Using administrative data sources to improve our understanding of movements of international migrants within the UK.

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Outline

• Integrated population and migration statistics system: what is it, what are we aiming to do, what is our approach?
• Access to admin sources: UK experience
• Understanding migration flows using integrated admin data: our approach, understanding data sources and how migrants interact with these
• Challenges and next steps
Transforming the population and migration statistics system…

• Strategic - to make better use of all available data to produce better statistics, better decisions
• Current system - challenges to quality of population statistics:
  10 years before we can rebase population International Migration statistics (survey based, emigration challenge)
• Un-met user needs - gaps between what users need and what we can currently produce (e.g. impact of migration in local areas)
• Build flexibility to incorporate new data and methods.
What is an integrated population and migration statistics system?
Trying alternative approaches

Scenario 3 – Hybrid stock-flow approach
Components of change – international migration

Most complex component as no single source covers movements of all types of migrants. Approach :-

• Understanding data sources what they can tell us about the different types of migrants and how they interact with systems ‘footprints’

• Develop linkage approaches (new data sources), build and understand the longitudinal picture.

• Consider the best way to bring data sources together (including surveys eg IPS) to measure long term migrant flows (and other migrant types)
Access to administrative data sources – the UK experience

• 2017 Digital Economy Act (UK)
• Securely holding data and development of systems
• Working in partnership
• A shared framework for improving migration statistics
• Collaboration with data experts in Government Departments and feedback loop for new insights and learning
How do data sources align with current definitions?

Current definition ‘migrant worker’

- All immigrants who come to work in the UK

Missing according to current definition

- Migrants working in the UK without needing a NINO:
  - paying NI contributions overseas
  - on temp ref num
  - seasonal/agricultural workers

- Illegal migrants working in the UK

MWS

Key variables: Arrival Date, Nationality, NINO

included

- Migrant working in the UK on a NINO who registered since 2002

Extra information

Data source includes

- People who were allocated a NINO since 2002

- Students who got a NINO to apply for a student loan

- Individuals who got a NINO only to claim benefits

- Individuals who got a NINO with the intention to work/find work but haven’t worked yet

- Individuals who got a NINO but have left since arrival or have never really moved to live in the UK
Exit Checks - Non-EU visa nationals – visa v first/last departure v travel events

Tested by calculating revised length of stay using duration from first recorded arrival date and last departure date (when available)

But it doesn’t tell us about an individual’s travel pattern in between these two points in time….

Very early research on classifying long term migrants from travel events…
Comparing data sources

Important points to note:
- Data sources are not capturing the same information and are not used for the same purpose.
- Differences due to type of data collected, how the data are collected, data quality of the two sources, assumptions made to process these data.

Source: ONS analysis of Home Office administrative data and International Passenger Survey (IPS) data
Measuring immigration - mapping to data sources

Reason for Immigration

Migrant type

Nationality

PR/PDS (flag 4 reg type)
MWS (Allocation of new NINo)
HESA (country registered for HE course from)
Home Office Admin Data - Exit Checks – first arrival date/visa start date (non EEA)
Longitudinal ‘activity’ eg BIDs

HESA (country registered for HE course from)
Home Office Admin Data - Exit Checks – arrival date/visa start date (non EEA)
Otherwise reliant on longitudinal activity to measure returning migrants eg ‘new activity after inactivity’
BIDs

Semaphore (HO admin data) – not there yet
Otherwise reliant on longitudinal activity

First Timer

Non-UK nationals

Non-FEA

study

working

other (incl. children)

HOME

data

Exit

Checks

Immigration

Returning

Non-UK nationals

Non-FEA

study

working

other (incl. children)

Otherwise reliant on longitudinal activity to measure returning migrants eg ‘new activity after inactivity’

BIDs

UK nationals

study

working

other (incl. children)
Measuring emigration - mapping to data sources

Activity before emigration

Data sources

Nationality

Non-UK nationals

EEA

studying

working

other (incl. children)

PR/PDS (RFR EMBK)

HESA (comparing years & country previous residence)

Home Office Admin Data Exit Checks (latest departure data/visa expiration date (non EEA))

Otherwise reliant on absence of activity

Non-EEA

studying

working

other (incl. children)

UK nationals

studying

working

other (incl. children)

Semaphore (HO admin data) - not there yet

Otherwise reliant on longitudinal activity/absence of activity
New insights from combining admin data sources

- Recent publications include:
  “What’s happening with international student migration?” – ONS
  “International student migration update”- ONS
  “Third report on statistics being collected under the exit checks programme”- Home Office
- ONS’ analysis of Home Office Exit Checks data revealed that majority (90%) of non-EU international students either depart the UK before their visa expires, or extend their leave to remain
- Our analysis suggests the IPS is underestimating long-term non-EU student emigration figures

Outcomes for non-EU students with a leave expiry date between 8 April 2015 and 7 April 2016

- 193,100 Non-EU students
- 122,000 Departed UK
- 57,900 Stay
- 13,200 Unknown
- 4,000 Departed but inconclusive evidence of return
- 18,900 Departed the UK and returned in 1 year on short-term visa
- 50,300 Granted valid leave to remain, study, work, or other
- 7,600 Departed the UK and returned in 1 year on long-term visa
- 13,200 No identified departure

Source: Office for National Statistics analysis of Exit Checks data
Challenges

- Data access – availability and quality of data – is it fit for purpose?
- Admin data alone is unlikely to deliver population statistics of sufficient quality, likely to need surveys to support the transformation.
- Is UN definition still relevant for measuring a changing population? Aligning ‘data driven’ definitions challenging. Intention v behaviour, registration v arrival, length of stay.
- Methods – new and innovative approach required, developing methods alongside other NSIs.
- UK coherence – population is a devolved responsibility, migration is a UK issue – working with DAs to deliver coherent outputs.
What next? Population and Migration Statistics Consultation – Autumn 2018

Consultation to understand user needs for transformed system, and gain feedback on research. Supported by:

- Part 1: Exploratory research illustrating definitions, methods and approach to transforming the Pop Stats System
- Part 2: Exploratory research into Non-EU Nationals travel patterns
- Part 3: Exploratory research into EU Nationals and how they impact on the economy

Following this we will be continuing to work iteratively on our research as we build our data sources and understanding of user needs, in collaboration across the GSS.