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Ms Ann Jones  
Chair, Equality of Opportunity Committee  
The National Assembly for Wales  
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Your ref/Eich Cyf

Our ref/Ein Cyf

10 December 2007

Date/Dyddiad

Dear Ms Jones

**Re: National Assembly for Wales Equality of Opportunity Committee Inquiry  
Focussing on Migrant Workers**

Contact was made with all Directorates to establish what, if any, experiences they have had of dealing with migrant workers and what affect it has had on services. Contact was also made with Valrec to seek their views.

The result of these inquiries that other than the personnel experience of dealing with job applicants council services do not seem to have noticed the presence of migrant workers in the county borough, therefore there has been no reason to review council services to cater for migrant workers.

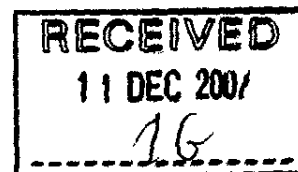
This raises the question of whether the council should be reactive or proactive. So far there seems to have been nothing done because there have been no pressures on services to cater for migrant workers but there does seem to be evidence that this could change soon.

The way forward for the council should be to be more proactive in going out to discover more about the people that live and work in the community and monitoring those who use council services. This is really part of the ongoing equalities agenda to discover the needs of the local community, whether they be disabled, from a different racial group, be a gypsy or traveller, a man or a woman, a Welsh speaker or a migrant worker.

Below is a summary of responses received:-

**Social Services**

Social Services Personnel have experienced an increase in overseas applicants of late and there have been some problematic areas whereby the applicants have not pursued any avenues in terms of gaining employment within the UK.



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Although you would hope that the applicant would have at least researched employment in the UK and gained an understanding of what is required ie NI numbers, CRB checks etc, it appears that the majority is not proactive in doing so.

This has identified a need to provide some basic guidance on applying for posts for overseas applicants, ie work permits, NI numbers, CRB checks, etc. It is likely that this will commence in January 2008. The guidance will hopefully elevate such areas of difficulty.

### **Education**

Libraries are not involved in any way at present though it is an area that we have identified which requires more concerted action on in the future. The South East Wales Region of Library Services are looking to develop a special collection of resources for residents who have English as their second language.

### **VALREC**

Caerphilly CBC is now home to an increasing number of Polish migrant workers. Evidence based on preliminary surveys conducted by VALREC under their Migrant Workers Support Project indicates that most Polish people in Caerphilly CBC work in transport, hospitality and packaging industries.

VALREC personnel have been working very closely with St Helens Catholic Church in Caerphilly assisting in introducing a Polish Mass once a month. Besides catering for spiritual needs, this will also help to form new social networks and help Polish people to integrate into the local community and surrounding county boroughs.

### **Economic Development**

Regrettably, we have had no direct experience of the effect that migrant workers have had on both the local economy and communities.

There is some empirical evidence that migrant workers are filling a gap in the labour market not being filled by local people, but I have no evidence or experience that groups or clusters of migrant workers have been established in the county borough. Again we have not received any enquiries from either employers or employees about migrant workers and any assistance they may require.

Yours sincerely



**Nigel Barnett**  
**Director of Corporate Services**