

## International Research

# Experience of People who Relocate to Scotland

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The Experience of People who Relocate to Scotland study was commissioned by the Scottish Executive and Scottish Enterprise, and conducted by TNS System Three Social in 2005/6.

The aims of this study were to:

- Understand why people choose to relocate to Scotland – including returning Scots, people from the rest of the UK and people from outwith the UK
- Explore the factors that have helped people to relocate to Scotland, in particular support with accessing employment opportunities and settling into Scottish life, including understanding the positive experiences and/or barriers encountered
- Consider the inter relations between the influence of education/work experiences, the importance of living in a particular place, and personal circumstances such as birth connections, family links, and family influence

## Main Findings

- The decision to relocate, and the choice of Scotland as a location, was often for economic reasons such as employment and study, over lifestyle factors.
- A typology framework was developed from in-migrants' motivations for relocating to Scotland. In-migrants were better defined by this than the 3 economic groups used by the Fresh Talent Initiative of entrepreneurs, employees and post graduates. The 4 typologies were: *Pragmatists* motivated by economic opportunities; *World Citizens* motivated by the experience of another country and economic opportunities; *Lifestage Returners* motivated by family connections; and *Lifestyle Pursuers* motivated by changes in lifestyle.
- Overall, in-migrants had positive experiences of relocating to Scotland. Those who relocated with economic opportunities arranged (World Citizens and Pragmatists) tended to settle in more easily than those that had relocated to pursue a lifestyle and sought economic opportunities post-relocation (Lifestyle Pursuers).
- When settling in Scotland, some common barriers and frustrations were identified from in-migrant's experiences. This was broadly attributable to typologies, with Pragmatists and World Citizens facing fewer, less serious barriers. A lack of suitable employment, whilst not the most common barrier to settling in, was the most salient.
- In-migrants were unaware of who Scotland wanted to attract, and the role of public bodies in managing migration, which this report identifies as crucial areas to define.

## Background

This study was conducted to research the experiences of people who relocate to Scotland, in order to inform future Fresh Talent policy developments.

Fresh Talent is part of a commitment, made by the First Minister, Jack McConnell, to encourage people to come and live, work, study and invest in Scotland. This initiative was implemented in response to long-term forecasts of population decline in Scotland.

## Methodology

This study was conducted in four stages using qualitative methods:

- Ten depth interviews with organisations that had contact with in-migrants
- 55 depth interviews with in-migrants to Scotland, 10 of which were couples
- Four follow-up focus groups with in-migrants to test emerging findings
- A literature review on managed migration which provided a contextual backdrop

The in-migrants interviewed were a mixture of entrepreneurs, employees and post graduates who: had relocated from overseas or the rest of the UK; had returned to Scotland; and had moved to different locations in Scotland. All those involved were at varying stages of the relocation process.

## Findings

### Motivations for relocating to Scotland

For many in-migrants, the decision to relocate was made in relation to economic factors. Lifestyle factors relating to Scotland were often secondary in the decision making process.

The motivations to relocate to Scotland were used to develop a typology framework for the study. The 4 typologies, and the motivations that epitomise them, were:

- Pragmatists – economic opportunities
- World Citizens – experience of another country and economic opportunities
- Lifestage Returners – family connections
- Lifestyle Pursuers – change in lifestyle

The Fresh Talent Initiative focuses on 3 economic status groups: entrepreneurs, employees and post graduates. This study showed that, within these groups, there were significant differences in motivations for relocating and that in-migrants were more closely identified with and better defined by the above typologies. Within the employee group of in-migrants, in particular, there were varying motivations for relocating.

The weight that *location* had in the decision making process was one of the key variables between the different groups in the typologies. For some (Lifestage Returners and Lifestyle Pursuers), location was a key driver while, for others (Pragmatists and World Citizens), location was a less important reason for making the move.

Those coming from overseas were attracted to the UK as a *whole* more than Scotland *per se*. Choosing Scotland as a location was largely down to pragmatic reasons of employment or study. Those from the rest of the UK also made little distinction between Scotland and the UK as a whole, although lifestyle factors played more of a role in their decision making process than those from overseas.

### Knowledge and perceptions of Scotland

Sources and depth of knowledge of life in Scotland pre-relocation varied amongst in-migrants. All in-migrants interviewed from the rest of the UK had visited Scotland before. For those coming from overseas, particularly outside the EU, their main source of knowledge of life in Scotland was from word of mouth.

## Experiences of relocating to Scotland

On the whole, people had positive experiences of relocating to Scotland. Given the weight that word of mouth carries in other in-migrants' decisions to relocate, especially those from overseas, this is of great importance.

Few in-migrants actively sought the advice and support of public bodies in making their relocation, however those that did, were generally satisfied with the support provided. Most were not aware of support available.

A positive experience with work, studies or business was crucial in making the move a success for most in-migrants in this study. Pragmatists and World Citizens were most likely to have had positive experiences in this area. Improved lifestyle was a major factor in attracting and encouraging people to stay in Scotland, but this was not a strong enough factor on its own to retain people.

There were some common barriers and frustrations in relation to settling into life in Scotland. This varied by situation, and can be broadly attributed to typologies. Pragmatists and World Citizens tended to face fewer, less serious barriers to settling in. The group that faced the most significant barriers were the Lifestyle Pursuers who often had unmet expectations of their new lifestyle. Difficulty finding suitable employment, whilst not being the most common barrier, was one of the most salient. It had serious implications for how successful some people saw their move.

Some post graduates expressed problems finding jobs and for a few on the Fresh Talent Working in Scotland Scheme this was frustrating as they had had to take jobs unaligned to their career path.

Despite overall high levels of satisfaction with relocating to Scotland, most in-migrants were not fully committed to staying on a permanent basis. Most in-migrants had a flexible approach to where they would live in the future, and many young Pragmatists saw their experiences of life in Scotland as helping them towards becoming World Citizens.

## Policy implications

There was low awareness of the Fresh Talent Initiative amongst in-migrants and the organisations involved with them. In-migrants also showed they were unaware of the kind of individuals Scotland wanted to attract, and the roles of the different public bodies in managing migration. This generated important questions for developing Fresh Talent policy:

- Is it important to encourage people to relocate permanently, or are there merits in attracting people who wish to stay for shorter time periods?
- Who does Scotland want to attract, and who should be targeted?
- How can the public, private and academic sectors work together to further develop managed migration?

The report also offers practical recommendations for encouraging in-migration and making relocation easier including encouraging the public and private sector to work closer together; increasing Scottish employers' awareness of the Fresh Talent Working in Scotland Scheme; and making it easier to open bank accounts for overseas in-migrants.

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The report, "Experience of People Who Relocate to Scotland", which is summarised in this research findings is a web only document and is available on the publications pages of the Scottish Executive website at

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