The UK: A warm and friendly welcome?

YHRMP ID
378
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Aims

The aim of the research was to gather data on the experiences of recently arrived Polish workers in the north of England, in the context of a perceived change to a less open approach to migration. The work was conducted by Northumbria University and the Polish Academy of Sciences.

Methodology

- The research was conducted in 2012/2013.
- Data was obtained via an online questionnaire of Polish workers in the north of England, including Leeds and Hull.
- There were 125 responses.
- The questionnaire was followed by 46 semi-structured interviews.

Key issues

The researchers describe the context for the research as being a less open approach to migration and an increase in xenophobia. Respondents were asked to state their economic situation and 62% selected ‘good’ or ‘correct’. However almost one-third reported experiencing work-based exploitation. Some respondents felt that employers expected them to confirm to the stereotype of a ‘hard working Pole’ and that more was expected of them than of their British born peers. Less than half the respondents felt integrated into British society, and even fewer reported feeling integrated into the resident Polish community. Some respondents shared experiences of having been made to feel welcome in Britain but most had experienced xenophobia at some point.

Conclusion

The report concludes that since the financial crisis in the late 2000s, government policy and the general attitude towards migrant workers has changed from broadly supportive to one where the place of migrants is questioned and xenophobic attitudes are seen as more acceptable. The authors provide information about initiatives across the north of England that can provide support with hate crime.

Migrant Group
EU migrants
Topic
Community and society

Integration
Migrant workers
Racism
Place
Hull
Humber
Leeds
West Yorkshire
Year
2016
Resource Type
Electronic source
Resource

Further related resources are available on request from Migration Yorkshire

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Source URL: *https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/research-entry/uk-warm-and-friendly-welcome*