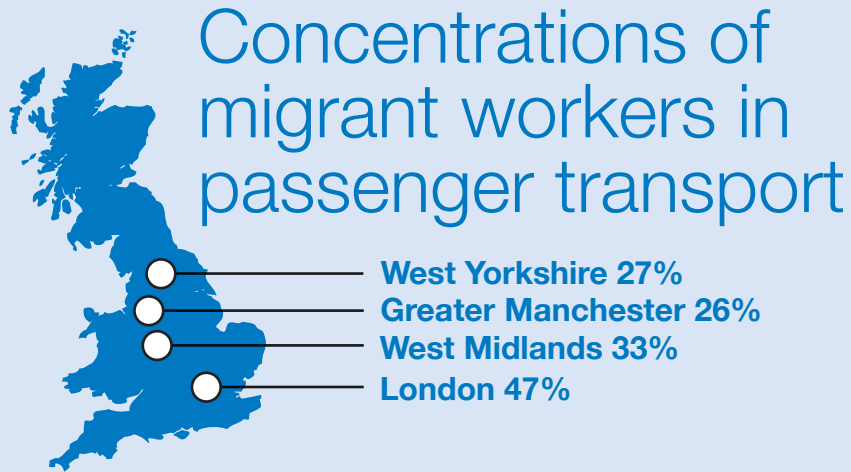


Migrants in the passenger transport industry



48% of all passenger transport vacancies are considered hard-to-fill

Source – Employer Skills Survey 2013



23% of the 156,163 people working in passenger transport were born outside of the UK



Bangladesh
12,086



Kenya
4,711



Ghana
3,847

Migrant representations in passenger transport subsectors



Taxi and private hire **38%**



Rail **14%**



Bus and coach **19%**



Aviation **23%**

Industries with the most hard-to-fill vacancies



Taxi and private hire **59%**



Bus and coach **55%**

What would we do without migrant workers?

The simple answer is that without migrant workers, employers would be faced with significantly higher numbers of hard-to-fill vacancies. As the sector is unable to attract sufficient numbers of skilled workers, a number of employers hire international workers. In total, 23% of the passenger transport workforce was born outside of the UK, with Bangladesh (almost 12,000) the most common place of origin, followed by Kenya (4,700) and Ghana (3,800).

While migrants are often employed in passenger transport roles they tend to settle in urban areas, which means there are specific areas in the UK where businesses are benefitting from their skills. London is the prime location, with 47% of the industry workforce having been born outside of the UK. The West Midlands (33%), West Yorkshire (27%) and Greater Manchester (26%)¹ provide further evidence that migrants have a strong presence in the industry in urban areas.

The latest figures show that 48% of all vacancies in the industry are considered hard-to-fill² and this is one reason such a high number of migrant workers can be found in this sector. With the unemployment rate falling, it is harder for businesses to recruit from among the unemployed, especially as a large proportion of these people have been out of work for some time. This, coupled with the fact that the labour market is recovering and becoming increasingly competitive, means that the sector is likely to experience difficulties recruiting skilled staff and employers may turn to migrant workers.

23% of the passenger transport workforce was born outside of the UK

¹ Labour Force Survey 2013

² Employer Skills Survey 2013

What roles do migrant workers typically undertake?

The most common role migrants undertake in the passenger transport sector is as a taxi driver, with almost 67,000 migrants working in this role. Taxi and private hire businesses employ the largest proportion of migrant workers in the passenger transport sector, with 38% of the workforce born outside of the UK, which has risen 4% since 2009. The types of roles migrants undertake has not changed much in the last few years, with the majority found in process or machine operative roles, which includes taxi drivers (66,631) and bus and coach drivers (14,771). Yet migrant workers are also starting to move into more senior positions, with the proportion of migrants in managerial roles rising 4% from 2009 to 19%.³ This is particularly notable in taxi companies, where 38% of managers were born outside the UK. Aviation services and rail similarly have high percentages of migrants working in managerial roles, with 37% and 19% respectively.

What's the impact of hiring migrant workers

A large proportion of migrant workers can also be found in low-skilled entry level roles in the industry. The recent Migratory Advisory Committee's (MAC) study into Migrants in low-skilled work shows the benefits of employing migrants.⁴ The report highlighted in particular that migrant workers:

- Are more flexible than British workers and are more likely to be happy with shift work at unsociable hours, which employers find useful due to the seasonality of demand in the industry.
- Generally tend to possess better soft skills than UK workers, which are vital in a number of roles in the industry.
- Are more willing to accept a job with potentially poor pay, poor working conditions and that may be lower than their skill level due to their willingness to work.

While there are clearly many benefits to hiring migrant workers, the MAC study also highlighted that migrant workers:

- Can depress wages within industries by up to 15%
- May not have the cultural and linguistic skills required to work in their role, which can have a negative impact on customer service.



³ Labour Force Survey 2009

⁴ Migrants in low-skilled work, The growth of EU and non-EU labour in low-skilled jobs and its impact on the UK, Migratory Advisory Committee (July 2014)

Is there an alternative to employing migrant workers?

The most common reason reported for hard-to-fill vacancies in the industry was a low number of applicants with the required skills. Employment academies offer one solution to address this as they provide training to jobseekers and link employers with providers so that they can find suitable candidates for their vacancies. The Employment 1st training programme prepares people looking for their first job in passenger transport and gives them the basic knowledge they will need, and can be delivered through employers as part of their induction training.

Accredited colleges can also provide employers with a steady stream of skilled employees. At the same time, they can use their formally recognised good practice and excellence in training and qualifications to attract future learners, while ensuring employers see them as a source of highly-skilled potential employees.

People 1st

People 1st is the skills and workforce development charity for employers in the hospitality, tourism, leisure, travel, passenger transport and retail industries focusing on transforming skills in the sector through the development of effective recruitment, training and talent management solutions.

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