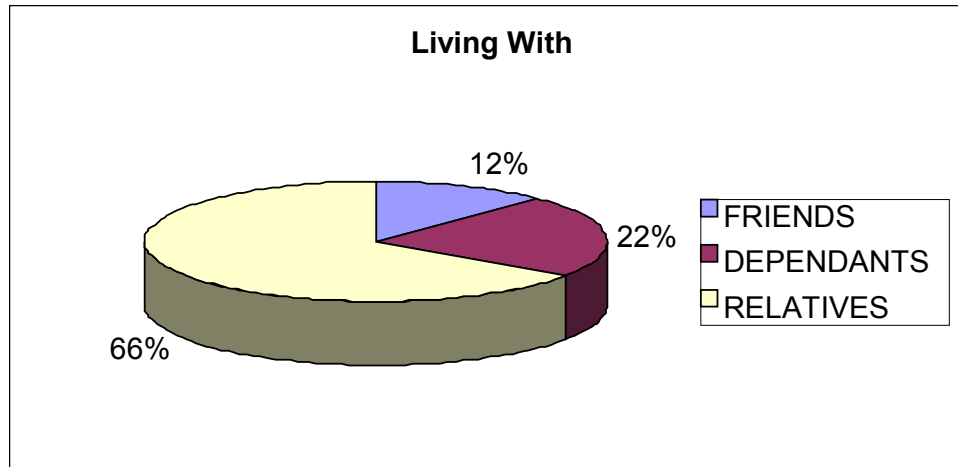


Chart 5a: Living with (percentages)

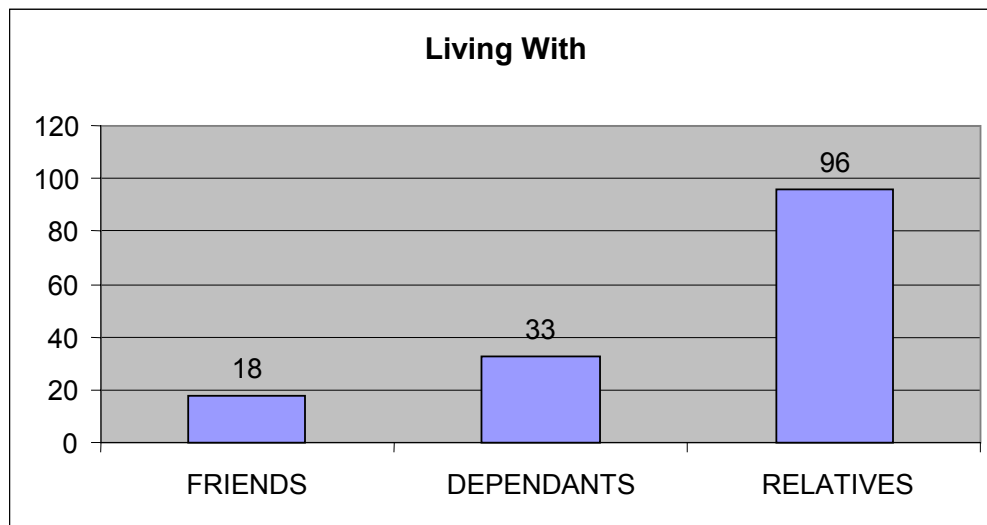


Table 5b: Living with (actual figures)

### 3.1.7 Employment Status

The vast majority (80%) of respondents are in full-time employment and 10% are in part-time employment. Only nine people are self-employed and thirty-three said they were unemployed.

It must be mentioned that a lot of Poles do not simply have one full time job. Many have either two jobs or work overtime.

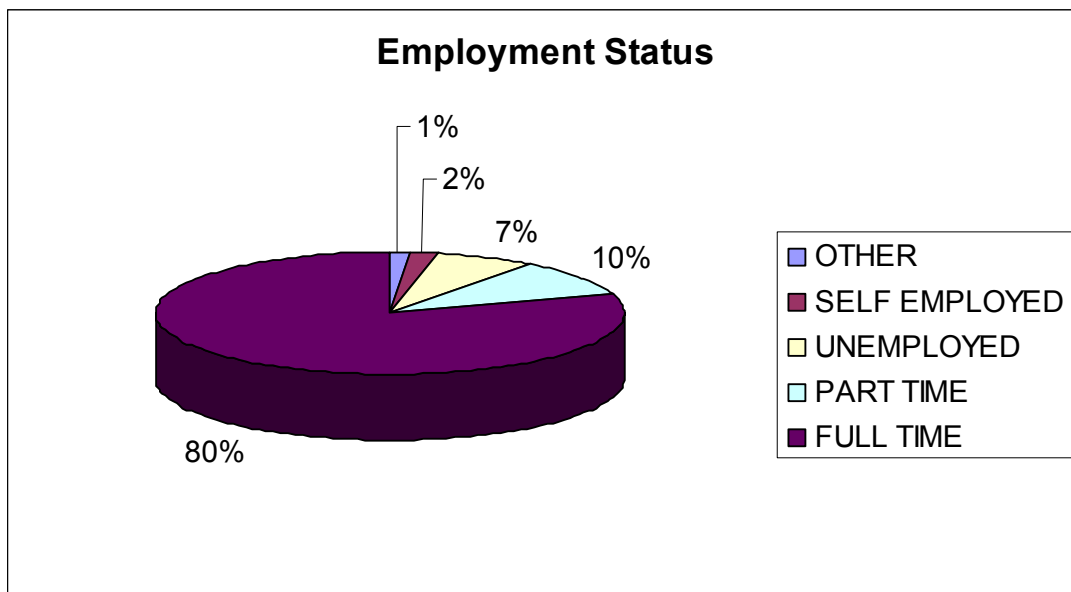


Chart 6a: Employment status (percentages)

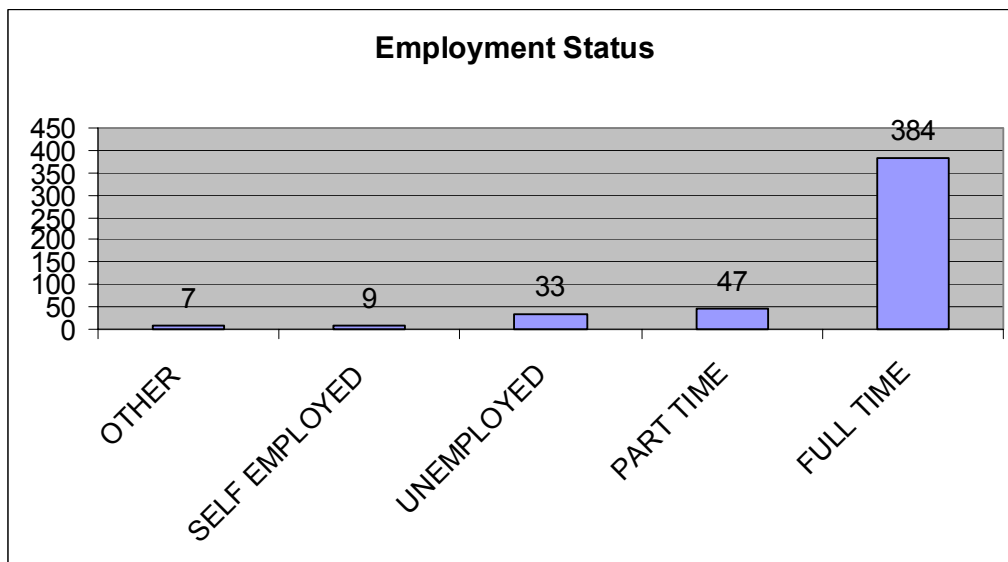


Table 6b: Employment status (actual figures)

### 3.1.8 Employment

The survey results show Polish people working in a wide range of employment, with the largest number of respondents (33%) employed in 'manufacturing'. This category includes packers, factory workers and various other low skilled labourers.

Other categories include transport/driving, administration/office work, cleaning, hotel/catering and working in warehouses.

In general Polish people are working in the following types of employment:

- Seasonal agricultural workers
- Student workers (tourism and hospitality)
- Skilled workers in the public sector (e.g. teachers, health workers)
- Skilled workers in the private sector (e.g. IT specialist)
- General labour (food and drink, construction, agriculture).

The survey results relating to education qualifications show that is not a reflection of the educational achievements of the people carrying out this type of work. Overall, it is plain to see that the majority of respondents are all in low paid jobs.

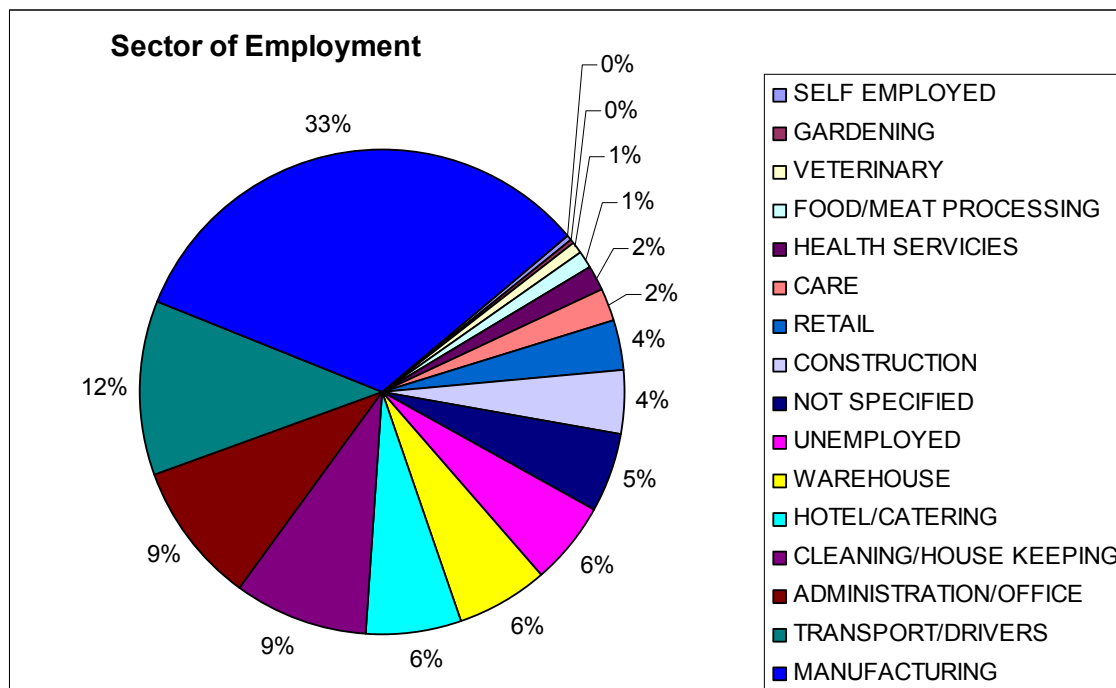
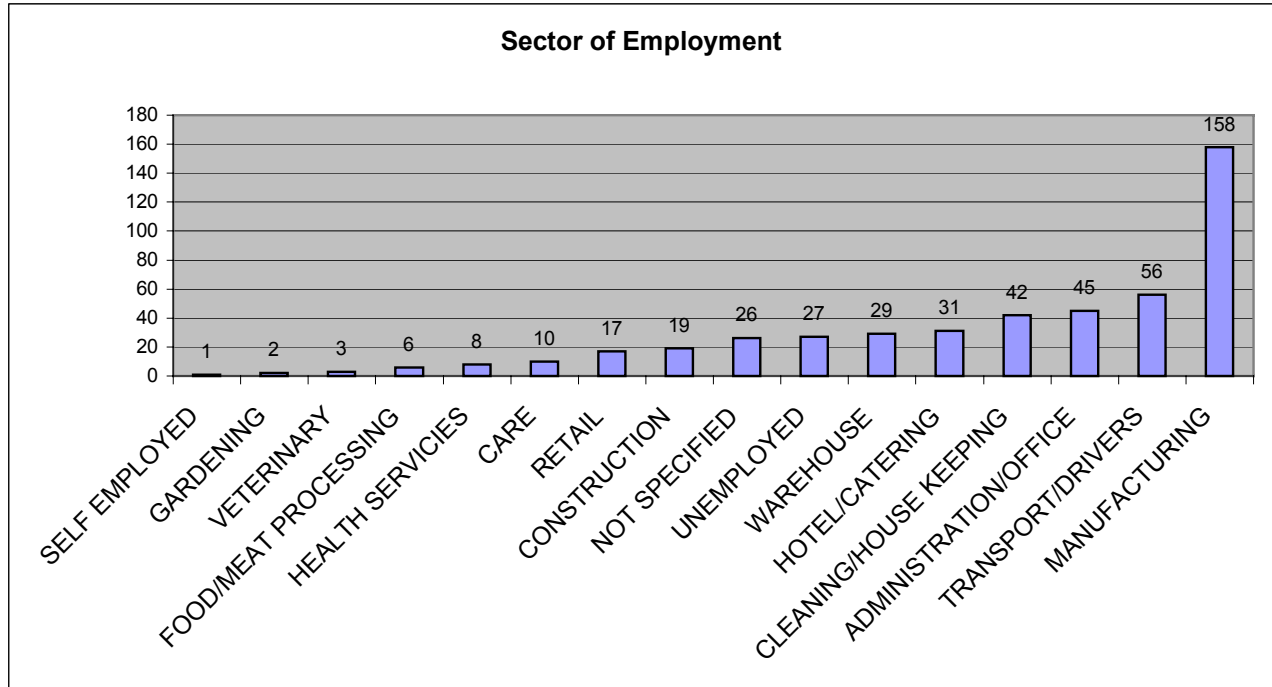


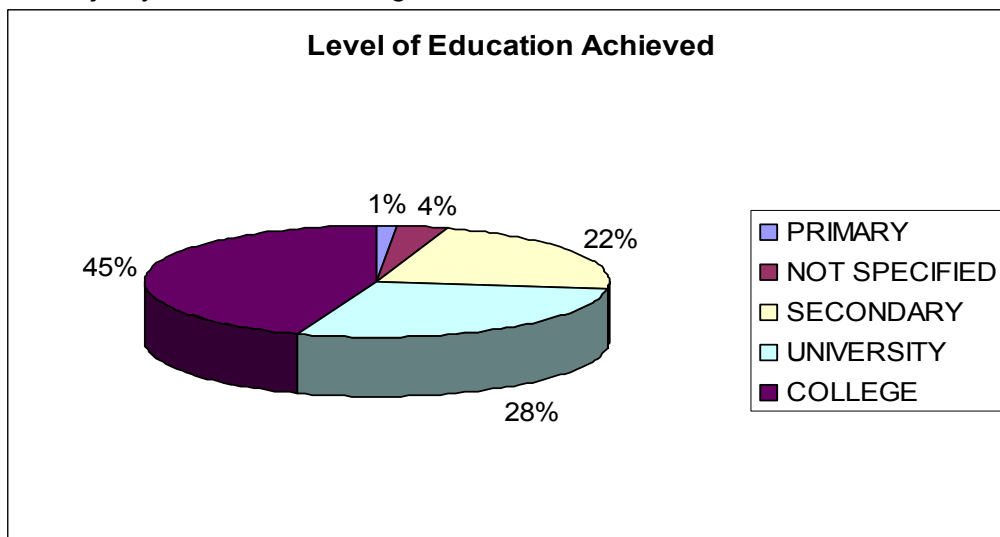
Chart 7a: Sector of employment (percentages)



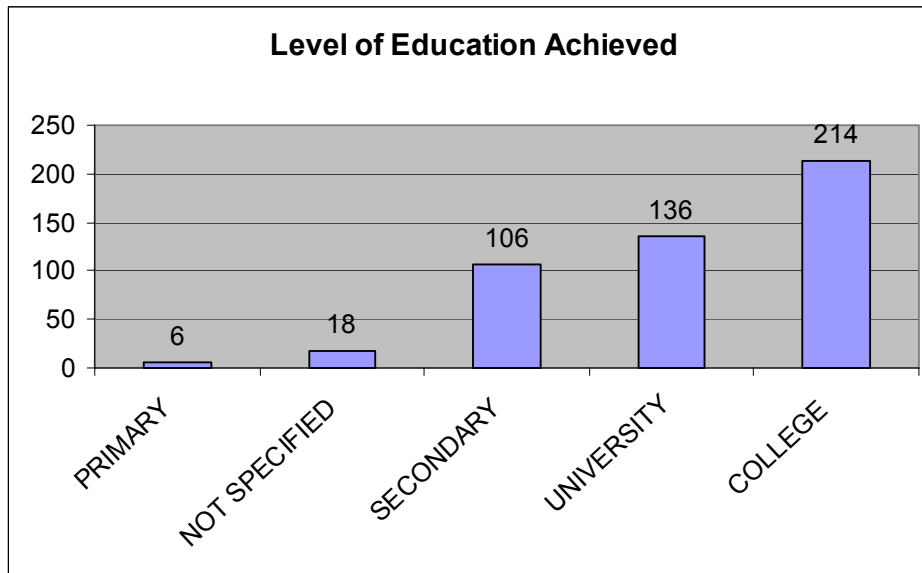
**Table 7b:** Sector of employment (actual figures)

### 3.1.9 Education

These graphs show the highest level of education achieved by the respondents. 45% finished their education in College and 28% finished in university. More than half of the respondents have successfully completed either college or university education. This fact needs to be considered when you look at the low skilled jobs that the majority of Poles are doing.



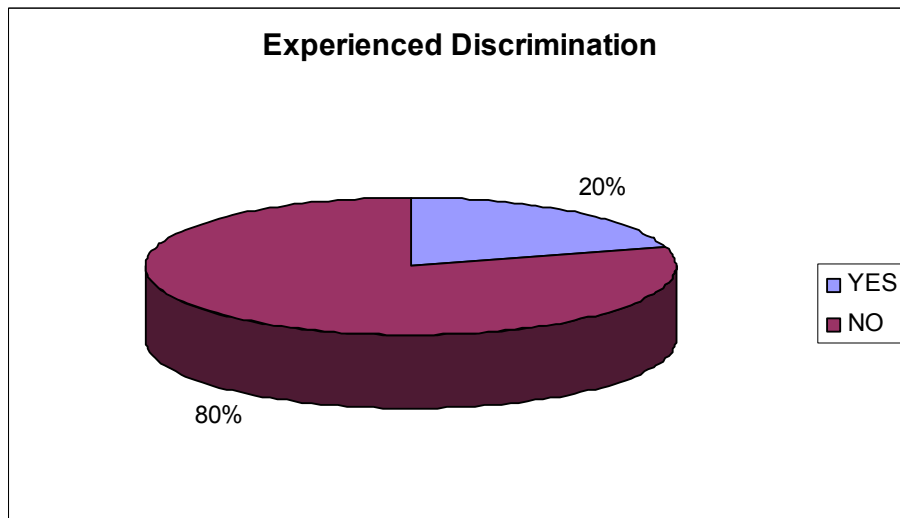
**Chart 8a:** Education (percentages)



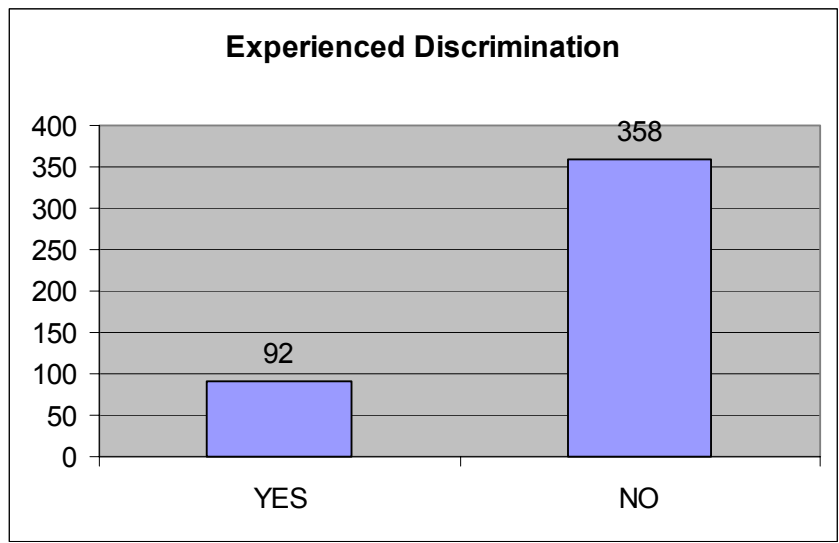
**Table 8b:** Education (actual figures)

### 3.1.10 Experience of discrimination

20% had experienced some form of racial discrimination. The perception of the researcher is that the amount of people who have experienced a form of discrimination is actually much higher than the figure reported. This is due to the fact that a lot of people would not like to mention incidents in case there are any repercussions or even difficulties in finding future work. People who had a 'one to one' interview with the researcher mentioned such incidents and knew of more Poles who had experienced similar problems. No one mentioned any serious incidents which they felt should be reported to the police, but people had experienced verbal discrimination both in public places and the workplace.



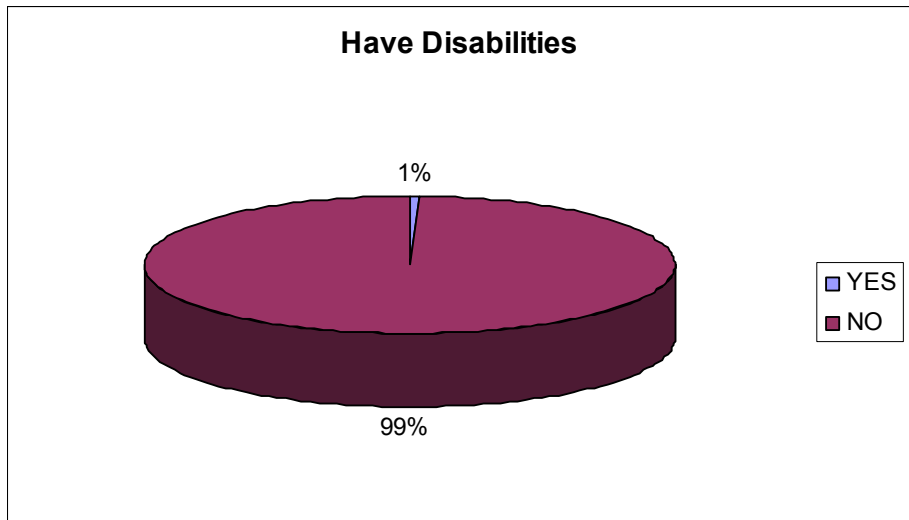
**Chart 9a:** Experienced discrimination (percentages)



**Chart 9b:** Experienced discrimination (actual figures)

### 3.1.11 Disabilities

Only three people who completed the survey said they suffered from some form of disability. This low figure could be due to people’s own definition of disability or reluctance to identify themselves as disabled.



**Table 10a:** Have disabilities (percentages)

### 3.1.12 Area of advice needed

The categories of advice need with the most housing, employment and benefits. Anecdotal evidence shows that people are unaware of how to apply for a Council house and do not know the procedures or whom to contact. Regarding employment, Poles strive to find better jobs than the low skilled jobs they currently have, but find this difficult due partly to their qualifications not being recognised in the UK and in some cases come up against discrimination. Polish people are not sure where and how to apply for benefits. They are also uncertain as to what they can apply for and the qualifying criteria. The 'OTHER' category relates to enquiries such as Education, local community events, how to open bank accounts, how to register with the local doctor's surgery and where to look for English classes.

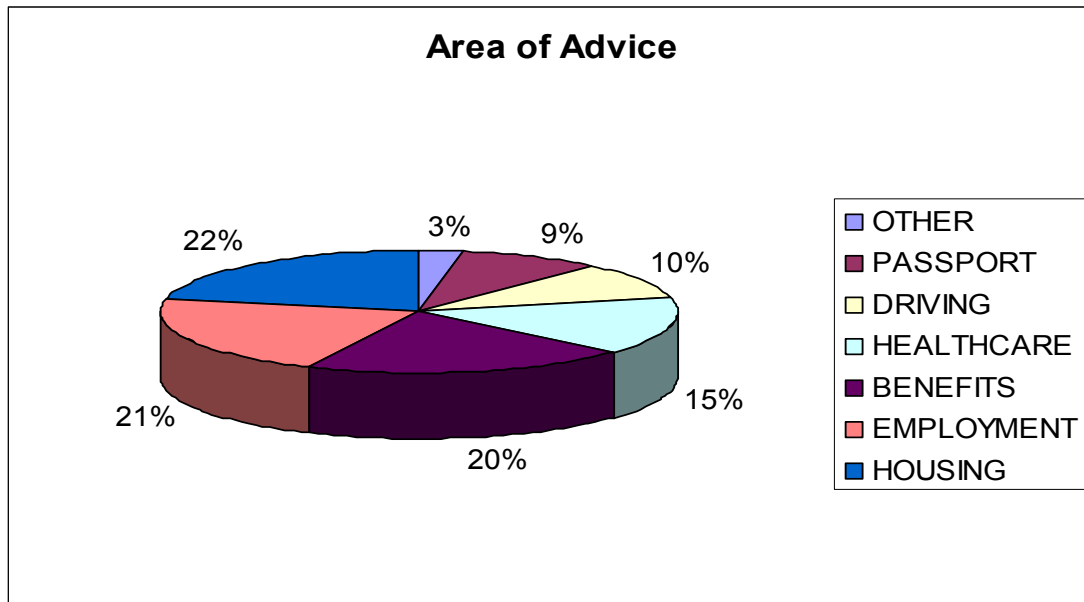


Chart 11a: Area of advice (percentages)

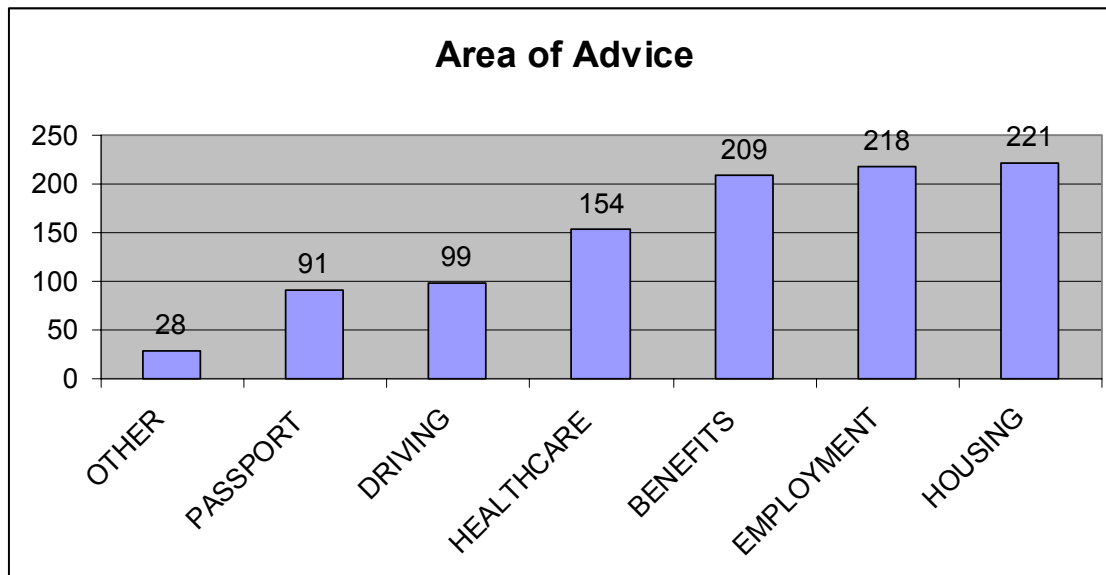


Chart 11b: Area of advice (actual figures)

### 3.1.13 Sources of advice

The most frequent sources of advice used by respondents were the Polish Church and Polish Consulate in Bristol. Only 12% of people would contact the Local Authority for advice. The researcher is aware that respondents may have included voluntary organisations providing advice services, for example, Citizens Advice Bureau, in this category, as people are not necessarily aware of the difference between services provided by the council or a voluntary organisation. The low number of people identifying the Local Authority as a source of help could be because not many Poles can speak English or feel confident in understanding important advice given to them in English.

17% were in the 'Other' category and this includes advice from Polish and English friends, employers and website forums. However, asking non-qualified people for advice is dangerous in respect that inaccurate advice may be given, which in turn will lead to further problems.

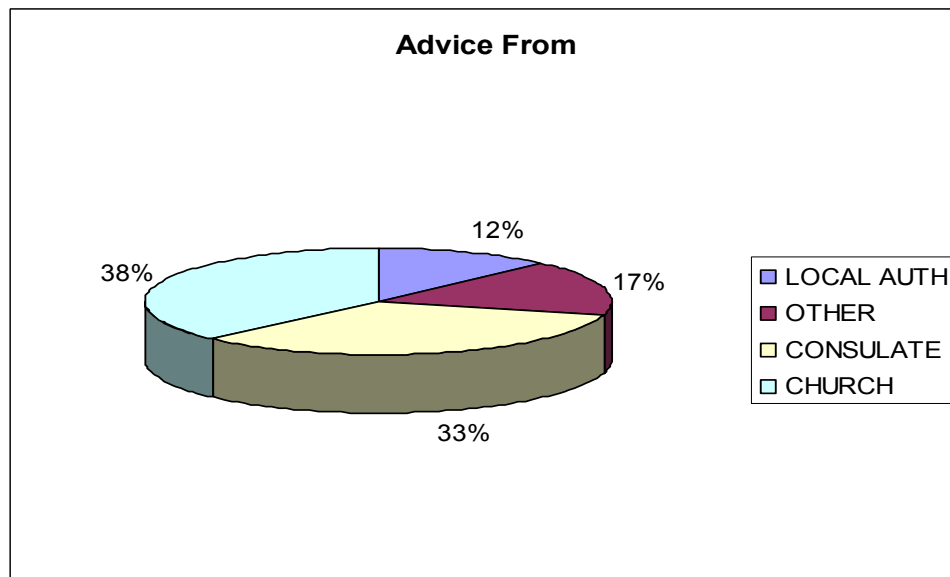


Chart 12a: Advice from (percentages)

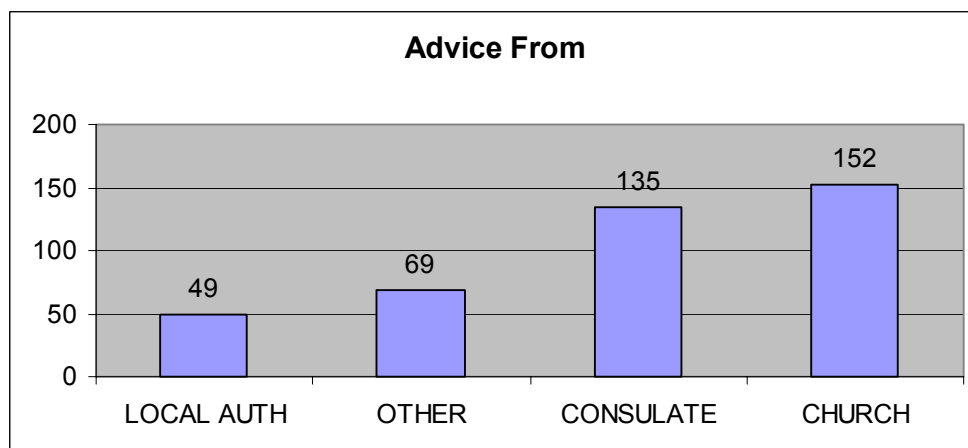


Chart 12b: Advice from (actual figures)

### 3.1.14 Level of English (written)

The majority of Poles completing the survey questionnaire were only able to write and understand written English 'a little', while just over a quarter were able to understand it 'fluently'.

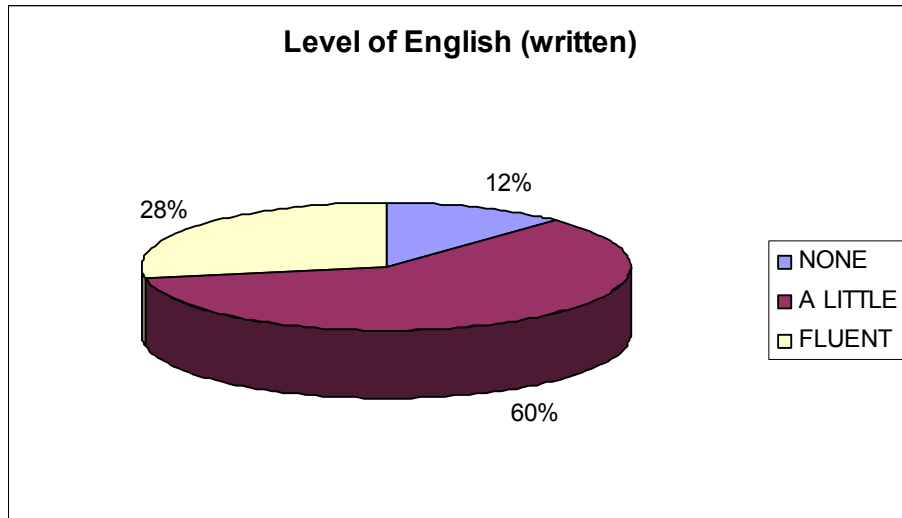


Chart 13a: Level of English - written (percentages)

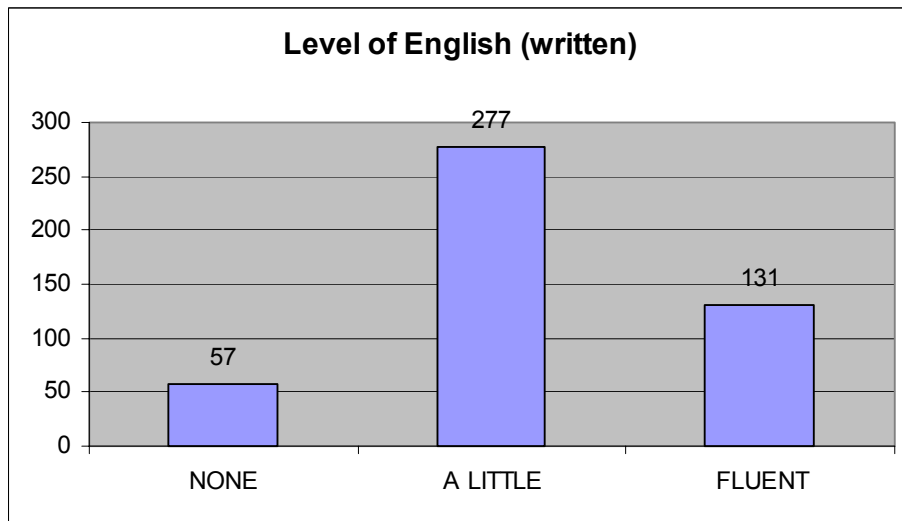


Table 13b: Level of English - written (actual figures)

### 3.1.15 Level of English (verbal)

The results show that 60% described themselves as able to speak 'a little' English and just over a third as able to speak English 'fluently'.

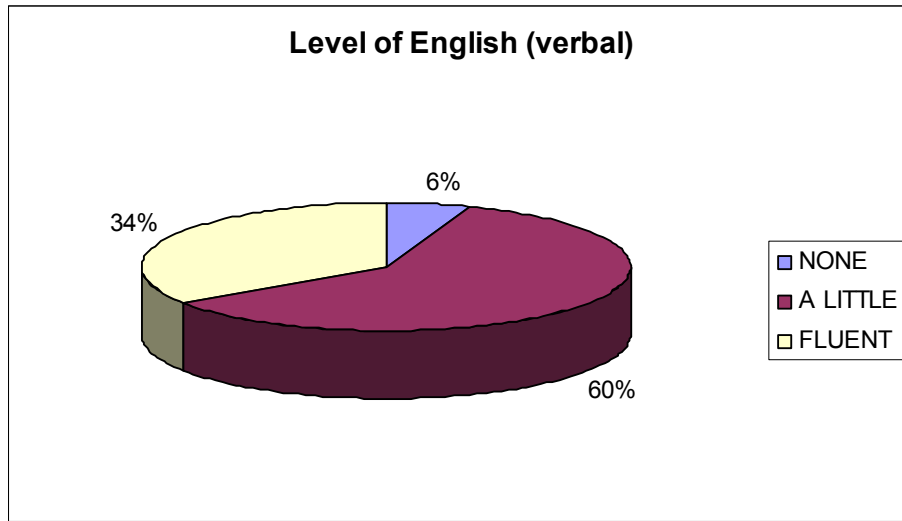


Chart 14a: Level of English - verbal (percentages)

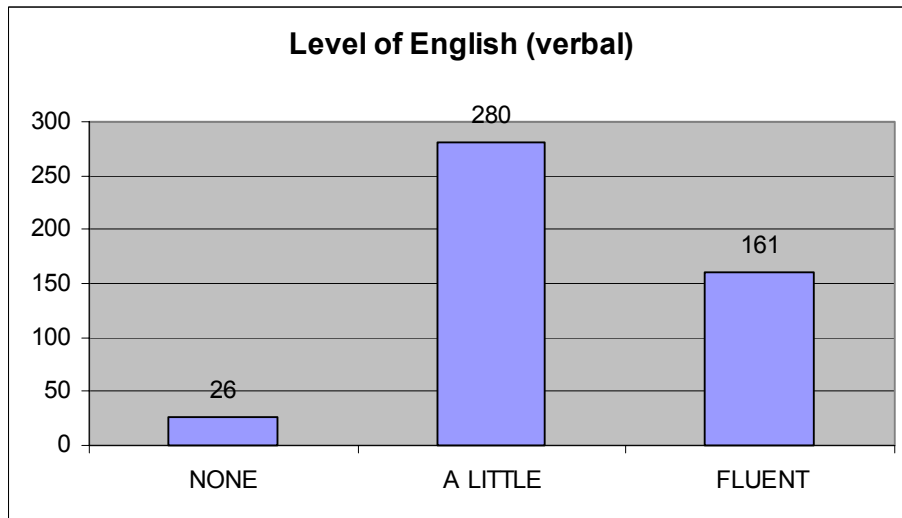


Table 14b: Level of English – verbal (actual figures)

## 4.0 Polish information event in Yate, South Gloucestershire

In order to obtain more completed surveys from Polish residents in the South Gloucestershire area, an information event was held in a local venue, Yate Leisure Centre, attended by twenty-three Polish people. Three presentations were made as follows:

- Usha Kumar, Community Development, South Gloucestershire County Council, gave an overview of the services provided by the Council.
- Tim Dallas, Vice Chairman of the Anglo Polish Society, spoke about the Society, what it could offer and its involvement in the research survey.
- Izabela Dallas explained about the research survey, why it was necessary, what it was hoping to achieve and how the Polish community could help.

People were asked to identify their advice needs and the problems they faced and rank these as 'most important' and 'less important'. Needs and issues were identified as follows:

### 'Most important'

- self employment – applying for VAT / regulations about VAT
- renting a flat or house – monthly payments
- information about schools and colleges – children aged 14 to 17
- how to get a Council house or flat
- rights for Poles in the UK
- taxes from investment income (obtained abroad / paid in the UK)
- education for adults.

### 'Less important'

- law – help with general legal issues
- law – help if person is self-employed
- information and support
- tourism – many Poles would like to know more about the area and accessible places to go to with their families for days out

Feedback on the event was that attendees found the day very beneficial and everybody had learned something new. Many people asked when the next event would be held, as they would definitely attend. When this takes place, specialists in the areas of problems identified by the attendees will be invited to speak and answer questions and concerns.

## 5.0 Conclusions from survey results

## 5.1 Employment

93 % of the respondents are employed either on a full time, part time or self employed basis. Only 7% are unemployed but are seeking work. Having spoken to some employers it was found that they find Poles extremely hard workers who very rarely take a day off sick. This is typical of the Polish working culture back in Poland as there is such high unemployment it is a fact that a Polish employer would be able to replace an unreliable worker very easily. This is a very high motivation for the employees and has continued in the UK as part of their culture.

The sectors of work that have been identified cannot be classed as highly skilled. The areas identified are:

- Manufacturing (33%)
- Cleaning / Housekeeping (9%)
- Hotel / Catering (6%)
- Retail (4%)
- Administration / Office (9%)
- Food / Meat Processing (1%)
- Transport / Driving (12%)
- Warehouse (6%)
- Veterinary (1%)
- Construction (4%)
- Care (2%)
- Self Employed (0.5%)
- Health Service (2%)
- Gardening (0.5%)

## 5.2 Qualifications / Work Achievement

However, when compared to levels of education, it is clear that respondents' skills are not being utilised in the best possible way. Possibly, a reason for this is the language barrier. It is also a fact that qualifications obtained in Poland are not recognised here in the UK. This ranges from college qualifications through to university degrees. It is possible to get foreign qualifications compared to those of UK qualifications via various agencies such as the National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom (UK NARIC) but it costs a lot of money. The main cost is getting the Polish documentation translated into English by a accredited translator. Due to the poor economy in Poland, most people do not have the financial resources to get this done before they come to the UK. Sometimes it doesn't even occur to people to get this done, as they consider a University degree will be recognisable in other countries as well as Poland. Finding such agencies is not very simple either, which compounds the problem and puts a lot of people off getting the comparisons done.

### 5.3 Education

Poles have said both at the Yate event and at information surgeries in Weston-Super-Mare that they want to get on courses in the UK, not only to learn English but also to further their qualifications. They have experienced problems in finding out where to apply, how much it costs, and when they become eligible to take the course. Another issue is finding a school for their children and if they are entitled to attend it. Many concerns have been raised with the Consulate and Polish priest on this matter. This issue was also mentioned at the Polish event held in Yate.

From September 2006 Bristol City Council's Education department is planning to introduce three new categories for monitoring the status of children entering Bristol schools, namely White Western European, White Eastern European and Black Somali. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there are increasing numbers of Polish Children being registered in certain schools, specifically Catholic schools.

### 5.4 Areas of advice needed

Respondents identified a wide range of topics with regards to advice needs, listed below with additional information about the kinds of issues raised during, for example, 'one to one' interviews and information sessions:

- Housing
- Benefits
- Driving
  - Licensing
  - Insurance
  - Fines and penalties
- Passport
- Employment
  - Their rights
  - Employment contracts
  - Harassment in the workplace
  - Minimum wages
  - Where to get help if they are not paid
  - Where can they get help if they are cheated by an employment agency
  - Misleading recruitment of workers in their own country, with false promises of good pay, conditions and housing.
  - Self employment and setting up a new business
  - Denial of basic employment rights, such as paid holiday, maternity leave and pay, Statutory Sick Pay.
- Healthcare
- Other
  - Resident status
  - Citizenship issues relating to their children who were born in the UK and also relating to themselves
  - Utilities
  - Banking, financial and mortgages
  - Insurance
  - National Insurance numbers (where to get them and also some employers are not requesting them).

The least amount of people are going to the Local Authorities due to the language problems as they are not confident in understanding important advice in a language they are unfamiliar with. Some ask advice from friends who are already settled in the UK and rely on their experience. A few search on the internet, but since UK rules and regulations are not readily available in foreign languages, this also poses a problem to the migrants. Those who have English friends tend to ask them whom to contact and how to deal with situations, but a lot of the time this advice is not correct and can lead to further problems.

### **5.5 English Language**

As mentioned previously, the level of English, both written and verbal, is not very high. This, consequently, causes many problems when coming to live in the UK especially when people then need to find out lots of information. It is apparent that quite a few Poles don't really take the seriousness of this into consideration before moving to the UK. They do not know how to apply for free English courses when they do get here, and even if they do know, there is a tremendously long waiting list to get on a course.

### **5.6 Discrimination**

It was found when talking to people whilst carrying out this survey that a lot of people don't really like to talk about discrimination. Sometimes they feel that what has been said to them in the street or pub, for example, is not worthy of any consideration, while others may take great offence. Several Poles working with the general public in pubs and shops have experienced racial comments from customers and their employers either did nothing or didn't know what action to take. This is of little comfort to the person that has to suffer the abuse whilst carrying out their work.

### **5.7 Disability**

Although not many people identified themselves as disabled this subject must still be mentioned, as there are probably more people who do not know, for example, how to get the care or medication they need. The researcher met one person with a surgical condition which needed medical attention. The person did not know whom to contact to start the process for this to happen, until he was informed that all medical matters need to start with the local GP. Another person had moved to the UK and wanted to bring a disabled family member to the UK. The flat he was living in was not large enough for this purpose. He needed advice about possible help with accommodation, medical support and specialist schooling.

### **5.8 Accommodation**

Most Poles are happy to rent accommodation from private landlords or from letting agencies. However, they do find the charges that agencies charge extremely high. The majority of Poles don't come to the UK alone. They either come with their partners, families, relatives or friends with whom they are happy to share their home until their financial situation improves to a level where they can afford their own home.

## **5.9 Age Groups**

61% of respondents were male and 39% were female. The most common age group is 26 to 35 (44%), followed by the 18 to 25 age group (32%). The statistics in Poland now show that because there are a large number of workers emigrating, there is a severe reduction in the amount of money paid to the Treasury in taxes that would be destined for the pensioners. Another problem facing Poland is that a lot of highly qualified people are emigrating, leaving a shortage of workers in skilled professions.

## **5.10 Final conclusions**

There is no doubt that the last few years have seen a major increase in the number of migrant workers from Poland coming to Bristol and South Gloucestershire. Migrant workers can bring specialist skills and solve recruitment shortages. However, employers need access to advice on legitimate ways to recruit workers from overseas. Advice is required on how to employ migrant workers to ensure they have their employment rights guaranteed, and adequate accommodation. Employers may require assistance with language training for both migrant and existing workforce. There may also be issues raised over the recognition of qualifications.

Poles come to the United Kingdom to seek a better lifestyle or to earn more money than they possibly could back home in Poland. In the case of the latter, they will either save the money up and return home in a couple of years or send money home on a regular basis and stay for as long as they feel comfortable. Some will even settle here and when their situation becomes stable, they will then bring the rest of their family over.

## **6.0 Recommendations**

### **6.1**

As shown in the survey results Poles need a place to get advice on the issues that have been identified. The opening of an Information Bureau would enable them to have access to the information they so desperately need without any fear of misunderstanding or misrepresentation.

The bureau would need to be open at times that are accessible to the Poles. This would mean that it would need to be open not only during the day but also in the evening. The most efficient way to do this would be to open the bureau for a couple days from mid afternoon to later into the evening and one day at the weekend. Many Poles work very long hours (much longer than a regular seven and half hour working day) and also work night shifts.

As not all Poles speak or write fluent English, there should be a person within the bureau able to assist with the completion of forms, provide interpretation and translation services, and act as a link between Poles and the local authorities and organisations. Another recommendation is that there should be someone quickly available in the event of non-English speaking Poles being taken to hospital or police Station. This can be a very frightening experience for people if they do not know what is being said to them or understands what is about to happen.

The Bureau would require its own website in both Polish and English languages which should hold information about the topics that have been identified in this research. This would need to have its own administrator as information can change very often and information is only useful if it is updated regularly and accurately.

## **6.2**

There should be more English classes accessible to Poles. Current provision does not meet the need of many Polish people to improve their English language skills.

## **6.3**

Another recommendation is to publish a booklet of relevant information on how to live in the UK and what legal requirements are expected of migrants. Contact details should be made available and indexed in an easy to understand format that can be accessed by Polish newcomers to the UK. One must always bear in mind that it is very difficult, but not impossible, to adapt to new cultures. Poles need to be aware that rules and regulations can be slightly different to those that they were used to back in their home country. Although there are booklets available, the information is not always applicable or accurate for citizens from A8 and some other EU countries. For example, 'A Guide for Newcomers to Bristol', published by Avon and Somerset Police in partnership with Race for Justice, has information about the Workers Registration Scheme rules, which is misleading for Polish citizens. Details like this can cause confusion. The proposed booklet should also include more information on how health services are run, as the Polish health service is completely differently to the UK one.

## **6.4**

Finally, it is recommended that organisations such as Support Against Racist Incidents (SARI) need to be publicised more in the Polish community to help with discrimination issues.

## **6.5**

In summary, the recommendations for action are as follows:

- accessible information bureau providing information and advice with Polish language support
- improved provision of English language classes
- information booklet for Polish newcomers arriving in area
- publicity about organisations providing support for people experiencing discrimination.

### **Author:**

Izabela Dallas MEng, BEng

## 7.0 Acknowledgements

The following people and organisations must be thanked for their help and support.

- Usha Kumar, South Gloucestershire County Council
- Debbie Clough, Bristol City Council
- George Peszynski, Polish Honorary Consul
- Father Zygmunt Fraczek, Polish Church of our Lady of Ostrabrama, Cheltenham Road, Bristol
- Polish shops in Bristol
- Anglo Polish Society Committee and Society members.
- Library services in Bristol and South Gloucestershire
- Peter Gurgul, Timeout Travel.
- Agata Palmer, community volunteer in Knowle area of Bristol.
- Websites:
  - Anglo Polish Society
  - Moj Bristol
  - Polski-Bristol (Mr. Mariusz Brzoza)

## 8.0 References

- Office for National Statistics
- Accession Monitoring Report May 2004 – June 2006 - 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2006 by the Home Office
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- CBI (2006) “Migrant workers filling capital’s labour market skills gap: CBI and KPMG London Business Survey”, News Release, 14 December 2006.
- Department for Work and Pensions (2006) Accession Monitoring Report: May 2004 – September 2006
- ‘Polish Workers in Bristol – A Summary of Evidence’, Equalities and Community Cohesion Team, Bristol City Council

## Polish Questionnaire

Name

Address  Post Code

Age  Gender\*

Do you live with other Polish people?\*

If YES, are they:-

	How many	Ages
Dependants		
Relatives		
Friends / Acquaintances		

Do you:-\*

Own your own home	
Rent privately	
Rent from Council or Housing Association	
Live with family or friends	

\* Please tick (✓) as appropriate

Are you:-\*

Employed Full Time		Self Employed	
Employed Part Time		Unemployed	

If you are employed please state your employer's post code

What kind of work do you do?

What is your highest level of education?

Do you have any disabilities?\*

Have you experienced any form of discrimination? \*

Where do you go to obtain advice about services, support and rights?\*

Polish Consulate  Polish Church  Local Authority   
Other (please specify)

In what category are you most likely to need advice:

Housing	<input type="text"/>	Benefits	<input type="text"/>	Driving	<input type="text"/>	Passport	<input type="text"/>
Employment	<input type="text"/>	Healthcare	<input type="text"/>	Other	<input type="text"/>		

How would you describe your English?

Written	Verbal
None	None
A little	A little
Fluent	Fluent

**All information given will be treated in strict confidence.**

Please tick (✓) this box if you wish to be informed of any services that will help to improve your life in the UK

Once you have completed the questionnaire please return it to:-  
Izabela Dallas, 31 St Pauls Road, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 1LX

**Thank you for taking the time in filling out this questionnaire.**

Since 2004, the number of Poles coming to the South West of Great Britain has increased. The direct flights from Bristol to Poland, very good bus connections between Bristol and Poland and also the better possibility of finding jobs are the main reasons which encourages Poles to come to Bristol and the surrounding area.

The majority of Poles are happy and after they have settled down, they start to think seriously about staying in the United Kingdom for a longer period of time or forever.

Unfortunately, for some of them, conditions are not so good. Because of this, they either go to the Polish Consul or to the Priest for help. Since the amount and variety of problems are large, and quite complicated, neither the Polish Consul nor Priest are able to help everyone.

Because of these reasons, The Honorary Consul asked The Bristol City Council about financial help, which can help to open an independent Polish Advice Bureau, where people can come and talk about their problems and they can receive professional help and advice.

The Bristol City Council has decided that before they give any money for the Bureau, they would like to know how many Polish people live in both Bristol and the surrounding area, and they also would like to know more about the conditions of where Poles live.

May I respectfully ask you about completing the attached questionnaire, and also about passing copies of it to your friends and colleagues and sending it back to the address which is printed on the questionnaire.

As it was mentioned before, The Polish Honorary Consul and Priest are not able to help everyone, then once more - please complete and send (or hand deliver) this questionnaire, and we can open The Information Bureau as soon as possible so we can help everyone who needs our help.

We hope that you will co-operate and give us your support.

Izabela Dallas

**Appendix 3**

**ANKIETA**

Imię i Nazwisko

Adres

Kod pocztowy

Wiek

Płeć\*

Mezcyzna / Kobieta

Czy Pani/Pan mieszka z innymi obywatelami polskimi?\*

Tak

Nie

Jeśli TAK to są to:

	Ile osób	Wiek
Osoby na Pani/Pana utrzymaniu		
Krewni		
Przyjaciele / Znajomi		

Czy Pani/Pan:\*

Mieszka w swoim domu/mieszkanie	
Wynajmuje dom/mieszkanie	
Mieszka w mieszkaniu socjalnym z Council lub Housing Association	
Mieszka z rodziną lub przyjaciółmi	

Czy jest Pani/Pan:\*

Zatrudniona(-y) na cały etat	
Zatrudniona(-y) na pół etatu	
Właścicielem firmy	
Niezatrudniony	

\* Proszę zaznaczyć właściwą odpowiedź (✓)

Jeśli Pani/Pan jest zatrudniona (-y), proszę podać kod pocztowy pracodawcy

Jaki rodzaj pracy Pani/Pan wykonuje?

Jakie ma Pani/Pan wykształcenie?

Czy jest Pani/Pan niepełnosprawna (-y)?\*

Tak

Nie

Czy doświadczyła/doświadczył Pani/Pan jakiegokolwiek formy dyskryminacji? \*

Tak

Nie

Gdzie zgłasza się Pani/Pan po poradę dotyczącą wsparcia, swoich praw, pomocy?\*

Polski Konsulat

Polski Kościół

Lokalna Władza

Inne (proszę sprecyzować)

Czego dotyczy, lub może dotyczyć porada, z którą Pani/Pan się zwraca do wybranej instytucji:

Mieszkanie	<input type="checkbox"/>	Zasiłki	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prawo jazdy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Imigracja/Paszport	<input type="checkbox"/>
Zatrudnienie	<input type="checkbox"/>	Problemy zdrowotne	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inne	<input type="text"/>		
				Proszę wymienić	<input type="text"/>		

Jak określiłaby/określiłby Pani/Pan swój poziom znajomości języka angielskiego?

W piśmie	W mowie
Brak	Brak
Początkująca (-y)	Początkująca (-y)
Zaawansowany	Zaawansowany

**Podane informacje zostaną utajnione i nie zostaną przekazane osobie trzecim.**

Proszę zaznaczyć (✓) to pole, jeżeli chce Pan/Pani być informowana (-y) o jakichkolwiek usługach, które mogą ułatwić życie w Wielkiej Brytanii.

Po wypełnieniu proszę ankietę przesłać na adres:-  
Izabela Dallas, 31 St Pauls Road, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 1LX

**Dziękujemy za poświęcony czas na wypełnienie ankiety.**

## Apel do wszystkich nowo przybyłych Rodaków

Od 2004 roku, liczba przybywających Rodaków do Południowo-Zachodniego Rejonu Wielkiej Brytanii systematycznie wzrasta. Bezpośrednie przeloty lotnicze z Bristolu do Polski jak i dobra komunikacja autokarami, oraz lepsza możliwość znalezienia pracy, zachęca Rodaków do przyjazdu do Bristolu i okolic.

Większość przybyłych Rodaków jest szczęśliwa i w miarę upływu czasu zakorzenia się na ziemi brytyjskiej, myśląc poważnie o pozostaniu w tym kraju na dłuższy okres czasu, czy też na stałe.

Niestety dla wielu z nich, warunki nie są jednak tak pomyślne. Stąd też, po poradę związaną z rozterkami i problemami, udają się do Konsula Honorowego lub Księdza Proboszcza. Jednakże często problemów jest bardzo wiele i są na tyle skomplikowane, że zarówno Konsul jak i Ksiądz Proboszcz, nie są w stanie przyjść wszystkim z pomocą.

Z tego też powodu, Konsul Honorowy zwrócił się do Władz Miasta Bristol o pomoc materialną, aby bez zwłocznie otworzyć niezależne Polskie Biuro Informacyjne, gdzie Rodacy w potrzebie mogliby otrzymać profesjonalną pomoc i poradę.

Zanim jednak Władze Miasta przyznają pomoc materialna na otwarcie Biura, konieczne jest wskazanie liczby Polaków mieszkających na terenie Bristolu i okolic, oraz określenie warunków i okoliczności, w jakich Rodacy się znajdują.

W związku z tym zwracamy się z uprzejmą prośbą o wypełnienie załączonego kwestionariusza, oraz przekazanie go do wypełnienia innym osobom i zwrócenie na podany adres.

Jak zostało wspomniane Konsul wraz z księdzem Proboszczem w obecnej sytuacji nie są w stanie przyjść wszystkim potrzebującym z pomocą, stąd też apelujemy o poparcie i wypełnienie kwestionariuszy, aby Biuro Informacyjne mogło być otwarte bezzwłocznie i służyć wszystkim w ich trudnościach.

Liczymy na współpracę i poparcie.

Z poważaniem,

Izabela Dallas