Welfare innovations
at the local level
in favour of cohesion

CITY REPORT: BIRMINGHAM

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This report is part of Work Package 3 of the research project entitled "Welfare innovations at the local level in favour of cohesion" (WILCO). WILCO aims to examine, through cross-national comparative research, how local welfare systems affect social inequalities and how they favour social cohesion, with a special focus on the missing link between innovations at the local level and their successful transfer to and implementation in other settings. The WILCO consortium covers ten European countries and is funded by the European Commission (FP7, Socio-economic Sciences & Humanities).

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Cover photo: The image on the cover page shows Longbridge, Birmingham in 2006 and the beginnings of regeneration efforts at the former Longbridge car manufacturing plant (the bridge linked different parts of the site). The site was opened in 1905 and by the 1960s was the largest car plant in the world, employing 250,000 workers. The core product at the industrial complex had always been cars, most notably the two-door Mini. The site has had a variety of private owners and even a period of state ownership. The collapse of MG Rover in 2005 led to the loss of thousands of jobs at Longbridge and had a major impact on the local labour market and the associated supply chain. More than half the factory site has been sold off and cleared, and the land reclaimed for commercial and residential use with the aim of creating up to 10,000 jobs in the next few years.

Birmingham is located within the West Midlands region of England and is the regional centre for business, retail and leisure. Birmingham is the largest city in the UK outside London and has a population of just over one million inhabitants. Much of Birmingham suffers from high levels of deprivation. Over half the city (54.8 per cent) is within the most deprived 20 per cent of England and nearly 40 per cent is in the most deprived 10 per cent according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (DCLG 2010). Birmingham has had a wide range of regeneration and renewal programmes and initiatives over the years targeting both the city centre and neighbourhood areas.

Local government for the city is the metropolitan authority of Birmingham City Council (BCC), the largest local authority in the UK made up of 40 wards (administrative/electoral districts within council boundaries). As with all local authorities in the UK the majority of BCC's income comes from central government. In the light of the national Spending Review by the current Coalition Government in 2010 and the accelerated reduction in the structural deficit, the current financial challenge facing BCC is to save approximately £300 million (€348 million) over the next four years. BCC spends around £3,550 million (€4,113 million) each year, about half of this is "ring-fenced" by central government or has statutory constraints (such as protecting the welfare of children) which means that the burden of savings will fall more heavily on certain areas of council services and by 2014/15 the local authority expects to have a much reduced workforce (BCC 2010a). Budget cuts introduced by national government departments and the local authority will have implications for services across all sectors in Birmingham.

1. TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE LABOUR MARKET

1.1. Socio-economic trends

Growth and sector specialisation over the last ten years

Birmingham is one of the UK's most economically important cities with a history of radical social and political reform. It was a small Midlands town until the industrial revolution when it became the "workshop of the world, a manufacturing centre connected to natural resources and the rest of the country by a network of canals and railways" (Aldred 2009). Large-scale, local de-industrialisation after 1978 led to the start of the loss of the city's manufacturing jobs. In the late 1970s manufacturing employed around 250,000 people in the city, almost 50 per cent of Birmingham's total workplace employment. By 2008 the number of people working in the manufacturing industry represented just 10 per cent of the total workforce (ONS 2011a).

Birmingham has moved from an economy based on manufacturing to one based on services. In order to address the decline in employment in traditional sectors a regeneration strategy was put in place led by BCC to redevelop the declining city centre (which still continues today). This aimed to encourage knowledge intensive professional services and also sectors involved in the visitor economy such as tourism, conferencing, hospitality, leisure and retailing. In 1971 45 per cent of employment was in the service industry but by 2008 this had changed to 86 per cent (BCC 2010b). Until 2005 Birmingham experienced strong employment growth, as did the region and the UK following the end of the previous recession in the early 1990s. The growth in the service and particularly the public sector drove employment growth and from the end of the 1990s Birmingham was the largest financial and business services centre outside London (BCC 2010b).

In the years leading up to the latest recession Birmingham's economy was falling behind progress in the UK and regionally. The city experienced further job losses at the MG Rover car manufacturing plant with the associated impact on the supply chain. The dependence of Birmingham and the West Midlands on the industries of car making and engineering was a significant drawback when sterling was over-valued between 1997 and 2008 alongside competition from newly industrialising countries such as China. Growth in the service sector alone was not enough to provide Birmingham with overall economic and employment growth in this situation (BCC 2010b).

Table 1 - Gross Value Added (GVA)* per inhabitant (£)

	England	Birmingham
2000	14,686	14,852
2001	15,411	15,695
2002	16,223	16,348
2003	17,160	17,096
2004	18,021	17,503
2005	18,589	17,843
2006	19,496	18,489
2007	20,458	19,358

Source: ONS.

*GVA is now used in the UK rather than Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and equals the value of output less the value of intermediate consumption; it is a measure of the contribution to GDP made by an individual producer, industry or sector.

Impact of trends on employment, temporary employment and unemployment

The impact of the shift in sector specialisation over the last ten years has resulted in changes to the principle industries and employers in the city. In 2009 according to the Business Register and Employment Survey the main areas of work were the public sector at around one third of all employment, banking, finance and insurance 22 per cent, and distribution, hotels and restaurants (which includes retail) 19.5 per cent (BCC 2011a). Manufacturing still had a role to play in the area in 2008 employing 10 per cent of the workforce (ONS 2011a). The major employers in Birmingham were the local authority, National Health Service, government administration, car manufacturers, the exhibition and conference centres, supermarkets and the retail chains.

Table 2 - Birmingham employment by sector 2000 to 2008 (per cent)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Public administration, education & health	25.7	25.9	25.9	29.8	29.4	30.8	30.9	31.2	32.2
Banking, finance & insurance	21.4	22.1	22.3	20.4	22.2	21.3	21.7	22.6	23
Distribution, hotels & restaurants	19.8	18.9	19.5	19.6	22.1	21	22.3	22	21.7
Manufacturing	17.6	17.1	16.8	14.9	13.2	12.5	11.6	10.6	10
Transport & communications	6.4	6.2	6	6	4.9	5.1	4.9	4.7	4.8
Tourism-related	5.7	6.4	6.5	6	6.3	7	8.6	8.3	7.8
Other employment	5.1	7	5.5	5.1	4.3	5	4.9	4.7	4.3
Construction	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.8	3.4	3.8	3.6	3.7	3.4

Source: Nomis.

The decline in Birmingham's manufacturing base led to high levels of worklessness and unemployment with great economic and social costs for the city. Worklessness is defined as "all those of working age who are not employed" and unemployment as "the claimant count of all those claiming Job Seeker's Allowance" (JSA). Worklessness rates in Birmingham are higher than the regional and national average; in 2009 the employment rate was 62 per cent of the working age population, compared to 71 per cent for the West Midlands and 74 per cent for England. These overall figures masked areas of significantly higher unemployment and worklessness, in Aston and Sparkbrook wards the unemployment rate has not been below 20 per cent throughout the last ten years and worklessness rates have remained over 30 per cent (BCC 2009).

After a long period of relative stability where worklessness in Birmingham only increased slightly, the recent recession led to a marked increase and between 2008 and 2009 the number of workless residents in the city increased by 12 per cent. Birmingham also had a high proportion of residents who were workless in 2011 compared to the region and nationally, 18.5 per cent, 13.6 per cent and 11.8 per cent respectively (BCC 2011b). In 2010 Birmingham experienced its highest levels of unemployment for over a decade at 12.8 per cent, compared to 5.9 per cent nationally.

In 2011 the proportion of the working age population claiming welfare benefits was also well above average at 12.6 per cent compared to 6.9 per cent for the region and 5.6 per cent for England. The claimant rate for males (15.6 per cent) was much higher than for females (8.9 per cent) (BCC 2011c). In 2010 amongst those who were claiming benefits Birmingham had a high proportion claiming JSA (the main unemployment benefit); over a quarter of all benefit claimants compared to 19 per cent across the region (ONS 2011a). The numbers in receipt of lone parent benefits was also high. The total welfare bill for the city in 2009 was £7,073 million (€8,105 million) which was per capita £3,041 (€3,484) and 17 per cent of 2008 Gross Value Added (Centre For Cities 2011).

Table 3 - Birmingham unemployment 2004 to 2010 (per cent)

	Unemployment	**Long-term unemployment >12 months**
2004	8.5	4.6
2005	8.6	5.2
2006	9.6	5.5
2007	9.2	5
2008	10.9	5.7
2009	13.4	7.6
2010	12.8	6.8

Source: Nomis.

Many local residents lacked the skills to access the new jobs created in the service sector and these have been increasingly filled by commuters in from neighbouring areas. The highest levels of worklessness were mainly concentrated in the same areas of the inner city and outer estates that also contain a high proportion of residents with low skill levels. 19.4 per cent of working age Birmingham residents had no qualifications (ONS 2011a). One of the challenges for the city will be "maintaining growth in an increasingly knowledge-based economy without leaving behind a significant proportion of local residents" (WMRO 2008).

Grey labour market

There is no information readily available about the grey labour market within the city. Research suggests that the UK has a smaller hidden economy than most other countries and as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product for 2001/2002 the size of the hidden economy was estimated at 12.5 per cent (Schneider 2002).

Impact of the recent financial crisis

Birmingham has been affected more than other cities by the recession, with welfare benefit claimant count rates rising faster and to higher levels than in other cities. A structural weakness in skills and a relatively high dependence on manufacturing are thought to have contributed to this poor performance. The recession hit the manufacturing industry particularly badly with significant consequences for the Birmingham economy and a number of local firms made significant cutbacks (car manufacturers Jaguar Land Rover and MG Motor UK Ltd, van maker LDV, engineering group GKN and airline bmibaby). BCC and partners responded to the recession and newly unemployed residents in the following ways: information and advice leaflets for residents; expansion of Jobcentre Plus Rapid Response Service for those at risk or who had recently experienced redundancy; additional support for large companies making workers redundant; additional financial help for those who start work from deprived neighbourhoods; and Birmingham was selected as one of the areas where the third sector would receive support from central government to cope with increased demand (Morris 2009).

Alongside job losses there have been new jobs created, however, there have been concerns expressed by local policy makers about the "quality" of these new jobs with full-time jobs replaced by temporary and part-time employment opportunities. In the West Midlands region during 2010 there were 47 per cent of people working in temporary jobs who did this because they could not find a permanent one and 17.6 per cent of people working in part-time jobs who did this because they could not find a full-time one (rather than out of choice) (ONS 2011b). A slow recovery from the latest recession will pose problems for Birmingham in increasing the numbers of jobs available and reducing its high rate of unemployment. Future reductions in public spending and public sector jobs will affect Birmingham as it is more dependent on public services employment than the UK average (Local Futures Group 2010). Current forecasts suggest it could be over a decade until Birmingham returns to the employment levels seen before the recession (Aldred 2009).

The Local Strategic Partnership, Be Birmingham, indicated that theincrease in unemployment during the recession has not been evenly experienced across the city, for example in 2011 women were disproportionately affected (a reversal from 2010). The biggest increases in unemployment have occurred in all ethnic groups other then Chinese, Indian and White groups, with Black and Black British groups particularly affected.

Income distribution and wage level

Median earnings of Birmingham employees in 2010 were above the regional average at £500.20 (€596.25) per week but slightly below the national average. This equates to an average annual figure of £25,878 (€30,851) about £2,000 (€2,384) above the regional average of £23,838 (€28,418). However, Birmingham residents were paid less well, slightly below the regional average. The median gross weekly pay for full time working residents was £465.80 (€555.30), compared to the regional average of £469.20 (€559.40). The gap between workplace and residents is because of the large number of commuters into the city who tend to be in higher paid jobs than residents. Pay rates have grown faster than both regional and national averages, between 2004 and 2007 they went up by 13 per cent compared to 10 per cent growth across the region and 9 per cent nationally (WMRO 2008). The average gross hourly earnings for Birmingham in 2010 were £10.46 (€11.93) compared to £11.24 (€12.82) for England and Wales (ONS 2010).

As is the case nationally there is a gap between the pay of full-time employed men and women, with men earning significantly more (although this gap narrows for part-time employment). In 2010 Birmingham resident based male full time workers gross weekly earnings were £494.80 (€589.92) compared to £417.80 (€498.13) for full time female workers (ONS 2010).

Young precarious workers

Birmingham has the highest youth unemployment rate nationally. Between 2009 and 2010 there was a significant increase in youth unemployment (those between the ages of 18 and 24). A seasonally adjusted youth unemployment rate for this period was 25.7 per cent (BCC 2011d). In 2011 this figure was 24.7 per cent and had increased most in the inner city and some of the more deprived outer city areas (BCC 2011d). Youth unemployment has been a key driver of increases in total unemployment, with youth unemployment accounting for over a third of the overall increase. In 2011 the proportion of 18 to 24 year olds claiming Job Seekers Allowance was 9.8 per cent compared to 9 per cent for the West Midlands and 6.9 per cent for England. The majority of these young people had been claiming JSA for 6 months or less (7.2 per cent), 2 per cent had been claiming for over 6 months and 0.7 per cent for over 12 months (ONS 2011a).

In 2009 estimates for Birmingham were that 7.7 per cent of 16 to 18 year olds were not in employment, education or training (NEETs) compared to 6.6 per cent for the West Midlands (DfE 2009). It should be noted that Birmingham has made considerable improvements in reducing the number of NEETs in recent years.

Main problems facing young precarious workers

The problems faced by young precarious workers in Birmingham are similar to that faced by those who live elsewhere. They are more vulnerable to the "low pay, no pay" cycle (Goulden 2010) due to being located in often temporary and insecure areas of the labour market and are most likely to be still living in the family home as the housing market is beyond the reach of young people (even those in work).In a study of deprivation in some areas of Birmingham (Fenton *et al*. 2009) young adults were directed to low status, low paid or insecure employment because they had not completed education or left school with few qualifications and entry into the labour market was informal (jobs secured through family and friends). Young women tended towards poorly paid service sector jobs and young men towards skilled and semi-skilled manual occupations vulnerable to cyclical downturns.

1.2. Public regulation

Responsibilities for labour market regulation and provision of services

During the New Labour administration the employment agenda was governed by four government departments: Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) through its delivery arm Job Centre Plus (JCP), the Department for Innovation, University and Skills (DIUS) through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) through local authorities and the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) responsible for improving the economic performance of the regions. Each of these departments was represented at regional, sub-regional or local level by delivery bodies brought together under local partnership arrangements. The New Labour government response to the higher than average unemployment rates in certain areas of Birmingham was to introduce a number of regeneration programmes, centrally driven, locally targeted and time-limited alongside mainstream welfare to work and active labour policies.

JCP was and still is the key delivery agency for the DWP and is the main body responsible for supporting people of working age from welfare to work and helping employers fill their vacancies. At local job centres, advisors assist people to find work and central offices administer welfare benefits. The majority of people that JCP engages directly with receive JSA, the "unemployment benefit" (see Table 4 for weekly rates). For those who remained on JSA in the longer term, a range of New Deal programmes were in operation to give extra support. Receipt of benefits was dependent on participation in these programmes after a specified period of unemployment. Currently, these programmes are being phased out as part of the Coalition government's national welfare reforms.

Table 4 - Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) rate per week 2006 to 2010 (£)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
JSA - under 18 years old	34.60	35.65	47.95	50.95	51.85
JSA - 18 to 24 years old	45.50	46.85	47.95	50.95	51.85
JSA - over 25 years old	57.45	59.15	60.50	64.30	65.45

Source: DWP.

Birmingham and Solihull is one of five JCP districts within the West Midlands region and in 2008/2009 had a programme budget of just under £38 million (€44 million). This included £7.4 million (€8.5 million) for New Deal programmes for 18 to 24 year olds, 25 years plus, 50 years plus and lone parents (BCC 2009a). It is the largest inner city JCP district in the country and there were 14 JCP offices and one Jobshop. Reports suggest that JCP will have its national budget cut by around 25 per cent by 2014 through savings required by the DWP and that 17 benefit processing centres and five local offices will be closed (one located in Birmingham).

The LSC was responsible for planning and funding further education (post-16 education and training but not higher education) in England. The West Midlands LSC had five sub-regions, one of which was Birmingham and Solihull LSC (with an approximate budget of £250 million or €287 million) (BCC 2009a). In 2010 the LSC was replaced by the Young People's Learning Agency (16 to 19 year olds) sponsored by the Department for Education and the Skills Funding Agency (adults) a partner organisation of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. The city council still has a strategic role but providers are funded directly by the national organisations.

From June 2011 the DWP launched the Work Programme to provide back to work support based on the payment by results principle and involves providers across the public, private and third sectors. The organisations commissioned by the government to deliver the programme for the West Midlands (Birmingham, Solihull and the Black Country) are Fourstar Employment and Skills Ltd (private sector), Pertemps (private sector) and Newcastle College Group (public sector). Providers will be paid on the basis of numbers supported back to work with the idea being that this will be off-set against the benefit payments saved. There are three types of payment: an attachment fee when a customer starts on the programme; a job outcome fee designed to reward providers for getting as many customers as possible into work; and a sustainment fee which will be paid to the provider whilst they keep a customer in work. This will replace a range of work programmes available to the unemployed.

There are a number of local employment initiatives for example the local authority has an Employment Access Team which aims to match residents with vacancies. Employment Connections is a worklessness initiative focused on areas where the unemployment rate is over 25 per cent. It is administered by Be Birmingham (the local strategic partnership) and managed by the local authority and brings together private, public and third sector employment support organisations. The Jericho Foundation is a registered charity which provides a combination of advice, guidance, training and supported work experience tailored to specific needs.

Welfare programmes for the young unemployed

The New Deal for Young People (NDYP) was introduced in Great Britain in January 1998 as one of the key parts of the New Labour government's welfare to work strategy. The aims of the programme were to help young unemployed people into work and increase their employability. NDYP was for 18 to 24 year-olds who had been claiming JSA for six months or more. It provided opportunities to work get new skills and/or get work experience in the voluntary and environmental sectors of the economy. NDYP was a mandatory programme and participation was compulsory to continue to claim JSA. NDYP will cease in the summer of 2011 until the implementation of the Work Programme.

In 2009 the government announced the Young Person's Guarantee which guaranteed all 18 to 24 year olds reaching six months unemployment an offer of a job, training or work experience. They were required to accept one offer by the ten month point of their welfare benefit claim. This could be: a new job created by the Future Jobs Fund (FJF); a job in a key employment sector with pre-employment training if needed; work focused training; a place on a Community Task Force or access help with self-employment. This became mandatory in April 2010 and elements of this will continue to be delivered until transition to the Work Programme.

The FJF started in October 2009 and targeted 18 to 24 year olds who had been out of work for at least six months (some targeted the over 25s in areas of high unemployment or inactivity). Birmingham was involved in the FJF but this came to an end in June 2010 (existing arrangements were to continue until March 2011). Another initiative, the Community Task Force (CTF) provided work experience placements of benefit to the community alongside job search support.

Routes into Work (another element of the Young Person's Guarantee) provided unemployed young people with access to existing jobs in key employment sectors such as retail, hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism, adult social care and facilities management. Pre-employment training was delivered and funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS, formerly DIUS). Work focused training was led and funded by BIS and lasted for up to 24 weeks full-time and offered unemployed young people training towards a level two or level three qualification (high school level education) required in a specific sector.

Under arrangements through the Coalition government‘s welfare reforms from the first day that a young person claims benefit they will receive job search support from JCP, and for those who have never had a job JCP will work with employers to identify suitable work experience opportunities. Those with a skills gap can access fully-funded, employment-focused training. Others ready to go straight into a job can access help to find an apprenticeship and to apply for the latest vacancies. To assist with minimising the risk of lasting damage from long-term unemployment, all those aged 18 to 24 who have not succeeded in finding a job after nine months will go into the Work Programme, with earlier entry for the most disadvantaged.

There are other services in Birmingham which provide support for the young unemployed but this is usually as part of other interventions (for example, Local Leagues is a not-for-profit organisation which provides sport-based activities for young people in deprived communities as a basis for developing social and personal skills). Connexions is a national advice and support service for 13 to 19 year olds which includes jobs, volunteering and personal development support. In 2008 responsibility for Connexions was passed to local authorities and Birmingham Connexions is a service run by the city council as part of the Children, Young People and Families Directorate. A reduction in the area-based grant from central government has meant that a number of local Connexions offices were closed in 2010. Another example is BXL a not for profit registered charity which provides education and employer engagement, work experience, services for NEETs and social interventions.

2. DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

2.1. Socio-economic trends

Changes to the demographic structure over the last ten years

Between 1982 and 2001 the overall population of Birmingham was falling, continuing a trend of reduction since the 1960s. Since 2001 the population has increased at an average rate of 0.5 per cent each year. This compares with a decrease of 0.2 per cent each year during the 1990s and 0.4 per cent each year during the 1980s. In all years, natural change has added to the population, in that there were more births than deaths. In 2010 there were 2,700 more births than occurred in 2001 alongside a year on year decrease in the number of deaths (ONS 2011c). Since 2005 Birmingham's population has been just over one million and in mid-2010 was estimated at 1,036,900 (ONS 2011a).

There has been a longstanding trend of net out-migration from Birmingham to other parts of the UK and in all years more migrants left Birmingham than arrived. In 2010 there was a net outflow of about 6,600 residents to other parts of the UK (38,300 in and 44,900 out). This was a further decrease in residents of 1,600 from the previous year and the lowest since 2001 (BCC 2011e). Traditionally most of the migration from Birmingham is to other parts of the West Midlands region. In recent years, migration losses have generally been much smaller due to migrants from overseas.

The city has a young age profile in contrast to the regional and national picture with fewer people in the older age groups than in the younger. In 2010 22 per cent of Birmingham's residents were children, markedly higher than the regional (19.3 per cent) and the national (18.7 per cent) averages. 15.3 per cent of Birmingham residents were state pension age compared to the national average of 19.5 per cent. The fact Birmingham has more children than pensioners is in contrast to the regional and national picture where the number of those aged 65 and over has grown. The number of residents aged 65 and over in Birmingham has consistently decreased from 1991 to 2008 but has subsequently shown small increases (ONS 2011d).

There were generally more males than females up to the age of 44, except in the early twenties and early thirties groups. After this there are consistently more females than males particularly in the older age groups reflecting national trends in greater female longevity. The large numbers in the early twenties group which has seen a 31.7 per cent increase since 2001 are partly due to the student population attending the city's universities and migration (BCC 2011f).

Trends in marriage and childbirth

In the UK in 2010 there were 12.2 million married couples and 2.8 million cohabiting couples (compared to 2.1 million in 2001) (ONS 2011b). The number of marriages that took place in 2009 was the lowest in England and Wales since 1895 and 33 per cent were a re-marriage for one or both parties. The number of divorces in England and Wales fell by 6.4 per cent in 2009 to 113,949 compared with 121,708 in 2008. This is the sixth consecutive year that the number of divorces has fallen from a peak of 153,065 in 2003. The number of divorces was highest amongst men and women aged 40 to 44 (ONS 2011b).

Data available for Birmingham estimated that 40.4 per cent of the adult population were married, 8.5 per cent were widowed, 7.3 per cent were divorced, 4.7 per cent were re-married and 2.9 per cent were separated (ONS 2001).

In 2010 nearly half of all babies were born outside marriage or civil partnership (for same sex couples) (46.8 per cent) compared with 46.2 per cent in 2009 and 39.5 per cent in 2000 which is consistent with more couples cohabiting (ONS 2011b). There were 723,165 live births in England and Wales in 2010, compared with 706,248 in 2009 (a rise of 2.4 per cent). In 2010 the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) increased to 2.00 children per woman from 1.96 in 2009.

There was a decline in the number of births in Birmingham during the 1990s but numbers have increased year on year since 2001 at an average rate of 2.4 per cent. There were 17,240 live births in Birmingham in 2010, a decrease of only 0.5 per cent over the previous year but 19.5 per cent higher than in 2001. The number of births is in part due to the size of the female population, the number of women of childbearing age has increased each year since 2001. Between 2001 and 2010 the number of women aged 15 to 44 years old increased by 10.4 per cent, more than double the rate of increase for the general population of Birmingham. Women in their early 30s had higher fetility rates than those in their late 20s for the third consecutive year (BCC 2011g). The number of births to teenage mothers fell between 2001 and 2009 by 16.4 per cent during this period and women aged 40 to 44 have seen the highest percentage increase (ONS 2011c).

The increase in the number of women of childbearing age could be partly explained by international migration. Between 2001 and 2010 35.7 per cent of Birmingham births were to mothers born overseas. Births to mothers born overseas have increased by 48.6 per cent since 2001. Asian born mothers accounted for one quarter of births in Birmingham, Pakistan born mothers had by far the highest number of births over this period, over three times more than Bangladeshi mothers (ranked second) and over six times more than Somalia born mothers (ranked third). The greatest numerical and percentage increase was among African-born mothers. Since 2004 there has been rapid percentage growth in births to EU-born mothers particularly from Poland (BCC 2011g).

Table 5 - Birmingham Total Fertility Rate and per cent live births to non-UK born mothers 2001 to 2009

	Total Fertility Rate	Live births to non-UK born mothers (%)
2001	1.96	30.5
2002	1.96	32.7
2003	2.03	33.6
2004	2.07	34.2
2005	2.06	35.9
2006	2.08	36.4
2007	2.16	37.2
2008	2.17	38.4
2009	2.14	38.7

Source: ONS.

The Crude Birth Rate for Birmingham in 2010 was 16.6 births per thousand head of population (higher than that for England and Wales). Using Age Specific Fertility Rates in 2009 fertility rates were higher for women in their early 30s than those in their late twenties and fertility rates for mothers aged 35 and over continued to rise. The Total Fertility Rate for Birmingham was an average of 2.11 children per woman in 2010 this was lower than for the previous three years but higher than the 1.96 children per woman in 2001. In 2010 the national rate was 2.00 and the regional rate 2.07 (BCC 2011g).

Changes to family structures

There were 26 million households in the UK in 2010 (ONS 2011b), of these 29 per cent consisted of only one person and almost 20 per cent consisted of four or more people. In 2008 there were 406,000 households in Birmingham and this is projected to increase by 80,000 by 2028 (DCLG 2010). The growth in household numbers is projected to rise higher than the number of households, reflecting the more youthful population and higher fertility rates than regionally or nationally. The average household size (DCLG 2010) was 2.47 for Birmingham, 2.31 for the West Midlands and 1.98 for England. Birmingham's average household size is above regional and national averages partly because of its relatively large and growing child population.

In 2008 there were 48,072 lone parent households with dependent children (12 per cent of households) and 76,589 couple households with dependent children (19 per cent). There were 96,595 couple households without dependent children (24 per cent) and 152,620 single person households without dependent children (38 per cent). Projections suggest that the numbers of lone parents will grow by 28,000 or 59 per cent and the number of single person households by 59,000 or 39 per cent (DCLG 2010). The Department for Communities and Local Government projections indicate that by 2028 Birmingham will have nearly 44 per cent of households containing only one person, compared with 39 to 40 per cent for the region and the country as a whole.

Working and caring

Women in Birmingham are more likely than their national or regional counterparts to have a flexible working arrangement in place but for men this is less likely to be the case. The Labour Force Survey (ONS 2003) indicated that almost 12,000 people in Birmingham have "school term-time" only contracts, 10,332 of them women (3 per cent of women employed full-time). Nearly 7,000 women with these contracts were also in part-time jobs (10 per cent of women employed part-time). This compared to less than one per cent of full-time employed men.

Women in Birmingham (as nationally) are more likely to provide unpaid care than men. There was considerable variation in the provision of unpaid care by people of different ethnicities. Pakistani women far outnumbered other Birmingham women (followed by Bangladeshi women) in providing unpaid care, 6 per cent for more than 50 hours per week. A higher proportion of Indian (13 per cent) and Bangladeshi and Pakistani (12 per cent) men provided unpaid care including four to five per cent who did this for more than 20 hours per week (Bucknor *et al*. 2005).

Lone parents

The number of lone parent families with dependent children in the UK increased by 12 per cent between 2001 and 2010 (ONS 2011b). Lone mothers headed 9 out of 10 lone parent families and this has not changed since 2001. In 2010 63 per cent of dependent children lived in a married couple family a decrease from 68 per cent in 2001. Over the same period the percentage of children living in cohabiting couple families increased by three percentage points to 13 per cent and those living in lone parent families increased by two percentage points to 24 per cent.

Data suggests that in Birmingham 12 per cent of households were occupied by lone parents with dependent children. Rapid growth is expected in numbers of lone parents across England (51.1 per cent) and the West Midlands (49.8 per cent) but Birmingham's growth rate is expected to be greatest at 58.6 per cent. Worklessness amongst lone parents differed by ward and ranged from 28 per cent to 70 per cent. Overall, of those women working the proportion in part time and full time employment was roughly equal (Equal Agender 2006). Birmingham is projected to have an above average percentage of lone parents but relatively fewer couples without dependent children. It is estimated that the proportions of lone parents and couples with dependent children will be equal (BCC 2010c).

Consultations conducted as part of the most recent Childcare Sufficiency Assessment which local authorities are required by statute to undertake (BCC 2011h) suggested that lone parents in Birmingham were more likely than other parents to experience barriers to take-up of childcare and more likely to find that childcare they do use does not meet their needs. More lone parents reported that childcare issues had prevented them from seeking or accessing work or getting a job and prevented them from starting to train or study.

Lone parent families reported finding it difficult to meet their weekly childcare costs suggesting income gaps may be more acutely experienced by these families. Affordability issues for lone parents were: late collection fees (fees charged if a parent was late to pick up their child) were difficult for working lone parent families on a single wage; child-minders were too expensive relative to other provision; issues with the processing of tax allowances left families missing out on entitlements. However, lone parent families were less likely to have claimed child or working tax credit suggesting that income gaps more commonly experienced by lone parent families could be reduced by increasing take up of tax credits.

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment consultation also identified that Birmingham one parent families were more affected than other families by the opening hours of childcare provision in all sectors as working lone parents were often precluded from working evenings and weekends due to a lack of available childcare. These families were also less likely to own a car and so it was important to have childcare locally for example within a 30 minute walk or bus journey.

2.2. Public regulation

Responsibilities for family welfare benefits and services

Most services are for parents/carers of young children rather than specifically focused on lone parents. Gingerbread is a national lone parent organisation with local affiliated groups providing support in some areas of Birmingham.

Childcare services are planned strategically in Birmingham through the Early Years Childcare Development Partnership and the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (through Be Birmingham). In terms of childcare provision Birmingham has approximately: 800 child-minders; 300 nursery settings (six weeks to five years old); 250 nursery schools and classes including day nurseries, nursery units based at Children's Centres (three to five year olds); and 100 pre-schools (two and a half to five year olds). There are also crèches (sessional care for less than four hours for children under eight years old) and 250 parent and toddler groups. Information for families including lone parents is available from the local authority's Family Information Service. This covers family support services, childcare, a brokerage service for families having difficulties accessing childcare services, family activities and returning to work.

In Birmingham in 2007 there were 19,900 registered childcare places in the private, voluntary and independent sector for 0 to 4 year olds, 9,700 for 5 to 7 year olds and 8,000 places in maintained nursery classes and schools (BCC 2008a). At an average of 2.6 children per place (the number of children of pre-school age divided by the number of child care places available) this compared favourably with the national average of 4.3. Birmingham had 38 places available per 100 children aged 0 to 5 which again was much higher than the national average. 34 per cent of 0 to 2 year olds and 72 per cent of 3 to 4 year olds were using some form of child care. The private, voluntary and independent sector accounted for the majority of childcare places for under 5 year olds within the city, with over 16,000 childcare places provided by day nurseries and play groups.

The most recent childcare sufficiency assessment did not identify any substantial gaps in need or demand except for some specific groups of parents such as families on a low income (including lone parents), families with a child with a disability or special needs and some ethnic minority families. The main issue identified was affordability with providers planning on increasing charges in the next two to three years. Data obtained from childcare providers in 2007 on their charges indicated that the average cost for a week of full day childcare (excluding any free entitlement or subsidies) within the city was £118 (€134.55), this compared to a national average of £152 (€173.29) per week and a West Midlands regional average of £127 (€144.81) per week (BCC 2008a).

There are over 70 Children's Centres in Birmingham providing multi-agency services to meet the needs of young children under five years old and their families including lone parents. This includes: early education with full day care, including provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities; parental outreach; family support, including support for parents with special needs; health services; a base for child-minders; a service hub within the community for parents and providers of childcare services; links with JCP and training providers.

The responsibility for reducing the number of workless lone parents lies with JCP and is the only organisation which sees all unemployed lone parents, as an annual review meeting takes place with a lone parent adviser. They offer a range of information and support, but this is focused entirely on gaining employment. As a way of raising awareness and increasing potential contact with the local community, lone parent advisers in some areas hold drop-in sessions and have JCP notice boards in all Children's Centres. Information from the JCP in Birmingham indicated that the availability of childcare is a barrier to some parents and identified a specific lack of provision for parents working weekends and shifts. This is especially difficult as many lone parents were looking to work in the retail sector and many employers were stipulating a requirement to work shift patterns and weekends on rota (BCC 2008a).

Policy on welfare benefits for lone parents who are not working is made at national level. Previously lone parents could claim Income Support until their youngest child reached the age of ten years old which did not require them to be actively seeking work. After this time they were required to claim Jobseeker's Allowance and look for work. From October 2010 this was reduced to when the youngest child reached seven years old and from early 2012 the Income Support entitlement conditions will now require that lone parents with a youngest child over five years old will be required to claim Jobseekers Allowance if they are capable of work rather than Income Support. Lone parents with children 12 years old and under can restrict their availability to work to school hours.

As well as the welfare benefits accessible to everyone dependent on individual circumstances lone parents can claim a tax-free £40 (€46) per week payment if they have been claiming certain benefits for a year or more and go back to work for 16 hours or more (paid for 52 weeks on top of any other in work benefits). There is also a one-off job grant for lone parents and couples with children who move directly from benefit to work of £250 (€287). As detailed in the Work Package 2 report (Brookes *et al*. 2011) there are Working Tax Credit options available for lone parents and those on a low income.

3. IMMIGRATION

3.1. Socio-economic trends

Migrants and/or ethnic minority groups

Information is much more readily available about ethnic minority groups in the UK particularly through the census a national population survey which takes place every ten years. However, there is no one comprehensive monitoring system for migration, particularly longer-term migration.

One of the distinctive characteristics of Birmingham is its diversity and constantly changing cultural mix. Birmingham's population is significantly diverse in terms of ethnic composition. The 2001 census contains the most comprehensive information about ethnic groups in Birmingham which estimated around 30 per cent of residents belonged to an ethnic group other than White a much higher proportion than regionally (14.4 per cent) and nationally (12.5 per cent). Pakistani was the largest minority group followed by Indian and Black Caribbean (see Table 6). Since 2008 White Other (this does not include White Irish which has a separate census category) had replaced Bangladeshi as the fourth largest minority group. The remaining minority groups each accounted for 2 per cent or less but together accounted for a further 12 per cent of the population. Indian was the largest minority group for England. The 2001 census (ONS 2001) provides information about religious groups and the largest minority religious groups in Birmingham are Muslims (14 per cent of the population) and Sikhs (3 per cent).

Table 6 - Birmingham population estimates 2001 to 2009
by the largest five ethnic groups (per cent)

	White: British	Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	Asian or Asian British: Indian	Black or Black British: Black Caribbean	White: Other
2001	65.6	10.7	5.7	4.9	1.5
2002	65.2	10.5	5.7	4.8	1.7
2003	64.9	10.4	5.7	4.7	1.8
2004	64.4	10.3	5.7	4.5	2
2005	64.1	10.1	5.7	4.4	2.2
2006	63.9	10	5.7	4.3	2.3
2007	63.7	9.9	5.8	4.2	2.4
2008	63.5	9.8	5.8	4.1	2.5
2009	63.3	9.7	5.8	4	2.6

Source: ONS.

The White Other group had low proportions of children and high proportions of people of working age. White British and Black Caribbean were amongst the groups with the highest proportion of people of pensionable age, 18.7 and 17.8 per cent respectively. The proportion of Black Caribbeans of pensionable age was significantly higher than other non-White groups reflecting the first large scale migration in the 1950s (BCC 2011i). The Pakistani and Bangladeshi populations are young and their age structures clearly affected by high birth rates. The older age range of men within the Bangladeshi population is the result of changing migration patterns, for example male labour migration followed after some time by marriage migration or family reunification. Black Africans display the age structure of a population with a migration past and declining size of new generations. The Chinese community's demographic structure reflects a more recent migration history illustrated by the high concentration in ages between 15 and 34 when migrants usually move for work or study purposes (Cangiano 2004).

Between 2001 and 2009 the non-white population of Birmingham increased by 12.4 per cent, well below regional (30 per cent) and national (42.7 per cent) increases. However, a person living in Birmingham is much more likely to belong to an ethnic group than in the region or England. In Birmingham, regionally and nationally the numbers of White Irish have fallen since 2001. In Birmingham there have also been decreases in the Black Caribbean and Pakistani groups. The most rapidly increasing group was Black African (by about 14,000 since 2001) followed by White Other. White Other was also the fastest growing group in the West Midlands and England and this group includes most migrants from the EU accession states in Eastern Europe (BCC 2011i).

Territorial distribution

The city's ethnic minorities are concentrated in the older, de-industrialised areas around the city centre known as the "middle ring". Birmingham's wards were revised in 2004 and Census data amended to reflect this and describe the ethnic profile of wards (BCC 2004). In Sparkbrook 80 per cent of all people in the ward were from an ethnic minority group compared with 30 per cent for Birmingham as a whole. The Pakistani community was especially concentrated in the neighbouring wards of Sparkbrook, Springfield, Washwood Heath and to a lesser extent Nechells. Indians lived mainly in some western wards such as Handsworth Wood, Lozells and East Handsworth, Soho and Aston. The Black Caribbean population was also concentrated in the western part of the city especially Aston, handsworth Wood, Lozells and East Handsworth, Nechells and Soho.

As a result of this different residential distribution of ethnic groups across the city there is significant diversity in the wards' population structures by ethnic background. In some wards the population is extremely diverse with no ethnic communities largely prevailing. Indians are over one third of Handsworth Wood's inhabitants (BCC 2004). An even larger proportion is found for the Pakistani group in Sparkbrook (45 per cent) and Springfield (45 per cent).

Birmingham has avoided some of the tensions that have emerged in some urban areas partly because there is less neighbourhood segregation than in some other places. However, there were riots in 2005 in the Lozells area of the city which were partly attributed to local economic rivalry between certain minority communities and there have been unsubstantiated reports that the recent riots in 2011 (which originated in unrest in London) had a race dimension.

Main immigration/emigration trends over the last ten years

In the past few years the city has been receiving a considerable inflow of migrants mainly from Africa and Eastern Europe. In particular approximately 8,000 Somali refugees came to Birmingham via stays in Holland, Denmark and Sweden (Abbas 2005) and an unknown number of Central and Eastern Europeans arrived especially after the EU enlargement. ONS estimate international migration into Birmingham has been 127,300 people between 2001 and 2010 based on the International Passenger Survey, asylum seekers and visitor switchers (those who intended to stay for less than 12 months but stayed longer).

The Annual Population Survey (based on a sample so therefore estimates not counts) illustrates the increasing percentage of Birmingham residents born outside the UK until 2009, in 2004 this was 15.5 per cent compared to 21.8 per cent in 2009 (BCC 2011j). 2010 saw a decrease over the previous year at 20.3 per cent. The proportion of overseas residents in Birmingham is more than twice that of the region and higher than the national average. In 2010 an estimated 10 per cent of Birmingham residents had a nationality other than British compared to 8.4 per cent in 2004.

National Insurance numbers are compulsory for adults wishing to work in the UK, whether short or long term. Polish nationals made up the highest proportion of National Insurance number allocations in Birmingham since 2005/6. However, in 2009/10 Indian and Pakistani registrations once again outnumbered Polish and in 2010/11 Pakistani registrants were more than double Polish ones. Since 2002 only four countries have consistently remained in the top ten highest numbers of registrations: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and China (BCC 2011j).

Until 2011 data on workers from the Eastern European states that joined the EU in 2004 was collected through the Worker Registration Scheme (although this refers to place of work rather than residence). In 2004 the numbers registered were 1,180 peaking in 2007 at 2,750, in 2009/10 this fell steeply to 390. The number of asylum seekers receiving support in Birmingham has decreased from 4,155 in 2002 to 870 in mid 2011 (BCC 2011j).

Table 7 - Birmingham Local Migration Indicators 2004 to 2009 per thousand/per cent of resident population (actual number in brackets)

	International migration (in) per thousand	International migration (out) per thousand	Non-UK born %	Non-British nationality %	Migrant National Insurance Number allocations (NINo) registrations %	New Flag4* GP registrations per thousand	Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) %
2004	17 (17,000)	9 (8,800)	0.15 (153,000)	0.08 (76,000)	0.009 (8,850)	13 (12,446)	0.001 (1,100)
2005	15 (15,100)	6 (6,000)	0.17 (165,000)	0.08 (79,000)	0.011 (10,680)	13 (13,524)	0.002 (2,440)
2006	13 (13,000)	8 (7,900)	0.19 (195,000)	0.09 (92,000)	0.012 (11,700)	14 (13,796)	0.003 (2,670)
2007	13 (12,700)	8 (8,200)	0.2 (199,000)	0.1 (102,000)	0.015 (15,230)	15 (14,770)	0.003 (2,750)
2008	12 (12,700)	5 (5,300)	0.21 (214,000)	0.13 (129,000)	0.012 (12,630)	15 (15,353)	0.002 (2,095)
2009	14 (14,100)	8 (8,500)	0.2 (220,000)	0.11 (119,000)	0.011 (11,670)	15 (14,994)	0.002 (1,815)

Source: ONS.
*Flag4 is where international in-migrants register with a National Health Service primary care doctor

Issues faced by migrants/minority ethnic groups

Worklessness is a particular issue for the city's ethnic communities, the employment rate was 50 per cent compared to 70 per cent for white residents. For some ethnic groups notably those of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin the rate was lower still with only 39 per cent of people from these groups employed. Unemployment rates vary significantly across ethnic groups. The most disadvantaged communities are Bangladeshis (22 per cent), Pakistanis (22 per cent) and the other black groups (23 per cent). These rates contrast with much lower levels observed for other minority groups, such as Indian (7 per cent) and Chinese (6 per cent) (BCC 2011k). Inactivity rates are extremely high for women of some ethnic groups especially Pakistani and Bangladeshi almost 80 per cent at the city level, double that of White British and Black Caribbean groups (Cangiano 2004).

Elementary occupations are high among Bangladeshis (23 per cent) and Pakistanis (18 per cent). Bangladeshis and Pakistanis are again the communities with the lowest professional skills, 59 per cent and 56 per cent of their respective working age populations have no or unknown qualifications (Cangiano 2004).

Research showed that refugees in Birmingham faced many barriers to gaining permanent employment, including lack of language skills, non-recognition of overseas qualifications, lack of UK references and an inability to produce the required documentation in support of their qualifications (Brahmbhatt *et al*. 2007). The research suggested that refugees were more likely to use informal networks such as friends and family for job seeking than official avenues such as JCP. The West Midlands, like other dispersal regions identified to accommodate refugees, has high numbers of destitute asylum seekers. There is evidence that they are often absorbed by existing refugee communities, putting an additional burden on families who are already on a low income (Phillimore *et al*. 2007). Consultation with clients at one of the refugee community organisations in Birmingham in 2006 highlighted that refugees continued to experience housing related problems after moving on from accommodation allocated to them for the duration of their asylum claim and required ongoing support to manage tenancies and access resources.

According to the 1991 Census owner-occupation was highest amongst Pakistanis (78 per cent), 11 per cent lived in social housing (compared to 28 per cent of white residents). 33 per cent of Pakistani and 42 per cent of Bangladeshi households were classified as overcrowded. Many groups were less likely to own their own accommodation Bangladeshis (48 per cent), Black Caribbean and Chinese (46 per cent) and Black Africans (29 per cent). However, the two largest ethnic groups displayed higher levels of home ownership than the white majority, Indians 82 per cent and Pakistanis 71 per cent. Over 30 per cent of Bangladeshis and 20 to 30 per cent of Black African, "other Asian", and Chinese and Pakistani households lived in overcrowded accommodation as compared with 6 per cent of the White British group (Abbas 2005). The high numbers of "unknown" in Table 8 indicates that recording of nationality when letting social housing is not routinely conducted.

The proportion of lone parent households with dependent children varies hugely across ethnic groups. The communities most affected by this factor are the "other black" group (33 per cent of all households) and the mixed background groups (28 per cent) (Bucknor *et al*. 2005). Evidence was not available about this issue for migrant families.

Table 8 - Birmingham Local Authority Lettings (general needs) by nationality 2006 to 2010

	2006	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**
UK nationals living in the UK	1,613	2,126	2,217	1,457	2,188
UK national returning from overseas	9	10	13	6	
Other EEA country	21	36	39	17	23
Unknown	6,235	4,273	3,737	8	66
Refused	611	50	26	13	12
Latvia		1	2	2	
Estonia			1		
Romania					2
Hungary	9	2			
Poland	5	3	6	7	6
Lithuania		3	1	1	5
Bulgaria			1		
Czech Republic			1		1
Slovakia	2			2	1
Slovenia				1	
Any other country	125	155	128	106	182
Total	8,630	6,659	6,172	1,620	2,488

Source: COntinuous REcording of letting and sales of social housing in England.

3.2. Public regulation

WILCO is concerned with migrants who are not British citizens but who have been in the country for five years or more. This is likely to include refugees (but not asylum seekers), European Economic Area (EEA) nationals, A8 nationals, irregular migrants (people who have overstayed or been smuggled or trafficked), non-EU nationals applying to work through the point-based system and those eligible to live in the UK through family relationships. It should be borne in mind that once resident in the UK for five years the majority of services available to British Citizens become much more easily accessible to migrants from the EEA area.

Support for migrants

The West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership (WMSMP) is the principal regional policy forum on refugee, asylum and migration issues. It was established as a result of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 to co-ordinate activities regarding the dispersal, accommodation and support of asylum seekers and the integration and social inclusion of refugees and newly arrived migrants. The Partnership Board is chaired by a regionally appointed locally elected council member and includes representatives from across the public, private, voluntary and community sectors and refugees themselves. The Refugee Council is a national charity with a base in Birmingham which focuses mainly on service provision for asylum issues providing signposting to services such as housing, education, health and training.

There are over 100 Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs) in Birmingham providing support to migrants and refugees and some of these have been in existence for more than 20 years (for example the Vietnamese Association). RCOs in Birmingham perform a variety of functions, ranging from giving specialised advice on immigration and citizenship, housing, welfare and benefits, to offering more practical and emotional support to new arrivals such as provision of food and clothes. They also organise cultural activities and provide language and history classes. There are also a large number of voluntary and community groups not identified as RCOs providing support to migrants based on faith or ethnicity or aimed at the general population but incorporating specialist support (for example the Birmingham TUC Centre for the Unemployed). On a national level the UK government has generally viewed these groups as helpful to integration and has provided small amounts of funding for their development.

The Birmingham New Communities Network (BNCN) is a coalition of over 100 migrant and refugee community organisations, which works to promote new approaches to integration and social inclusion both within and between communities. It represents the interests of new communities and aims to take action on common issues. Working in partnership with the BNCN is the Community Resource and Information Service (CRIS), which develops initiatives to promote social cohesion and integration and also assists with capacity building.

The BCC Ethnic Minority Pupil Support Unit (EMPSU) can provide help to migrants seeking access to education. EMPSU coordinates a project to train adults from refugee communities to go into mainstream schools to support young people who have additional language needs. The Children's Society (a national children's charity) runs a school-based project which supports asylum seeking and refugee children in mainstream schools offering classroom assistants, homework clubs and peer projects. There are various colleges providing English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and other courses some with specialist staff trained to support and advise on asylum and refugee issues.

There are a number of projects in Birmingham that provide befriending or mentoring services to refugees and asylum seekers. RESTORE is a charity which works with local volunteers to befriend asylum seekers and raise awareness in the local communities, especially within schools and through the church network. The Red Cross also runs an orientation project, which offers short-term guidance to refugees about the local area and friendship to those who feel isolated. The Time Together Project funded by the Refugee Council offers mentoring to refugees and aims to ease the integration process for refugees, build bridges between different cultures and promote a positive image of refugees. The Refugee Council also has a football project that brings people together from refugee and other backgrounds and the Aston Sports Club uses sport to build relationships between people of different backgrounds living in the area.

The Community Cohesion Regional Implementation Group of the West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership (WMSMP) is a discussion forum for key local issues and seeks to develop good practice amongst its partners. The group has developed a resource pack which contains information on dispelling myths about migrants, building empathy, cultural awareness and challenging racism and prejudice. Refugee Week is the key event in the year that presents an opportunity to raise the profile of refugees in the West Midlands, with 20 to 40 events taking place to raise awareness and celebrate the contribution that refugees make to the region.

There are a range of activities provided by voluntary and community organisations for refugee young people for example, the Birmingham Refugee Sports Group run football teams for young people aged 13 years and upwards. The Central African Development Agency also provides leisure and educational activities for young people. Many groups focus specifically on refugee women for example, the Oasis Women and Children's Group and the Somali Women and Children's Group, the Refugee Women's Association, the Rwanda and Burundi Women's Group and the Sikh Women's Forum.

Welfare benefits for vulnerable migrants

EU migrants in the UK can access certain benefits, although some have a "right to reside" test attached to them. This includes income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Child Benefit, Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit and State Pension Credit as well as housing and homelessness assistance. Any EU migrant who meets the requirements imposed on British Citizens should be able to access Disability Living Allowance, Maternity Allowance, contribution-based JSA and contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance. For EU migrants who have made National Insurance (NI) contributions in the UK and social security contributions in other EU Member States, JCP must count the contributions made elsewhere in the EU for the purpose of determining if the person has made sufficient contributions to get the contribution-based benefit.

A8 nationals are citizens of the eight countries that acceded to the European Union in 2004: the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. This category does not include Bulgarian and Romanian nationals who still require a work permit ("A2 nationals"). The Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) was a temporary measure used between 2004 and 2011 by the government to keep track of the way the UK labour market was affected by workers from these countries. From 2011 any A8 national will be able to access income-based JSA, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit by signing on as a jobseeker at JCP and meeting the requirements imposed on British Citizen jobseekers. Any A8 worker in work will be able to access in-work benefits and any who are out of work will be able to access benefits.

The law defines who is and who is not eligible for social housing in terms of immigration status and habitual residence. Even if a migrant is eligible the same assessment of need will be made as for British citizens. To be eligible for housing in England, EEA nationals must have the right to reside in the UK which can be gained by those who work or who are self-employed. In some cases, people who are temporarily unable to work or who are studying or self-sufficient are eligible but they have to pass the habitual residence test. Family members of EEA nationals are usually eligible, even if they are not themselves EEA nationals. EU nationals normally acquire permanent residence once they have resided legally in the UK for a continuous period of five years.

Citizens of countries from outside the EEA are generally subject to immigration control and need permission to enter or remain in the UK. Only some groups subject to immigration control are eligible for social housing: refugees and people with discretionary leave, humanitarian protection or exceptional leave to remain during an application for asylum; people with indefinite leave to remain (with some exceptions).

Migrants can therefore access the same housing support as British citizens provided they are eligible for example, by registering with the local authority housing department for social housing. In 2007 the UK Border Agency (an executive agency of the central government and responsible for immigration issues) was using 260 of Birmingham local authority's social housing stock to accommodate asylum seekers with the remainder in the private rented sector. Refugees with leave to remain can access help and advice on housing from the Wardlow Road Refugee Resource Centre which brings together statutory and voluntary partners operating from one site. The centre has a home options team which provides advice on renting accommodation in the private sector and works to build relationships with landlords to raise awareness around refugee issues. The centre also houses a refugee support team, which works with refugees moving into their first settled accommodation and supports them for the first six months of their tenancy. A National Asylum Seeker Support Team works with those who are dispersed (allocated accommodation) in the region and being housed in council accommodation and a neighbourhood advice team support refugees within the local area.

4. HOUSING

4.1. Socio-economic trends

Data from the 2001 census showed that the dominant tenure of housing stock in Birmingham was owner occupation, accounting for 60.4 per cent of all properties across the area (26.4 per cent owned outright and 33.2 per cent owned with a mortgage or loan) and in 2010 this had increased slightly to 64 per cent. Around 27.7 per cent of the stock was rented social housing (either council or housing association) in 2001 a slight decrease in 2010 to 25 per cent (see Table 9). In 2001 11.8 per cent of housing stock was in the private rented sector compared to 10 per cent in 2010. About one per cent of households were in shared ownership in 2001. There was a lower proportion of owner occupation and a slightly lower level of privately rented accommodation in Birmingham when compared to England in 2010 which was 70 per cent owner occupation and 12 per cent privately rented. Social housing however was a much higher proportion of housing stock in Birmingham, for England this was at 18 per cent (BCC 2010d).

One feature of Birmingham's housing market is the high proportion of households living in flats. These made up 18 per cent of households in 2001 (purpose built blocks), the highest figure in the region (ONS 2001). Since then a large proportion of new housing completed has been flats. However, the highest proportion of were living in semi-detached houses (35 per cent) or terraced housing (31 per cent).

Table 9 - Tenure: social rented housing 2002 to 2009 (per cent)

	UK	Birmingham
2001	20.9	29.7
2002	20.6	28.9
2003	19.9	27.8
2004	19.4	27.6
2005	18.9	26.8
2006	18.5	25.9
2007	18.3	25.6
2008	18.1	25.5
2009	18	24.9
2010		24.9

Source: DCLG.

Lower quartile house prices in Birmingham have more than trebled in the last decade. Between 2001 and 2007 the average property price in Birmingham rose by 104 per cent from £79,000 (€90,401) at the start of 2001 to £161,000 (€184,235) by mid-2007. Much of the increase in property prices was seen between 2001 and 2004 and whilst average prices have continued to rise since 2005 the increases have been less rapid (WMRO 2008). This rise was above the regional average and is higher than in the other metropolitan boroughs, with the exception of Coventry. Nevertheless, house prices were still lower than in most of the region's shire districts, particularly those in the areas immediately surrounding the city (WMRO 2008).

Table 10 - Average house prices 2000 to 2011 (£)

	England & Wales	Birmingham
2000	82,251	60,860
2001	89,338	67,496
2002	102,330	77,269
2003	125,680	99,476
2004	144,439	114,343
2005	157,061	126,200
2006	162,971	128,006
2007	177,017	133,389
2008	180,680	134,605
2009	152,097	115,587
2010	165,080	119,812
2011	162,379	116,686

Source: Land Registry.

Between 2001/2 and 2006/7 the number of houses built was between 2,750 and 4,000 across the city (see Table 11). The number of demolitions for the same period was between 734 and 1,930 with most of these in the affordable housing sector.

Table 11 - Housebuilding in Birmingham 2001/2 to 2006/7

	New homes	Affordable	Total
2001/2	1,829	921	2,750
2002/3	2,111	631	2,742
2003/4	2,538	805	3,343
2004/5	2,501	680	3,181
2005/6	2,828	1,172	4,000
2006/7	2,424	655	3,079

Source: BCC.

In 2007 there were nearly 31,000 households on the council's waiting list and around 22,000 were applicants (people who wanted to move into council housing for the first time). Around 5,500 allocations of council housing were made in 2006/7. In 2003 29 per cent of lettings of council homes were to applicants, 21.7 per cent to transfers and 49.3 per cent to homeless people. In 2006/7 43 per cent were to applicants, 23 per cent to transfers and 35 per cent to homeless people or families (BCC 2008).

The Birmingham Strategic Housing Market Assessment (Opinion Research Services 2008) conducted on behalf of the council indicated that housing supply was not sufficient to meet the level of demand suggested by household growth forecasts. Supply in recent years had been dominated by smaller units largely in the city centre but there existed greater demand and need for larger homes across all tenures. There was also a need for larger market homes. The Working Neighbourhoods Fund (£3 million or €3.43 million from the DCLG between 2008 and 2011) managed by Be Birmingham will be used to increase the supply of larger, affordable homes in the social housing stock.

Unsuitable housing

In 2005 (CSR Survey Ltd 2006) 38,831 households were assessed as living in unsuitable housing due to one or more factors. Owner occupiers were much less likely to be unsuitably housed (14.5 per cent) compared to 22.5 per cent of those who rented privately and 28.1 per cent of households renting from a social landlord. 19 per cent of established households were in unsuitable housing of these 10 per cent were in serious disrepair and 6 per cent overcrowded. Households with children were much more likely to live in unsuitable housing (28.6 per cent) compared to 2.2 per cent of households with adults and 18.5 per cent of households with older people. Households in the city centre were most likely to be living in unsuitable housing (38.4 per cent).

By April 2010 95 per cent of council properties met the Decent Homes Standard (set by the previous Labour government) and 97 per cent of housing association homes. However, in 2006/7 52 per cent of properties within the private sector failed to meet the standard which includes: meeting the statutory minimum standard for housing; in a reasonable state of repair; reasonably modern facilities and services; and provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort. Fifty four per cent of vulnerable households were living in a non-decent property (BCC 2008b).

Homelessness

Birmingham City Council provides a homelessness service to the West Midlands region but as homelessness prevention has become more successful, the total number of acceptances has declined significantly (from 5,567 in 2003/4 to 2, 496 in 2006/7). At the end of the second quarter of 2007, a total of 498 households were homeless and housed in temporary accommodation by the council (BCC 2008b). Of these 352 were in private sector housing leased by the council or registered social landlord, 57 were in hostels and 7 in bed and breakfast accommodation. In 2006/7 nearly two fifths of people accepted as eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need were aged between 16 and 24 (whereas this group made up less than one fifth of the adult population of the city in 2001).

Affordability

Housing affordability in Birmingham is comparable with that in most of the other metropolitan boroughs and slightly better than the regional average. In 2007, the lower quartile house price was approximately 6.4 times the lower quartile average earnings in the city (this is based on workplace earnings rather than residence based earnings). The housing affordability ratio means that many people and not just lower earners will struggle to enter the owner-occupied housing market in Birmingham (Opinion Research Services 2008).

For Birmingham existing rents in the residential social landlord sector tended to be around the target rent set by the Housing Corporation (the regulator for social housing, now the Tenants Services Authority) with local authority rents marginally below this amount. Even the cheapest properties in the private sector typically cost double this amount with implications for those unable to rent in any other sector. For example the average weekly local authority rent for a two bedroom property was £57 (€65), housing association £62 (€71), private rented £153 (€175) (Opinion Research Services 2008) and the target set by the Housing Corporation was £62 (€71).

Spatial concentration

The concentrations of deprivation often correspond with the location of social rented housing in the city. Many of the most deprived parts of Birmingham are around the city centre, some of these areas have original housing from the latter part of Birmingham's industrial expansion (for example Sparkbrook) and some have been redeveloped as public housing (for example Nechells). There are also larger social housing estates in suburban and peripheral locations to the city centre (for example Shard End, King's Norton, Kingstanding, Longbridge, and Weoley) (Fenton *et al*. 2009).

Current financial situation

During June 2009 average house prices in Birmingham fell much more sharply than regionally or nationally. Land registry house prices for Birmingham fell 16.5 per cent compared to the previous year. This was the sharpest fall in house prices since 1995. Mortgage repossession had started to increase during 2009 figures from the national government Ministry of Justice suggest a rise larger than for both the region and nationally (BCC 2010e). Most commentators see the combination of high unemployment, concerns over job security and tight credit conditions as continuing to constrain the housing marketing the short to medium term.

Data were not available for Birmingham but in terms of home building and construction new orders for private housing in the West Midlands fell sharply in mid-2009 (in contrast to national figures which showed a rise). Within the region there was a significant rise in housing starts particularly for the private sector and registered social landlords. There was a recovery in completions for the social housing sector. Average asking rents declined in Birmingham over the same period whereas elsewhere in the UK these increased (BCC 2010e).

4.2. Public regulation

Currently the West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA) is responsible for developing and co-ordinating a strategic vision for improving the quality of life in the region. The Assembly is responsible for setting priorities and delivering regional strategies including housing. It is an incorporated company limited by guarantee and comprises of 100 members, with 68 members representing the local authorities, 16 representing the business sector and 16 representing other economic and social partners. The Regional Housing Partnership and the Regional Planning Partnership sub-groups of the WMRA work towards increasing the number of affordable homes in the West Midlands. The key regional strategies in delivering affordable housing in the region are the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS) and the West Midlands Regional Housing Strategy (WMRHS).

BCC is the largest public landlord in England by the number of dwellings it owns and lets, and has the largest concentration of tower blocks in the country. In 2002 council tenants in the city voted two to one against a transfer to a non-profit independent housing association. As a result of this an Independent Housing Commission chaired by the London School of Economics and Political Science was set up which identified that at least a third of housing stock would need to be transferred in order to raise resources to meet the government's Decent Home Standard. Currently the council still owns and manages social housing stock with some provided by around 55 housing associations (or registered social landlords), for example Midland Heart and the Family Housing Trust. About half of their accommodation is set aside for people on the council's housing waiting list.

The Birmingham Housing Plan is the City Housing Partnership's (partners include social landlords and third sector organisations) shared statement of the priorities and actions for the housing sector which contribute towards achieving the vision for the city agreed by Be Birmingham (the local strategic partnership, a single body that includes public sector as well as the private, business, community and voluntary sectors). The core strategies address supporting people and homelessness with various supporting plans: empty properties; development; private sector housing; urban living; and older person housing.

There are approximately 56 services in Birmingham offering housing advice including public and third sector organisations. BCC Housing Department aims to work with not-for-profit housing associations, the Housing and Communities Agency (the national housing and regeneration delivery agency for England) and private sector partners to develop high-quality, affordable homes. It also provides support for vulnerable people in Birmingham through the supporting people programme, offers grants and loans to homeowners to improve housing conditions, helps homeless people to find temporary accommodation and gives advice and support to refugees and asylum seekers. The council has commissioned a range of services for vulnerable people to help them access supported accommodation and housing-related support.

Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust is Birmingham City Council's brand name for building new homes across Birmingham which was set up in response to the recession. Jointly funded by Birmingham City Council and the Homes and Communities Agency it is committed to building up to 500 new homes per year across the city by 2012. These will be homes for rent allocated by the city council to existing secure tenants who have applied for a transfer and homes for sale marketed to the general public by the developers who are building them on the various sites across the city.

Housing Benefit (and Local Housing Allowance for the private rented sector) is the national welfare benefit which aims to help people on a low income pay their rent (see Brookes *et al*. 2011 for details). The local authority administer this according to central government rules and in June 2011 there were 113,670 recipients of Housing Benefit in Birmingham 66 per cent of these were in the social rented sector which is similar to the national picture (68 per cent) (DWP 2011b). In 2004 the council had a budget of £379 million (€440 million) for housing-related benefits and in 2010 this was £528 million (€629 million) about 15 per cent of the council's total budget. Over the same period the council budget for council dwellings and realted services decreased from 9 per cent of the total budget in 2004 to 6 per cent in 2010.

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THE WILCO PROJECT

Full title: Welfare innovations at the local level in favour of cohesion
Acronym: WILCO
Duration: 36 months (2010-2013)
Project's website: http://www.wilcoproject.eu

Project's objective and mission:
WILCO aims to examine, through cross-national comparative research, how local welfare systems affect social inequalities and how they favour social cohesion, with a special focus on the missing link between innovations at the local level and their successful transfer to and implementation in other settings. The results will be directly connected to the needs of practitioners, through strong interaction with stakeholders and urban policy recommendations. In doing so, we will connect issues of immediate practical relevance with state-of-the-art academic research on how approaches and instruments in local welfare function in practice.

Brief description:
The effort to strengthen social cohesion and lower social inequalities is among Europe's main policy challenges. Local welfare systems are at the forefront of the struggle to address this challenge – and they are far from winning. While the statistics show some positive signs, the overall picture still shows sharp and sometimes rising inequalities, a loss of social cohesion and failing policies of integration.
But, contrary to what is sometimes thought, a lack of bottom-up innovation is not the issue in itself. European cities are teeming with new ideas, initiated by citizens, professionals and policymakers. The problem is, rather, that innovations taking place in the city are not effectively disseminated because they are not sufficiently understood. Many innovations are not picked up, because their relevance is not recognised; others fail after they have been reproduced elsewhere, because they were not suitable to the different conditions, in another city, in another country.
In the framework of WILCO, innovation in cities is explored, not as a disconnected phenomenon, but as an element in a tradition of welfare that is part of particular socio-economic models and the result of specific national and local cultures. Contextualising innovations in local welfare will allow a more effective understanding of how they could work in other cities, for the benefit of other citizens.