Wage progression and labour market integration of migrant workers in the UK

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Summary

This Data Insight uses the Migrant Workers Scan dataset (MWS) -- an administrative register from HM Revenue and Customs that records every non-UK national applying for a National Insurance Number -- to explore how the wages of migrants change over time, compared to the native population. The MWS data has recently been linked to the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), a longitudinal source of high-quality data on earnings for 1% of the labour force. This linkage is an ADR England flagship dataset.

We provide some initial statistics comparing the linked MWS-ASHE data to the Annual Population Survey, which demonstrate that the new ASHE-MWS dataset appears to be consistent with more traditional survey-based measures of labour force participation.

Background

Migration has played a vital role in shaping the UK labour market. The country saw large increases in inward migration after the European Union expanded in 2004 and 2007, and a big shift in migration patterns after Brexit. This research uses the linked Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)-Migrant Worker Scan (MWS) dataset to understand the dynamics of migrant employment, including their wage progression.

The main source for migration is the Migrant Workers Scan (MWS), the government's record of non-UK nationals who register for a National Insurance Number (NINo) to allow them to work in the UK. The MWS includes gender, age, date of registration, date of arrival and nationality. To understand more about migrants' wages and their progression, we linked a 1% sample of the MWS with the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), representing a 1% sample of employee jobs.

To provide a comparative perspective and to contextualize the findings from the ASHE-MWS data, we also draw upon the Annual Population Survey (APS) as a benchmark. By analysing these datasets, this research aims to provide a comprehensive data-driven insight into the experiences of migrant workers in the UK labour market.

In 2023 the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) used a similar linked ASHE-MWS dataset to explore wage progression[1]. They concentrated on those who first appeared in the labour market 2002-2010 and explored how different factors such as tenure in the job and occupation affected wage growth. Their detailed model suggested that, generally, migrant workers under-perform compared to UK nationals in similar roles and with similar job characteristics.

In this paper we step back to draw out some descriptive patterns in the characteristics of migrants over time rather than constructing an explicit model.

Our analysis suggests that migrants have generally seen higher wage growth than non-migrants since the start of the century. This offsets, to some extent, the initial downgrading in wages experienced by migrants that other studies have found. However, this needs to be seen in the context that migrants who struggle in the labour market may be more likely than non-migrants to leave the UK labour market, and so results may be biased upwards.

What we did

Our analysis primarily uses the linked Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)-Migrant Worker Scan (MWS) dataset. The linkage enables us to mark all sample members in ASHE who have a record in MWS as migrants. We also use the Annual Population Survey (APS) as a benchmark to compare the results; here we use the variable "date first arrived in the UK" (cameyr) and "date last arrived in the UK" (cameyr2) as an indicator of migration. Following the analysis strategy of MAC, we divide migrant workers into three distinct groups based on their country of origin:

i. **A12** – nationals of the 12 Accession countries that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007, including the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, and Romania
ii. **EU14** – nationals of the 14 EU countries prior to 2004, including Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. These countries have had longer-standing migration relationships with the UK and represent a different pattern of migration compared to the more recent A12 countries.
iii. **ROW** – the rest of the world, comprising all non-EU migrants.

We first examine the characteristics of migrant employees and then analyse the wage progression of migrant workers over time. Our analysis sample is restricted to main jobs (for those who have multiple jobs), with real hourly earnings excluding overtime tracked at:

i. one year after their year of arrival (t+1)
ii. three years after their year of arrival (t+3)
iii. five years after their year of arrival (t+5)
iv. seven years after their year of arrival (t+7)
v. ten years after their year of arrival (t+10)

This longitudinal perspective allows us to gain insights into the evolving economic circumstances of migrant workers as they establish themselves in the UK labour market. By tracking wage progression over these specific time intervals, we can observe patterns of economic integration and identify potential factors that may influence the migrants' working trajectories. All wages are adjusted using the Office for National Statistics' wage deflator.

What we found

Migrants and characteristics

Figure 1 takes all employees aged 18-64 and charts the share who are migrants in (i) the linked ASHE-MWS dataset, and (ii) the APS dataset. When merging MWS into the ASHE data, we mark the matched subset as migrants. In other words, an observed employee in ASHE who has successfully been linked to the MWS is considered a migrant. For the APS dataset, a migrant employee is defined as one with a valid year of arrival and in employment.

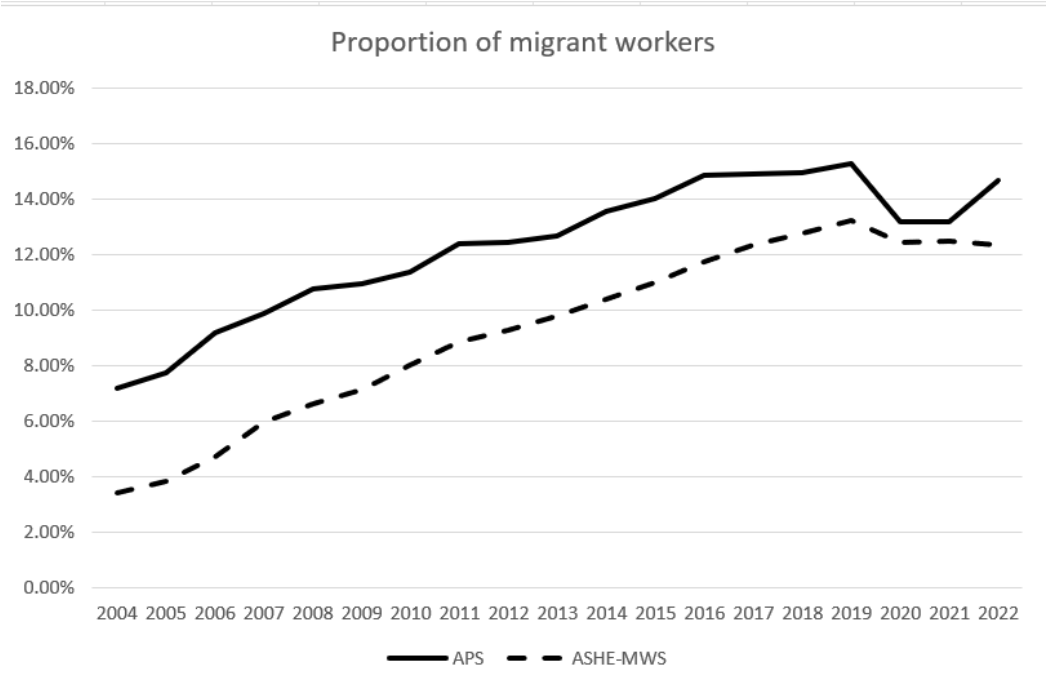

Figure 1: Proportion of migrant workers (18-64 years old) in both datasets; authors' calculations

In general, both datasets broadly show similar trends through to 2019 despite the APS consistently reporting higher incidence of migrant employees than the ASHE. Notably, there was a sharp increase in migrants after the EU expansion during the 2004-2007 period, which extended freedom of movement rights to citizens of the A12 nations. By 2019 there was a shift in the trend in both series, perhaps due to Covid-19 but Brexit may have been a cause. This drop is less pronounced in ASHE-MWS than in the APS.[2]

Figure 2 further breaks down the composition of migrant employees between the two datasets, offering a temporal understanding of the relative sizes of these migrant groups (A12, EU14, ROW).

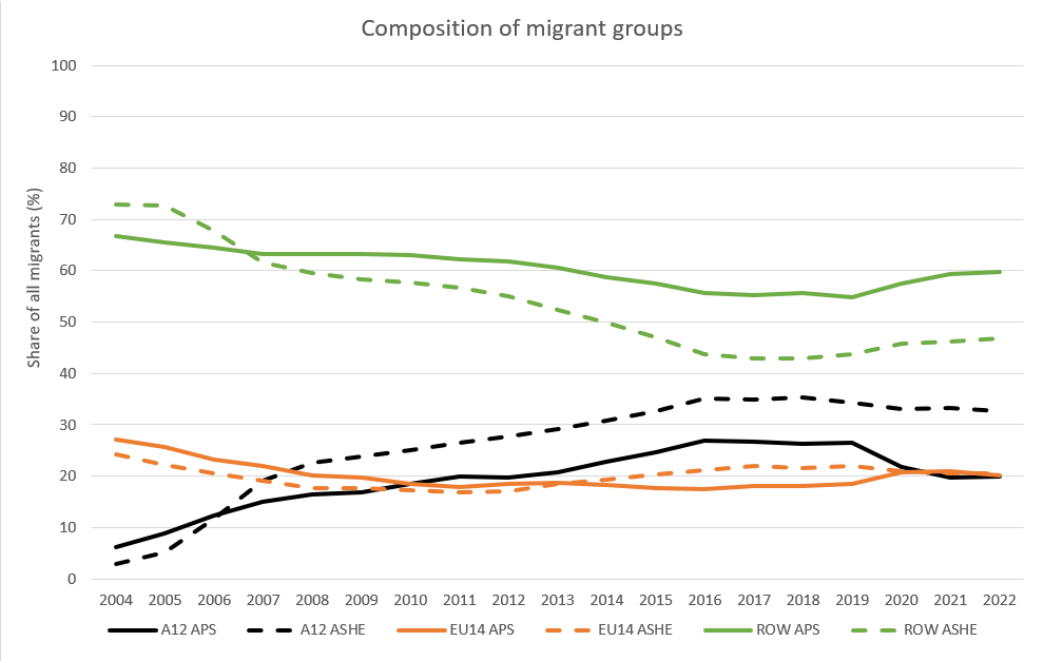

Figure 2: Composition of migrant groups (18-64 years old) (A12, EU14, and ROW)

In the APS dataset, migrants from A12 appear in small proportions before 2006, after which their share grows steadily and overtakes EU14 migrant group by late 2000s. From the mid-2000s onward, the figures reported in APS and ASHE-MWS begin to diverge. EU14 migrants, by comparison, remain relatively stable, with modest fluctuations between two datasets. This stability indicates consistent migration patterns from these established EU member states.

Migrants from the ROW group consistently constitute the largest proportion across both datasets throughout the period. The persistent high number of non-EU migrants emphasises the importance of migration from Commonwealth nations and other regions outside Europe. However, ASHE records a considerably smaller proportion of ROW migrants compared to APS, and this gap has widened since 2015.

Analysing the different characteristics of the 18–64-year-old migrant employees in both datasets, Figure 3 shows the percentage of men in different migrant groups over the years, as observed in both the APS and ASHE-MWS data.

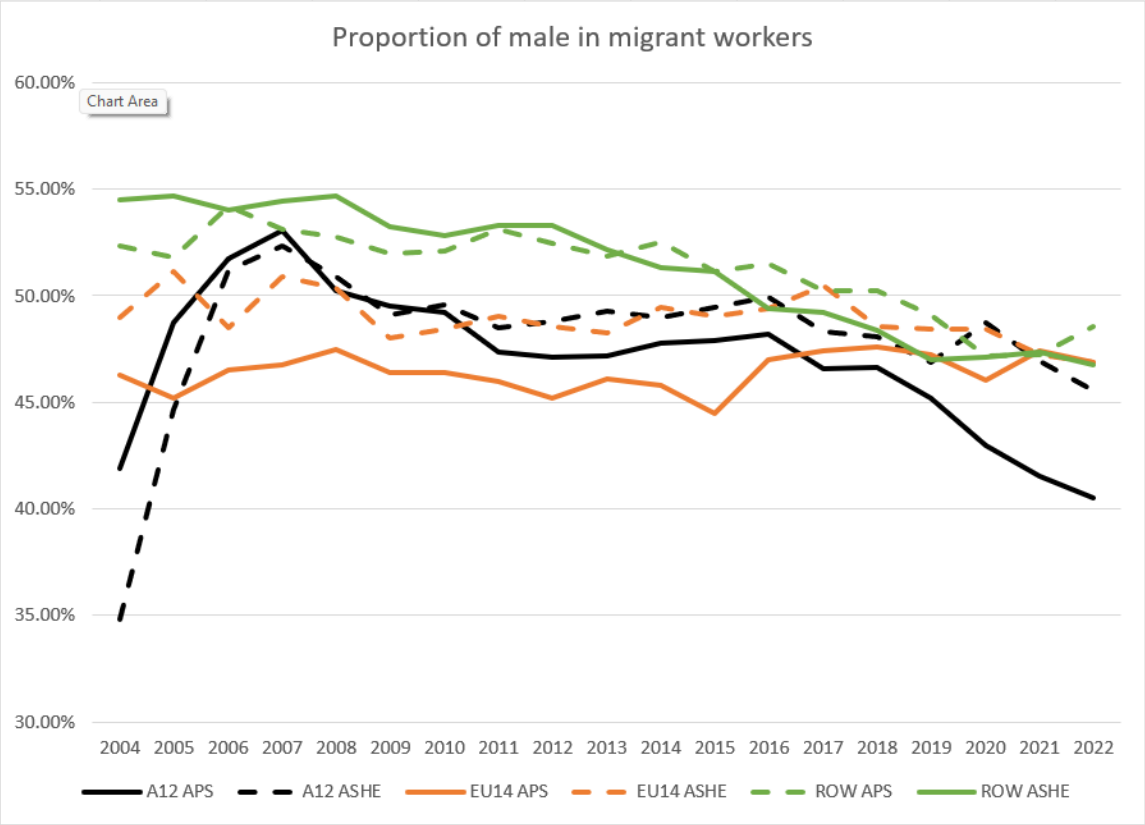

Figure 3: Proportion of males among migrant workers, by migrant groups & year

For the A12 group, there is a notable surge in the proportion of men in the early years in both ASHE and APS between 2004-2007, with the male shares rising around 50% by the mid-2000s. After this peak, the two series remain relatively close but show a gradual decline over time, with APS recording a steeper downward trend than ASHE. By 2022, men account for just over 40% of the A12 group in APS compared to around 46% in ASHE, suggesting a longer-term shift towards greater female representation among this group of migrants. For the EU14 group, the APS data consistently reports a lower percentage of men as compared to the ASHE figure, staying around 46-47% over most of the period. However, the two series converge in the final years of the series. For the ROW group, ASHE generally indicates a higher percentage of men over the period 2004-2013, but the two series converge thereafter.

Figure 4 shows proportion of migrants residing in London. The APS (solid lines) records the place of residence at the time of the survey. The ASHE-MWS data shows two measures: one recording an address in London at first registration from MWS (dashed lines) and the other using the home location region reported in ASHE ('hgor'; dotted lines). The ASHE and APS data therefore reflect "where are the migrants now", whereas the MWS reflects "where did they first appear?" The MWS data is missing in about 15% of cases, 10%-13% in 2000-2010 dropping to about 5% from 2010 onwards.

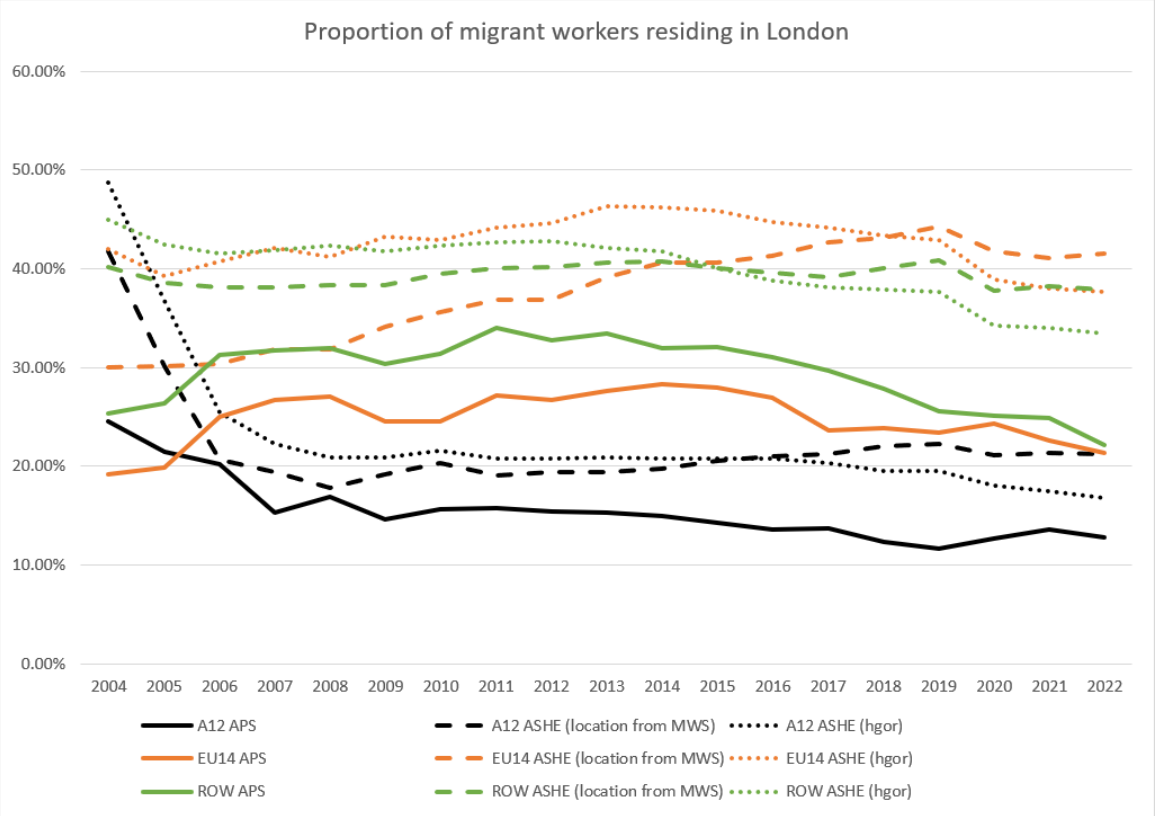

Figure 4: Proportion of migrants living in London, by migrant groups & year

The trends of the dashed lines and dotted lines seem consistent across different migrant groups, but notable differences remain when compared with APS. For the A12 group, APS indicates a considerable decline in London residency between 2004 and 2006. In contrast, both ASHE-MWS records higher A12 migrants in London across all years, with a substantially larger share at the beginning period followed by a significant drop in the 2004-2006 period, and not far off the APS record. For the EU14 group, APS shows residency in London rising slightly in the mid-2000s before stabilising around 22–28%, whereas ASHE-MWS reports a much higher and steadier proportion, ranging between 38–46% across the period. The differences between APS and ASHE-MWS are noticeable. Similarly, for the ROW group, APS figures stay within the 22–32% range, while ASHE-MWS consistently places London residency 10–15 percentage points higher.

Table 1 shows the median age for migrant workers as observed in each year. Validation of the age data in MWS against age data in ASHE indicates a very high degree of agreement between the two sources, and so we use the latter.

Year	A12		EU14		ROW	
	APS	ASHE-MWS	APS	ASHE-MWS	APS	ASHE-MWS
2004	36	31	38	34	39	35
2005	31	29	38	34	39	34
2006	29	28	37	34	38	34
2007	29	27	38	33	38	33
2008	29	28	37	34	39	34
2009	30	29	39	34	39	34
2010	30	29	39	35	39	35
2011	31	30	39	35	39	35
2012	32	31	39	35	40	36
2013	33	31	39	34	40	37
2014	33	32	39	34	41	37
2015	34	32	40	34	41	38
2016	34	33	39	34	41	39
2017	34	33	40	35	41	39
2018	35	34	40	35	42	40
2019	36	35	40	36	42	40
2020	37	36	42	37	43	41
2021	38	37	43	38	43	42
2022	38	38	43	40	43	42

Table 1 Median age of migrant workers, by migrant groups and year

The median age for all migrant groups is in the thirties for most of the period, rising to the early forties at the end of the period. Among the groups, A12 migrants consistently record the lowest median age in the early years. Median age of migrants recorded in ASHE increased steadily from 27 in 2007 to 38 in 2022. The rise in median age over time could be due to the original migrants aging or to an increase in the age of new arrivals as migration trends stabilised. The EU14 group has median age slightly higher and more stable, around 34–35 until the late 2010s and then to 40 by 2022. The ROW group follows a similar trend, remaining in the mid-thirties until the mid-2010s, then increasing gradually to 42 by 2022. This might reflect shifts in UK immigration policies, which now focus on skilled migrants with higher salaries, often favouring older, experienced workers. Additionally, fewer young migrants may be arriving (Table 2 of the MWS User Guide shows mean age at arrival is increasing over time), and those settled are growing older. In comparison, the APS consistently identifies a higher median age but the gap is relatively small.

Table 2 shows how migration patterns have changed over time by arrival year. Each row of the table represents one year of data in APS/ASHE and the columns then show the distribution of migrants in that year of data according to their recorded date of arrival in the UK.

Year	<2000	2000-2004	2005-2009	2010-2014	2015-2019	N	<2000	2000-2004	2005-2009	2010-2014	2015-2019	N
Panel A: A12												
2004	63%	37%				867	41%	59%				156
2005	39%	45%	16%			1,279	21%	76%	3%			316
2006	24%	36%	40%			1,521	7%	53%	39%			886
2007	15%	24%	61%			1,953	4%	32%	64%			1,514
2008	13%	23%	64%			2,282	3%	22%	75%			1,997
2009	12%	22%	66%			2,241	3%	21%	76%			2,770
2010	10%	21%	66%	3%		2,489	3%	19%	77%	1%		3,358
2011	9%	17%	64%	10%		2,808	2%	17%	71%	10%		4,092
2012	9%	16%	61%	14%		2,819	2%	15%	64%	19%		4,302
2013	9%	15%	54%	22%		3,040	2%	13%	58%	27%		4,817
2014	7%	14%	50%	28%		3,557	2%	11%	52%	35%		5,526
2015	7%	14%	45%	32%	2%	3,892	1%	10%	45%	41%	3%	6,181
2016	5%	12%	40%	33%	9%	4,156	1%	8%	40%	37%	13%	6,936
2017	5%	11%	38%	33%	14%	4,210	1%	8%	37%	34%	20%	7,261
2018	4%	10%	38%	29%	18%	4,042	1%	7%	34%	31%	26%	7,656
2019	4%	10%	38%	27%	21%	4,106	1%	7%	32%	30%	30%	7,534
2020	6%	12%	39%	26%	17%	2,217	1%	7%	32%	29%	30%	5,340
2021	7%	11%	39%	26%	18%	1,938	1%	8%	34%	29%	29%	5,219
2022	6%	10%	34%	28%	22%	1,918	1%	8%	33%	30%	29%	5,028
Panel B: EU-14												
2004	81%	19%				3,820	61%	39%				1,277
2005	78%	19%	2%			3,735	55%	43%	1%			1,341
2006	75%	18%	7%			2,882	46%	45%	9%			1,553
2007	72%	17%	11%			2,869	38%	40%	22%			1,516
2008	68%	15%	17%			2,794	36%	34%	30%			1,574
2009	68%	15%	17%			2,609	33%	31%	35%			2,067
2010	64%	16%	19%	1%		2,490	30%	28%	40%	1%		2,296
2011	63%	14%	17%	6%		2,495	27%	26%	38%	10%		2,597
2012	58%	15%	17%	10%		2,634	24%	22%	33%	21%		2,639
2013	56%	14%	14%	16%		2,714	21%	19%	28%	31%		3,068
2014	51%	13%	14%	22%		2,861	18%	16%	25%	41%		3,470
2015	50%	12%	13%	23%	2%	2,802	15%	14%	21%	46%	3%	3,864
2016	45%	11%	14%	21%	10%	2,707	14%	12%	18%	41%	15%	4,161
2017	45%	11%	12%	20%	12%	2,835	12%	12%	16%	36%	23%	4,586
2018	42%	11%	12%	19%	16%	2,797	11%	11%	15%	33%	29%	4,686
2019	38%	12%	12%	18%	19%	2,849	11%	10%	13%	30%	36%	4,826
2020	43%	12%	13%	17%	15%	2,111	11%	10%	14%	27%	38%	3,376
2021	43%	12%	13%	16%	16%	2,029	11%	11%	14%	27%	37%	3,208
2022	40%	13%	13%	18%	17%	1,899	11%	10%	14%	28%	36%	3,144
Panel C: ROW												
2004	76%	24%				9,371	55%	45%	0%			3,910
2005	71%	27%	2%			9,489	48%	52%	0%			4,448
2006	66%	28%	7%			7,979	41%	52%	8%			5,186
2007	61%	27%	12%			8,267	35%	46%	19%			4,920
2008	56%	27%	17%			8,737	31%	41%	28%			5,303
2009	53%	27%	20%			8,366	29%	38%	33%			6,863
2010	52%	25%	21%	1%		8,459	27%	35%	37%	1%		7,732
2011	50%	24%	21%	5%		8,712	25%	33%	37%	6%		8,759
2012	48%	23%	21%	7%		8,804	23%	32%	34%	11%		8,539
2013	46%	24%	21%	9%		8,828	23%	32%	32%	14%		8,685
2014	45%	24%	19%	12%		9,146	22%	31%	31%	17%		9,029
2015	42%	23%	20%	14%	1%	9,078	21%	30%	30%	19%	1%	8,901
2016	39%	23%	19%	15%	4%	8,586	20%	29%	28%	19%	4%	8,645
2017	37%	22%	18%	14%	8%	8,667	19%	29%	27%	18%	8%	8,938
2018	36%	21%	18%	14%	11%	8,587	18%	27%	26%	17%	11%	9,290
2019	32%	21%	18%	14%	14%	8,478	17%	27%	24%	17%	16%	9,626
2020	34%	20%	18%	13%	15%	5,831	16%	25%	23%	16%	19%	7,380
2021	33%	20%	18%	13%	16%	5,695	15%	26%	24%	16%	18%	7,248
2022	30%	19%	18%	14%	18%	5,266	15%	26%	24%	16%	19%	7,179

Table 2 Composition of migrants by year of arrival (18-64 age group) (row %s)

In the A12 group (shown in Panel A), the ASHE data shows noticeable changes in the composition of migrants over time. During 2004-2005, the majority of A12 migrants arrived between 2000 and 2004, accounting for 59% in 2004 and rising to around 76% in 2005. This pattern likely

resulted from the EU expansion in 2004. By 2007, most migrants in this group had arrived between 2005 and 2009, making up 64%. Over the years, more arrivals from 2010 to 2014 joined, illustrating the impact of EU expansion on migration and how the A12 group has developed through various waves of newcomers. APS data broadly reflects similar trends after some initial unusual results.

In the EU14 group (Panel B), a substantial proportion of migrants arrived before 2000, particularly around 61% by 2004. This reflects a long history of migration from these countries to the UK. As time progressed, new arrivals changed the composition of immigrants. But even in 2014, when 41% arrived in the preceding five years, almost one in five had been in the UK over 15 years.

For the ROW group, about 77% of the group had arrived before 1999. This proportion gradually decreased with new arrivals in later years. By 2022, the distribution was more even, with around 27% having arrived before 2000 and significant numbers coming in subsequent periods.

When data exists for both APS and ASHE-MWS on the same basis, similar trends occur. This gives some reassurance that the ASHE-MWS provides a viable dataset for analysis.

Wage progression

In this section, we focus on the linked ASHE-MWS data only because it provides reliable information on pay. Table 3 shows the average real hourly pay of migrant cohorts one, three, five, seven and ten years after their year of arrival. Time periods are independent; that is, an employee may be observed in years Y1, Y3 and Y10 but not years Y5 and Y7, for example.

Year of arrival	Y1	Y3	Y5	Y7	Y10	Y3-Y1	Y5-Y3	Y7-Y5	Y10-Y7	Y10-Y1
2001	£8.18	£13.40	£15.16	£16.87	£23.30	64%	13%	11%	38%	185%
2002	£10.32	£12.56	£14.94	£22.14	£23.73	22%	19%	48%	7%	130%
2003	£9.17	£12.04	£13.22	£17.02	£17.89	31%	10%	29%	5%	95%
2004	£9.16	£12.64	£15.67	£18.27	£23.01	38%	24%	17%	26%	151%
2005	£8.97	£13.61	£16.09	£16.12	£21.50	52%	18%	0%	33%	140%
2006	£9.74	£13.39	£14.21	£15.93	£16.12	38%	6%	12%	1%	66%
2007	£10.38	£14.12	£15.40	£16.39	£19.08	36%	9%	6%	16%	84%
2008	£11.64	£13.66	£14.73	£15.99	£20.10	17%	8%	9%	26%	73%
2009	£12.43	£14.89	£15.98	£17.85	£23.38	20%	7%	12%	31%	88%
2010	£11.37	£13.52	£15.59	£17.64	£22.24	19%	15%	13%	26%	96%
2011	£12.13	£15.24	£16.46	£19.93	£23.42	26%	8%	21%	18%	93%
2012	£12.87	£15.02	£17.87	£20.90	£26.22	17%	19%	17%	25%	104%
2013	£14.09	£17.54	£20.87	£23.92	£30.71	24%	19%	15%	28%	118%
2014	£13.60	£17.97	£20.19	£23.47		32%	12%	16%		
2015	£13.37	£17.66	£21.05	£25.15		32%	19%	19%		
2016	£15.61	£20.09	£20.37	£27.01		29%	1%	33%		
2017	£16.93	£21.31	£25.03			26%	17%			
2018	£18.68	£20.80	£27.62			11%	33%			
2019	£20.21	£26.07				29%				
2020	£21.43	£30.34				42%				
					Colour key: growth above		10%	25%	50%	

Table 3 Mean real hourly pay of migrant cohorts at time t+1, t+3, t+5 t+7, t+10. Source: linked ASHE-MWS

Generally, migrants earn more the longer they stay, reflecting that they are integrating in the labour market and seeing some career progression. Their wages increase significantly from year t+1 to year t+3, typically by 30-50%. This first three-year period plays an important role as they improve English, obtain related skills, and build networks. Wage growth continues at a slower rate in the following years. After 10 years of arrivals, a large proportion of migrants earn double as compared to their initial pay, marking significant economic progress. For instance, 2004 arrivals experienced a real hourly wage rise from £9.16 at year t+1 to £23.01 in year t+10, an increase of 151%. Different groups of migrants start with varying wage levels. Those arriving in the early 2000s had lower initial wages than recent arrivals: the 2001 group had an average wage of £8.18 at year t+1 compared to £12.13 for those arriving ten years later.

Wage growth was not the same for all migrants. For example, those arriving in 2013 saw slightly lower growth than many others in the first three years, perhaps because of a higher starting wage; but higher growth in later years meant that after 10 years they had had seen some of the biggest

earnings growth over a 10-year period. This may be due to different economic conditions, skills, job sectors, or migration rules: these results do not differentiate between skill levels, or migration paths, all of which can affect wage growth in different ways.

An obvious question is: how does this differ from native workers? Table 4 compares the wage growth of migrant and non-migrant workers over time. It shows the percentage change in wages at different time points (Y3, Y5, Y7, and Y10) relative to the base year (year of arrival). The "Diff" column shows the difference in wage growth between migrants and non-migrants. A negative value indicates that migrants experienced more wage growth than non-migrants (green shaded boxes), while a positive value (blue shaded boxes) indicates the better wage growth for non-migrants. We should note that this is a purely descriptive comparison: we do not control for other characteristics which might affect wages or wage growth.

	Y3-Y1			Y5 -Y1			Y7-Y1			Y10-Y1		
Year of arrival	Migrants	Non-migrants	Diff	Migrants	Non-migrants	Diff	Migrants	Non-migrants	Diff	Migrants	Non-migrants	Diff
2001	64%	21%	-42%	85%	46%	-39%	106%	76%	-30%	185%	103%	-81%
2002	22%	18%	-4%	45%	48%	3%	115%	82%	-33%	130%	104%	-26%
2003	31%	26%	-6%	44%	54%	10%	86%	79%	-7%	95%	99%	4%
2004	38%	34%	-4%	71%	66%	-5%	99%	82%	-17%	151%	112%	-39%
2005	52%	29%	-23%	79%	53%	-27%	80%	64%	-15%	140%	85%	-54%
2006	38%	28%	-9%	46%	42%	-4%	64%	57%	-7%	66%	80%	14%
2007	36%	24%	-12%	48%	37%	-11%	58%	51%	-7%	84%	70%	-14%
2008	17%	15%	-2%	27%	28%	2%	37%	41%	3%	73%	74%	1%
2009	20%	16%	-3%	29%	33%	4%	44%	44%	1%	88%	77%	-11%
2010	19%	16%	-3%	37%	29%	-8%	55%	49%	-6%	96%	89%	-7%
2011	26%	17%	-8%	36%	30%	-6%	64%	52%	-13%	93%	81%	-12%
2012	17%	17%	0%	39%	40%	1%	62%	66%	4%	104%	112%	9%
2013	24%	19%	-6%	48%	42%	-6%	70%	74%	4%	118%	132%	14%
2014	32%	24%	-8%	48%	53%	4%	73%	81%	8%			
2015	32%	27%	-5%	57%	58%	1%	88%	91%	3%			
2016	29%	26%	-2%	30%	50%	19%	73%	97%	24%			
2017	26%	27%	1%	48%	56%	8%						
2018	11%	21%	9%	48%	64%	16%						
2019	29%	27%	-2%									
2020	42%	42%	1%									

Key

- Migrant wage growth>15% more
- Migrant wage growth 0-15% more
- Non-migrant wage growth 0-15% more
- Non-migrant wage growth>15% more

Table 4 Wage growth between migrant workers and non-migrant workers

The table reveals a distinct difference between those who arrived earlier and those who came recently. Early migrants, arriving between 2001 and 2005, initially experienced higher wage growth than non-migrants, particularly in their first 3-5 years. For instance, migrants who came in 2001 had a wage increase of approximately 64% by their third year, compared to a 21% rise for non-migrants. However, this pattern does not hold for later migrants; although they see higher

growth in their first years in the country, in later years growth is much slower. For example, the average migrant joining the labour market in 2016 experienced wage growth 2% higher than the average non-migrant in the first three years, but by year five after arrival their cumulative wage growth is 19% less than non-migrants. This suggests that newer migrants face more difficulties in matching the wage growth of locals, possibly due to shifts in the job market, policy changes, or different barriers.

These results are likely to be affected by survivor bias. Those who are performing well in the labour market are more likely to stay. Those who fail to achieve sufficient wage growth may become disheartened and look for work in other countries, or return to their country of origin. While the MAC report argued that this was not a significant factor, it is difficult to assess as no data sources currently available have information on why migrants stay or not. This is exacerbated by the ASHE sampling strategy. Only sampling once a year means that seasonal workers are likely to be missed. In addition, the lowest paid workers are likely to be in insecure employment (and so missed by the ASHE survey), or be working for firms which fail to respond to the survey. The ASHE sampling issue can be addressed by exploring the MWS linked to HMRC employment records, which we will do in a future publication.

Why it matters

These findings present a different perspective to the MAC report, which found that migrants do not perform as well in the labour market as non-migrants. However, this can be reconciled by noting that the MAC study found that migrants arriving in the UK faced a substantial initial downgrading of their jobs (that is, migrant workers found themselves in much lower grade roles than their qualifications should suggest). In other words the *higher wage growth* we see here should be seen in the context of *lower initial wages* compared to similarly-qualified individuals. This emphasises the importance of understanding both level and change in the labour market.

What next?

Building on the descriptive patterns, the next step could be to estimate wage growth models that control for occupation, industry, working hours, and other characteristics, in order to identify the key drivers of progression differences between migrants and non-migrants. Future analysis could also separately examine the long-settled migrants and recent migrants by tracing their employment histories observed in ASHE, and patterns of job mobility over time.

NOTE

[1] Brian Bell and Philip Jonhson (2019) Immigrant Downgrading: New Evidence from UK Panel Data. Available from https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigrant-downgrading-new-evidence-from-uk-panel-data

Disclaimer

This work was produced using administrative data accessed through the ONS Secure Research Service. The use of the data in this work does not imply the endorsement of the ONS or data owners in relation to the interpretation or analysis.

This work uses research datasets which may not exactly reproduce National Statistics aggregates. National Statistics follow consistent statistical conventions over time.

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