

# Economic Work Package

Everyday Integration Working Document

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# **Precarity and Everyday Integration in Bristol: a baseline report and working document**

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## **Precarity and Everyday Integration in Bristol: a baseline report and working document**

### **1. Introduction**

This paper examines the relationship between precarity and integration in Bristol, examining the challenges precarity poses to integration, but also open to the possibilities that in some contexts precarity can facilitate integration. It draws on desk research conducted by David Jepson from ACH-Himilo<sup>1</sup> and Natalie Hyacinth, researcher for the University of Bristol's Everyday Integration project conducted between November 2019 and February 2020. Babbasa, a Bristol-based social enterprise supporting less-advantaged, ethnically diverse young people to achieve professional ambitions also contributed an analysis based on previous research they had commissioned. We integrate academic literature, which generally concerns the national and international picture, with a more fine grained analysis of what is specific to our city and in particular, paying attention to a practitioner perspective. The drafts authored by ACH-Himilo and Babbasa can be found here.

As we were drafting this paper, COVID-19 struck and we were placed into 'lockdown'. This has both short and long term consequences for the intersection between precarity and integration. Precarious workers are often working in sectors where they are at particular risk of contracting coronavirus – most obviously the care sector, but also in delivery and storage, retail and transportation. They are also particularly vulnerable to economic fall-out – they may find it difficult to access schemes such as furloughing and self-employment support, and they are often the first to be laid off in times of economic recession. At the same time, there is increased recognition of the essential work performed by key workers – shelf stackers, food processing workers, healthcare assistants – which in more usual times is more usually disregarded as 'low skilled'. Precarious contracts risk making certain key occupations not resilient at time of crisis, and questions may be raised about the policy implications of this.

Integration is a concept that seems somewhat out of place in the current moment, when contact between different households is strongly discouraged and policed and 'social

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<sup>1</sup> ACH is a leading provider of support for refugee and migrant communities proving housing and economic opportunity in the West of England and West Midlands. We also contribute to policy development at national and international level.  
[www.ach.org.uk](http://www.ach.org.uk)

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distancing' actively promoted. However, it is worth investigating the distinction between physical and social distancing – for physical and social distance are not commensurate. Moreover, the importance of key workers in maintaining all of our lives indicates that low skilled and precarious workers are more integrated into daily life than is often recognised.

The original aim of this paper was to examine how and in what context does precarity facilitate integration, and what challenges does it pose to integration, with particular reference to Bristol and its residents. It contextualises the relationship between precarity and integration in Bristol. However, the changing context means that this report should be read as a 'working document' as well as a baseline report. It will be added to and amended as the situation develops, and the authors will use the material in further reports, research and papers associated with the Everyday Integration project.

We begin by setting out the definitions of integration and precarity we are using and then briefly outline precarity in the UK, before describing the Bristol context and honing in on precarity in the city. We then give the Bristol context to the three sectors we selected: film and TV, hospitality and care.

## **2. Working Definitions of Integration and Precarity**

The terminology of 'integration' and 'precarity' is contested and amorphous. It is therefore important to begin by laying out how we are using these words in this report and in the Everyday Integration project more generally. 'Integration' means many things to many people. There are understandable concerns with the word's associations with assimilationist policies that disrespect ethnic and cultural diversity and treat 'migrants' and people of colour as a problem to be solved – "Immigrant integration... sustains rather than softens forms of what are conventionally called 'social exclusion'" (Schinkel 2018: 15). This has led to a search for alternatives such as 'inclusion' or 'incorporation', which are intended to rid integration of these connotations, though typically without breaking new conceptual ground (Spencer and Charsley 2016). We concur with Spencer and Charsley (2016: 3-4) that given its continued policy traction, there is a need to develop a critical engagement with integration based on a 'more systematic and nuanced analysis of integration processes that avoids the pitfalls which integration's critics have rightly identified.'

We approach integration as the possibility for *meaningful and respectful exchange*. It therefore involves everyone and occurs through practices, mobilities, and exchanges that are grounded in the local contexts of everyday life. We are particularly interested in integration of

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newcomers. Non-citizens are not the only newcomers to cities; there are incomers from other parts of the country, including families, students, and workers, as well as movement within cities. However, racialized newcomers may keep their newcomer status for longer – particularly if they are subject to immigration restrictions. More settled urban populations are not simply ‘hosts’ to these newcomers but equal partners in reimagining social spaces. Our approach to integration is bottom-up. Whilst policy frameworks provide an official endorsement of the state’s vision of integration, the actual forms of integration experienced and practised by people on the ground cannot be singularly deduced from them. This everyday integration begins with people as agents of integration, doing the labour of integration as they connect with others in meaningful and productive ways across varied social milieux. Importantly we do not attach the adjective ‘(not) integrated’ to people, communities, or neighbourhoods, but rather to the city of Bristol, understanding the city as a set of relationships and practices. An integrated city is not without its differences, disputes, or competing interests, but in an integrated city these differences don’t lead to exclusion, segregation, or marginalisation.

Precarity is a term that tends to be used very loosely (Alberti et al. 2018). It is usually applied to labour markets and types of work but may also describe livelihoods more generally. Precarious work is insecure work. It is a key element of non-standard working and can be defined by work which has two types of characteristics. Firstly, it is work that is temporary (e.g. short-term contracts) and/or uncertain hours (e.g. zero hours contracts) and/or informal (cash-in hand). Secondly it is work that is low waged, and/or offers limited benefits and entitlements, and/or is high risk for illness or injury, and/or is characterised by a lack of control with low levels of union organising. People in precarious work may often be unclear about their exact employment status.

Precarious has also come to be applied to immigrant status, to denote temporary, dependent and/or undocumented status, which often intersects with precarious working. The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development’s 2015 report entitled: *‘Multiple Forms of Migrant Precarity, Beyond “Management” of migration to an integrated rights based approach*, states that migrant precarity is a particular economic status that they define/describes as:

Migrant precarity can be understood as a situation of vulnerability and insecurity for migrants, related to employment, social entitlements, political and civil rights, as well as migration status. Embedded in an increasingly restrictive policy environment,

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current practices heavily circumscribe the human rights of migrants. Although undocumented or irregular migrants are most vulnerable, legal status alone is not a guarantee for non-exposure to exploitation. Migrants tend to find themselves in a state of precariousness because they work in low-wage sectors, often in an undocumented or contract-tied manner. After returning home, they frequently remain in desperate situations, leading to re-migration.

The concept of ‘precarious status’ is somewhat vague and must be used with care, not least because the formalities of legal status are critical to rights, and the precarity of the holder of temporary residence status is likely to be in quite a different from the precarity of status of the illegally resident for example. Nevertheless, it facilitates making useful analytical connections between employment/labour relations and immigration status through the common framing of insecurity and time.

### **3. UK Context**

Precarious working has a long history, far longer than the settled security of the standard employment contract (Anderson 2015). ‘Standard’ employment is far from standard. It has typically been the provenance of the white able-bodied male, and in many of the poorer countries of the world working in a secure job with a contract is the exception rather than the norm. In the UK there has been a steady increase in the number of people in precarious work, from five million people in 2006 to more than seven million ten years later<sup>2</sup>. This is in keeping with the increase in precarious working across Europe after the 2008 economic crisis (Gutierrez-Barbarrusa 2016) which accelerated the long-term decline in the wage share of low and medium income earners (SPERI 2017). There is concern that these ‘flexible’ and highly individualised practices are becoming more widely diffused, and the proliferation of poor work ‘generalizes and transmits the sense and experience of precarity to the majority of the labour force’ (Doogan 2015). Furthermore, in the UK the standard employment contract is key to eligibility for some foundational employment rights which are available to employees but not to ‘workers’. Scarcely surprising then that attention has shifted from unemployment to in work poverty, non-standard forms of employment and poor contractual conditions, such as zero hours contracts.

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<sup>2</sup><https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/nov/15/more-than-7m-britons-in-precarious-employment>

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The trend towards precarious and casual employment has a disproportionate impact on women and the young. Focussing on retail, logistics and higher education the TUC report *Living on the Edge* found women, BAME and young workers are particularly likely to experience low job satisfaction and life satisfaction, have perceived low employment security; and higher levels of anxiety and depression and are more likely to anticipate losing their jobs and withdraw from the labour market.<sup>3</sup> The Women's Budget Group 2020 commission report, '*Spirals of Inequality: How unpaid care is at the heart of gender inequalities*' found that precarity is an intersectional issue: Women are less likely to be in any form of paid work and, when they do undertake paid work, it is more likely to be part-time and precarious - of those women that are in employment, 41% work part-time compared to just 13% of men in employment. One of the reasons that sectors where women are over-represented tend to have lower wages, the report notes, is due to these sectors being often viewed as an extension of the unpaid caring work women do 'naturally', leading to the skills in these sectors being undervalued. The gender disparity is most marked among those aged under 50, suggesting that the responsibility of caring for ageing parents falls primarily on women. This has significant consequences for rights, and the report found women hold 70% of jobs that are not entitled to Statutory Sick Pay.

The report also highlights the significant differences in the gender pay gap by ethnicity. Women of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin and women of Black African origin women have the biggest gender pay gap, relative to White British men, at around 25% for all employees. For Black African women, the gap has been particularly resistant to change, with only a 2% reduction in the period from 1990 to 2010. Using data from the Labour Force Survey (2002-2103), Khattab & Hussein (2018) found that "most Muslim women, regardless of their multiple ascriptive identities, generation and levels of qualifications, still face significant penalties (in employment) compared with their White-British Christian counterparts".

Thus precarious work is associated with groups that are already marginalised in the labour market. In a 2017 report the GMB Union found that, with the exception of Scotland, across the UK more women are on zero hours contracts than men (3.1% vs 2.4%). It also found that along with young and older people, ethnic minority workers are more likely to be employed in insecure work. There is a significant and noticeable difference in the proportion of ethnic minority workers who are employed on zero hours contracts: Black workers (5.1%) are twice

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<sup>3</sup><https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/insecure%20work%20report%20final%20final.pdf>

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as likely to be employed on a zero hours contract than white workers (2.6%). Black workers have also seen a sharp rise in temporary contracts, a 58% increase between 2011 and 2016, or seven times the increase for White workers (2020 Women's Budget Group report).

The GMB report notes that across UK workers who fall under the definition of 'Disabled' formulated by the Equality Act definition are more likely to be on zero hours contracts (3.4%) than non-disabled workers (2.7%). This is supported by other research, including the TUC's 2019 *Disability Employment and Pay Gaps* which found that the UK has a significant disability employment gap, of 29.8%. Only around half of disabled people of working age are employed (51.8%), in comparison to an employment rate for non-disabled people of 81.6 per cent. Disabled workers on average earn £1.65 less an hour or £3,003 less per year in comparison to non-disabled workers. The report further points to the fact that disabled women continue to face the most significant pay gaps of all.

Stonewall's 2020 report, '*Shut Out, the experiences of LGBT young people not in education, training or work*', outlines the struggles LGBT young people face with regards to employment. Young LGBT people face significant barriers to entry with regards to education and employment. The report states that this is partly due to anti-LGBT discrimination, but also due to bullying often beginning at school, which leads to an early disengagement with education. The report states that there are no accurate figures or estimates of the number of LGBT young people who are not in education, training or work in the UK today. Office of National Statistics data from the third quarter of 2019 show that 11.6 per cent of all 16-24 year olds in the UK, 800,000 young people, were not in education, training or work. The report notes that LGBT young people who had not been in education, training and work for a longer period often felt less hopeful about re-entering it, and less sure about what steps they could take to do so. Further, the report states that these experiences often had a negative impact on mental health and made it difficult for LGBT youth to remain in education and work.

Refugees and migrants are particularly vulnerable to precarious working. They may experience precarity not only in their labour market experiences, but also in their citizenship and residential status. As noted above, the two may be mutually constitutive and while there tends to be a particular focus on the vulnerability of people working in breach of their immigration conditions, those on temporary visa statuses or on sponsored visas may experience institutionalized precarity, enforced via immigration controls. Furthermore, in some sectors employers have been found to prefer to employ migrants because their

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dependent immigration status makes them more compliant workers than are citizens (Anderson 2010; Maury 2019).

Even before the COVID outbreak there was a growing interest in the connection between work, wellbeing and overall health. Some forms of insecure or temporary employment are associated with reduced wellbeing (What Works Wellbeing Centre 2018). GMB's 2017 '*Health and Wellbeing report*' found more than six in ten workers surveyed reported experiencing stress, anxiety or another mental health issue as a result of their current employment and working arrangements. The same proportion reported that they have worked while sick or unwell for fear of losing pay or risking their job or future work. In her report on health and work in Knowle West, Victoria Morris (2018) notes that "evidence of the impact of poor health on income is less accessible" in the literature than evidence of the impact of poor income on health. However, ethnographic findings presented in her study strongly suggested such a link, as among her respondents "illness either caused poverty or prevented [people] from getting out of poverty". Thus the effects of the erosion of this institutional security stretch far beyond working life, and impact on health and well-being, on life-cycle and family formation, on planning for the future and on social life more generally, potentially destabilising society and politics (Kalleberg and Vallas 2017; Standing 2009). In their 2013 report, *Work and Health in Bristol: Economic Insecurity and Health Inequality*, for Bristol City Council's Public Health Department and Wellspring Healthy Living Centre, Jakub Jabłonowski and Małgorzata Piotrowska state that the "changing nature and increasingly complex patterns of employment, as well as the unregulated influx of migrant workers, make it difficult to ensure workers' health".

On the other hand, integration into the labour market is a policy goal for a range of marginalised groups: disabled people, the unemployed, single parents, recently released prisoners and of course 'migrants'. Labour market participation is represented as providing a route out of poverty and also as demonstrating a commitment to 'making a contribution'. In practice this participation may often be via precarious work. Thus while the growth in precarious employment is largely regarded as a negative trend requiring mitigating actions from local or national government some of our community partners were also interested in whether new forms of recruitment and allocation of work (via digital platforms etc) may be to the advantage of those who have not been able to access for standard work via mainstream recruitment and selection processes. They point out that non-standard hours may be attractive to those who may have more than one source of income (for example running a small business and a taxi) or to fit in with other commitments (including child care, community or political activities). It may also offer an entry point to employment for those with relatively

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limited language skills or social capital through social networks within refugee and migrant communities. From the point of view of ACH, to better understand the dynamics and competitive advantage of precarious work models (in terms of customer impact and delivery for example) as well as cost savings is important as is a dialogue with researchers and with employers to better identify models of good practice.

#### **4. Bristol context**

Bristol offers an interesting case study to explore the impact of precarious work. It is the West of England's city-region most economically productive area (Calzada 2017) and one of the most successful city economies in the UK, with an employment rate of 77.6%, one of the highest for the UK's Core Cities and above the national average (Economic Briefing, 2019). It has a skilled workforce with a high proportion of graduates and students living in the city (State of Bristol Report, 2019. In March 2019, there were 247,100 working age residents in employment in Bristol, with an employment rate 2.2 percentage points above the national average (State of Bristol Report, 2019). At that time, the unemployment rate was 3.8% below the national average and lowest of the British Core Cities (State of Bristol Report, 2019).

While Bristol escaped from the worst impact of industrial restructuring and decline the period since the 2008 financial crash saw further decline of the remaining manufacturing in the city including food processing, engineering and port related activities which did offer full time standard employment. In 2011 for example the Fry's chocolate factory at Keynsham which employed up to 5000 people closed down. The period has also seen major pressures on public sector employment, especially in local government. On the other hand, the Bristol region is home to the UK's largest aerospace cluster and the largest digital cluster outside of London (McKinsey/Centre for Cities, 2014). Moreover, work has started on a speculative development at Avonmouth which will bring more than 150,000 sq.ft. of industrial space to the area. The development at Portside Park, planned to be completed shortly, will provide much-needed additional industrial space to the area and create around 400 jobs. Spaces will range from 12,500 sq.ft. to nearly 90,000 sq.ft. The developers have stated that: "Avonmouth is a key distribution location for the South West and the site is located in Bristol's most established industrial area. Portside Park has great prominence and connectivity. We are delighted to see construction underway and progressing well" (Economic Briefing, 2019).

However, despite the positive figures and Bristol's predicted economic growth, the State of Bristol's 2019 report states that "prosperity is not shared by all its citizens and many areas

experience multiple deprivation". Bristol is a city with stark inequalities of opportunity across place, class, and ethnicity. Though Bristol City Plan's 2018 report that the city has a large SME business sector, and a prospering BME business community, there continues to be issues with regards to education and training for Bristol's ethnic minority communities. Data from BCC's 2019 State of Bristol Report shows that Bristol has 41 areas in the most deprived ten percent in England, including three (Hartcliffe & Withywood, Filwood and Lawrence Hill) in the most deprived one percent (State of Bristol Report 2019). Over seven and a half percent of 16-17 year olds (2017/18) were "not in education, employment or training" (NEET), significantly worse than national average of five and a half percent (State of Bristol Report, 2019). Deprivation remains a long-standing issue in Bristol that is concentrated in particular areas of the city and segments of the population. As the 2019 State of Bristol Report, goes on to state:

Like many places, Bristol faces challenges. It remains a city of contrasts where some of the most affluent areas border some of the most deprived. Economic success has also created new problems such as travel congestion, environmental pollution and increasing house prices.

An ever more individualised service sector where customers (from more affluent sections of the city) require flexible and lower cost services (such as take away food delivery or taxi services) can put pressure on employers to reduce costs. Some businesses (such as the screen sector) have specific but time limited requirements for inputs from people with very specific skills and experience. The digital economy, use of employment platforms and the accessibility of apps via mobile devices also drives forward this process.

In geographical terms, concentrations of employment in the Bristol area is primarily located in a small number of areas of the city. This includes Filton/ Bradley Stoke (actually in S. Gloucestershire) which is a location for UWE, desk-based Ministry of Defence work as well as production and design relating to aerospace. The City Centre and the area around Temple Meads is a location for Higher education, retail work and high-end professional services. In the Avonmouth area, former port-related land adjacent to the M5 motorway has become a location for warehousing and distribution activities. South of the City, the airport (located in North Somerset) is a further concentration of employment. These locations are distant from residential areas Lawrence Hill, Easton, Ashley and also South Bristol. Public transport routes (including the Severn Beach rail line and bus services) are available but tend to be relatively costly, poor for cross city trips and are often unreliable especially outside peak times (for example for shift work).

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This concentration of employment means that public transport is a significant factor in Bristol's economic disparities. Employment clusters such as Avonmouth are difficult to reach by public transport and areas of the city, such as Hartcliffe, are cut off from the city due to poor transport links. Bristol City Council research 'Who cycles to work?' (2014) and 'Who walks to work?' (2014) help in understanding the mobility of commuters across the city. The reports found that more people in Bristol commute to work by bicycle or on foot than in any other Local Authority in England and Wales. Cycle use almost doubled and walking increased by 40% between 2001 and 2011. However, transportation use also is highly variable. The report states that a typical person who cycles to work in Bristol is likely to be a white male, aged between 25-39, with a degree, who works full time in a professional occupation. In contrast, the proportion of people who walk to work does not vary greatly between those with no qualifications and those with a degree or higher.

Poor employment conditions for those in work was identified as a major issue by the City Council in the 2014 report by the Bristol Fairness Commission. It identified priorities including the adoption of a living wage, avoidance of zero/low hours contracts, a workplace health and well-being charter, improved employment advice and guidance, positive action for represented groups and greater ESOL provision<sup>4</sup>. The Action Plan for the European Charter for equality of women and men in local life produced by Bristol Women's Commission also identified significant differences in women and men's position in the labour market, and highlighted challenges related to access to jobs, childcare; part time work which fits in with caring; low pay and zero hour contracts. It also proposed actions to mitigate these trends<sup>5</sup>.

The Bristol One City Plan has as its aim that by 2050 everyone in Bristol will contribute to a sustainable, inclusive and growing economy to the benefit of all.<sup>6</sup> There have been efforts by Bristol City Council to reduce barriers to employment and encourage economic development in some of the city's deprived areas. Apprenticeship initiatives have been implemented across the city (State of Bristol Report, 2019), and there are a number of employment related projects based in areas such as Knowle and Lawrence Hill. For example, as part of Bristol's "Global City: A 10 Year Strategy 2017 – 2027", people in the wards of Ashley, Lawrence Hill

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<sup>4</sup>. <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/35080/140630+-+Fairness+Commission+final+report+FINAL>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/33055/EU+Charter+for+equality+between+men+and+women%2C+Bristol%27s+Action+Plan.pdf/ddb9bbe0-1e78-4af8-b65f-82870cd53519>

<sup>6</sup><https://www.bristolonecity.com/one-city-plan/>

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and Easton will benefit from the European funded smart cities and communities REPLICATE project (Bristol Global City, 2017). Knowle West Media Centre (KWMC), a community organisation in one of the most deprived areas of Bristol has teamed up with Bristol Living Lab projects for Change Creators, a leadership and training programme in which 18-25 year olds meet and learn from innovators working in Europe whilst developing their own social change campaigns. Activities such as this have meant the neighbourhood has been recognised by the Intelligent Community Forum as one of the world's top 21 'smart communities'.

In 2017 the West of England Combined Authority produced West of England Local Industrial Strategy. This put inclusive economic growth at the heart of the West of England's ambition and vision for the region's future on the grounds that inclusion drives growth through championing diversity, innovation, and increased productivity.<sup>7</sup> The proposed new Temple Quarter campus on a derelict site adjacent to Temple Meads contributes to this agenda.<sup>8</sup> Commitments in terms of community access, diversity of employment and non-traditional modes of study have been highlighted as features of the new facility, including a co-operation link with nearby Barton Hill Settlement who work closely to open up opportunities with refugee, migrant and BAME communities in the Lawrence Hill area. However, the long-term impact of these provisions are not yet clear. Furthermore, evidence from employers highlights that the government's current post Brexit immigration proposals could significantly limit the growth of sectors in Bristol including aerospace, digital, and the creative industries. At the moment non-UK nationals make up 16 per cent of Bristol's population – higher than the national average.<sup>9</sup>

## 5. Precarity and Bristol

Some of Bristol's growth sectors are characterised by temporary and part time contracts as well as unclear employment status and lack of collective representation. Self-employment is often an indicator of precarity and Bristol saw a growth in the number of self-employed workers with an increase of 18,000 self-employed workers between 2010 and 2016. This is the biggest rise outside of London and the second highest of any local authority area of the UK (GMB, 2017). In the year to June 2019 Bank Search data indicated that there were 2,857 new business start-ups in Bristol. (Economic Briefing, 2019).

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<sup>7</sup><https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/ourstrategy/>

<sup>8</sup><https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/concerns-over-potential-impact-6400-3432536>

<sup>9</sup> IPPR, October 2019, <file:///C:/Users/My%20PC/Downloads/Go%20west%20Bristol%20Oct19%20summary.pdf>

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Bristol is marked by stark disparity with regards to the economic security of the city's ethnic minorities. The city is ranked seventh worst of 348 districts in England and Wales for multiple inequalities experienced by its ethnic minorities (Bristol, A City Divided? 2015). Ethnic minorities in Bristol experience greater disadvantage than in England and Wales as a whole in education and employment, and this is particularly so for Black African residents (Bristol: A City Divided? 2017). The city's ethnic minority employment gap is over twice the national level, and those from ethnic minority backgrounds who are working are more likely to be employed in low skilled jobs (Bristol City Council Annual Population Survey, 2017/18).

There have been a number of strategies and initiatives to tackle these gaps in education and employment and provide training programmes for ethnic minority residents in Bristol. One of the strategies set out in the Bristol City Council Business Plan 2017/18 was to implement the Race Equality Toolkit in Bristol through the Race Equality in Education Steering Group to close the gap in educational disparities and to develop a Recruitment and Retention Plan. Bristol City Council also has plans to set up a BAME Enterprise Hub in the city. The SETsquared Innovative Breakthrough Bursary Scheme, set up by SETsquared Bristol, awards business bursaries to ethnic minority businesses.

## **5.1 Refugee and migrant communities**

Unlike other core cities, reflecting its different economic and social development, Bristol did not experience significant in-migration during the decades after the second world war. However, this has changed in the early 2000s though the scale is difficult to assess and there are important differences by nationality. In 2016 there were 67 000 people (approx. 15% of the population) living in the city who were not UK-born a significant increase from 40 000 ten years previously<sup>10</sup>.

One major change over the past decade has been the arrival of people seeking work from new EU member states in Central and Eastern Europe. It is estimated that there are around 15000 Polish-born people living in Bristol, mostly younger (70% under 35) and more likely to be in work than the UK born. Around 60% had some form of higher education at college or university and yet most were in low waged work such as manufacturing (the largest category at 33%), transport./drivers, administration/office, cleaning/housekeeping, hotel/catering and

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<sup>10</sup><https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/number-people-born-outside-uk-378546>

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warehouse work as well as construction, health and care services, retail and food/meat processing?<sup>11</sup><sup>12</sup><sup>13</sup> Many of the migrant workers from new member states are women working in sectors such as social care, hospitality and retail. There are also migrants in the UK from countries outside the EU who have restricted rights to work and some who are legally allowed to stay in the UK and who are working illegally. An unknown number are illegal entrants and overstayers.

A major element in this change has been the arrival in Bristol of asylum seekers and refugees. It is difficult to make comparative estimates of both refugee/asylum seeker communities and migrant workers from elsewhere as the data are not very reliable. However, it is generally estimated that of 60 000 people in Bristol not born in the UK some 15-20 000 are from Poland and 15 –20 000 of Somali origin. It has been suggested that the number of refugees in Bristol is between 2 –3000<sup>14</sup> (However, the here?) number is very hard to determine as the estimated total number of refugees includes individuals who have moved here for personal and for work reasons. Countries of origin include Yemen, Somalia, Eritrea, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and others. There are also people from refugee backgrounds who are now UK citizens including those who have residence rights or citizenship in other EU member states, thus there is considerable overlap between BAME and refugee/migrant communities. For example, it is estimated that the city has between 15 and 20,000 residents of a Somali background, but some are UK born, or have citizenship of an EU member state, or be UK nationals, and therefore not subject to restrictions on the basis of their legal status, even as they experience racism and the restrictions associated with precarious working.

There are no firm figures for the number of asylum seekers in Bristol which would need to include those formally dispersed to the city together with others who have informally relocated for personal or other reasons. Bristol Refugee Rights assess the number to be around 500 – 1000 people. Asylum seekers are not legally allowed to work whilst their cases are considered (other than in exceptional circumstances) and so not generally able to take any work including precarious employment. However, some may end up working illegally or undertaking surrogate work as volunteers etc and in that situation will be very precarious with few rights and at risk of detention and possibly deportation. Sectors where this happens

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<sup>11</sup><https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/eu-migration-to-and-from-the-uk/>

<sup>12</sup><https://www.voscur.org/sites/voscur.org/files/executivesummary.pdf>

<sup>13</sup><http://www.wellspringhlc.org.uk/reports/WorkandHealthofPolish-speakingMigrantsinBristol.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> For example by Bristol Refugee Rights

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include catering and restaurant work, car cleaning and valeting. There is a contradiction apparent in relation to the “integration” of asylum seekers between exclusion and segregation on the one hand, and on the other concern to prepare the individuals concerned for “integration” should their application be successful. Current rules (concerning work, study, training etc) err on the side of isolation, presumably to act as a deterrent and to encourage a willingness to return.

If the asylum seeker wins their claim and is accepted as a refugee or is given some other kind of legal status they have the right to work. However, there is no systematic support in accessing sustainable and decent employment. Refugees face barriers including language, lack of social capital and access to social networks, recognition of qualifications as well as attitudes and procedures for recruitment and selection by employers, so many look for entry level work. Entry level work of this type is not necessarily associated with precarious work but is increasingly linked to minimum wages, short term contracts, often flexible contracts. We can look at the overall situation of refugees in relation to labour market participation<sup>15</sup>.

Highly skilled	Near labour market entry	Small business / self employment	Far from the labour market
10%	25%	25%	40%

Refugees with high skill levels can be found in entry level / precarious work. Examples include a Vietnamese Maths professor picking strawberries or a Syrian eye surgeon stacking supermarket shelves. Here barriers to higher level work can include recognition of experience and qualifications. However, this is a relatively small group including at most 10% of the total and may work in a range of sectors including higher education, accountancy and professional services, IT and health care.

A larger group are near to labour market entry, actively seek employment but face barriers such as language, lack of social capital and social networks as well as lack of or inappropriate technical skills which are outmoded in Bristol (for example repairing furniture or car repair). They are also likely to end up working in sectors already employing people from refugee backgrounds which may be categorized as precarious work. Many of this group will be men

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<sup>15</sup> ACH data

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arriving ahead of their families seeking security and opportunity. This work may include taxi trade, security work, warehousing and distribution and social care. It may be characterised by low pay, poor conditions and no routes for progression. People within this group may be distant from the role of trades unions and organised labour. However, precarious work for this group may allow initial experience and skills to be developed and also give flexibility for studying, training, community or other activities. Many individuals from refugee communities may risk becoming stuck in entry level work, lacking social capital, networks and soft skills to progress within current employment or to move within the labour market. In order to address this, ACH is, for example, working with professional business services firms such as Womble Bond Dickinson, to develop long term pathways into higher quality work.

A further group see self employment or small business as a desired route to economic opportunity. In fact many of the individuals in this category could be regarded as in precarious work with low pay, poor conditions and lack of permanent security at work. Whilst a wide variety of types of business are established they can be vulnerable due to lack of profitability and cash flow problems. Many lack a coherent business model and may be encouraged to follow inappropriate social enterprise models. Others will not have easy access to finance due to unwillingness to use interest bearing loans and some will focus on goods or services with very small markets within their own communities. Yet this group does have huge entrepreneurial potential to be tapped. Precarious self employment and small business can offer opportunities, especially for women, to generate income and social contacts whilst undertaking family and caring roles in a flexible way.

Lastly, a considerable number of people, a considerable proportion women, from this section of the community are several steps from the labour market due to factors such as health or mental health problems, caring responsibilities, lack of confidence and aspiration as well as the factors mentioned above. Again this group may be vulnerable to precarious work through short term casual employment for example in catering or domestic work which may lack proper contracts, living or minimum wage levels or other protection. Isolation and lack of social networks may prevent access to public services or community support needed.

In addition, there are refugees in Bristol through specific resettlement schemes, notably Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme which has seen around 100 people relocated. The primary vehicle for the management of this scheme has been Bristol City Council who have developed a support package for individuals accepted into the city through this route. This has included targeted assistance in finding work (for example ACH supported preparation for a

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jobs fair) and in relation to small business and social enterprise. Refugees through this scheme have a more certain status and a higher level of support from the local authority (provided via national government) and others and will include family groups including people of different ages including children and young people. People who enter the UK through this route are immediately legally able to work but many are far from the labour market as they are selected by UNHCR according to their vulnerable status (such as disability or illness). The individuals within this group will pose additional challenges in relation to integration via employment. There may be risks in relation to elements of precarious employment though where higher levels of support are available this might be identified and mitigated.

In relation to gender issues, asylum seekers and refugees who arrive through the asylum route and engaged via ACH are likely to be younger or middle aged men who travel first in search of opportunity and security ahead of wider family groups. However, there are significant differences between refugee communities in the composition of cohorts and their approach to labour market engagement. Women are likely to have to fit activity in the labour market with caring and other responsibilities and thereby engage in precarious work, for example in social care, cleaning. Refugee women also see small business development as an opportunity and may be more flexible in considering areas of economic activity different from that in their country of origin compared with men. Refugees arriving via resettlement schemes are likely to include a larger proportion of women as well as children and young people. In addition, ACH work extensively with individuals from refugee and migrant communities (often not born in the UK) many of whom may have previously lived and worked in third countries including other EU member states (for example people of Somali origin from the Netherlands). These individuals are often younger, better educated and prepared and include a higher proportion of women than those who have initially entered the UK / EU for the first time.

## **5.2 A practitioner perspective**

ACH – previously Ashley Community Housing – was established in 2008 largely by people from refugee backgrounds to provide housing for individuals whose status was confirmed and needed support to integrate into life in the UK. More recently, the role has significantly expanded to include support for refugees, migrants and newly arrived communities to find employment or to engage in small business development as we see economic opportunity as central to the process of “integration”. This includes directly working with employers and aims wherever possible to ensure that our client groups do not end up in entry level work but rather where possible in median salaried work. We offer careers advice, training, language

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support and aim to develop new techniques to assess “integration”. ACH emphasise a business model through which emphasis is placed on the importance of the skills, experience and networks of refugees and migrants as important for the future of our economy. We now employ around 70 staff in Bristol, Birmingham and Wolverhampton.

Research into precarious work often tends to emphasise the potential negative impacts that elements of this may have on the individual workers concerned and on the wider functioning of the labour market through reducing bargaining power and protection. Clearly it has potential risks for workers (such as low and irregular pay, poor conditions etc) but is nevertheless a feature of areas of the local economy which are of immediate interest to the communities we work with, such as taxi driving, distribution, security work, and the care sector. For their 2013 study on work and health in Bristol, Jablonowski and Piotrowska (2013) report that a precarious labour environment may suit some people. For example, some participants they contacted for their study reported that they were in “good health and actually appreciated flexibility of precarious work”. From a practical point of view it is important to assess the attractions and benefits of this type of work and associated processes as well to mitigate problems where possible.

## **6. Everyday Integration – Key Sectors**

We selected three sectors to examine precarious work and integration in Bristol: care, hospitality and TV and Screen. All are important sectors in Bristol’s economy, and the first two are known to be sectors where there is considerable precarious working and migrant employment. We decided to include the TV and Screen sector because, while precarious work is frequently identified with low wage and entry level work it is also a significant feature of other sectors including the culture/screen sector which is a key pillars of our economy in Bristol. Interestingly, in a survey of BAME businesses in Bristol conducted in 2018 by Black South West Network, the creative industry was found to be one of the two of the largest BAME business sectors in Bristol (the other was food service and retail). However, ethnic minority involvement in the UK Digital Tech sector is higher at 15% than the national average of BAME participation in the entire workplace, at 11%, Bristol remains below average.

### **6.1 TV and Screen**

The culture industries emerged in the UK in the 1980s, when “culture came to be seen as a potential contributor to economic development in general and urban regeneration in

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particular” (Frenzel 2015). In 2001 New Labour established the Department for Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS), a dedicated government department which has subsequently been embraced by policy makers in the EU and the United Nations and has found international application (Frenzel 2015). The Creative Industries, as they have become known, became an increasingly significant component of the UK economy. In 2016 the DCMS reported that this sector was worth £84.1 billion per year and grew at almost twice the rate of the wider UK economy, generating almost £10 million per hour (Genders 2019).

The cultural sector is long established in Bristol, with cultural organisations growing rapidly and around 16,000 jobs in the sector in Bristol and Bath<sup>16</sup><sup>17</sup>. Bristol has thus benefited from national growth as the UK’s third largest cluster of film and television workers after London and Manchester, with an estimated 1,500 freelancers working in the region (Genders 2019). Within a production economy composed of BBC Bristol and around 150 private companies, Bristol is most home to multi-award winning Aardman Animations, the BBC’s world-renowned Natural History Unit and the largest dedicated film and TV studio facility in the West of England, The Bottle Yard Studios (Genders 2019). Channel 4 has recently selected Bristol to host one of its new creative hubs.

In 2017/18 Bristol’s film and television industry generated £15.2m in inward investment across 1,141 filming days and 383 productions (Genders 2019) and in 2017 Bristol was named by UNESCO as a Creative City of Film (State of Bristol 2019). Bristol is one of three hub locations for the BBC in the UK and produces 35% of global natural history programmes in the region (Bristol: Global City Report, 2017). The screen sector increasingly is structured around employing a small number of core staff and when in full production contracting significant numbers on short term and temporary contracts using digital platforms and social networks (Genders 2019).

BCC’s State of Bristol, Key Facts 2019 report reported the following figures concerning the city’s creative industries:

- It is estimated that there are 20,000 jobs in Bristol’s Creative and Digital industries
- Bristol named as the UK’s most artistic city (April 2019)

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<sup>16</sup><https://meanwhilecreative.co.uk/coworking-office-space/bristol/what-is-the-bristol-and-bath-creative-cluster/>

<sup>17</sup><https://www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk/uk-creative-overview/facts-and-figures/focus-on-bristol-and-bath>

- Bristol's motion picture, video and TV post-production activities sub-sector (although small) has outperformed that of London. In Bristol the number of business units in this sector grew 75% between 2011 and 2019, well over twice that (28.9%) for London
- In 2018/19 Bristol Film Office and The Bottleyard Studios brought in approx. £16m of inward investment to the city with 757 filming days
- 2018/19 also saw major productions film in the city on location including His Dark Materials, Casualty, Unforgotten, Poldark, War of the Worlds and The Trial of Christine Keeler
- Visiting film & TV activities contributed £16m of inward investment to the Bristol economy in 2018/19

However, despite its status and appeal the sector is riddled with precarity and the film and television industries, like many wider cultural industries, are “increasingly dominated by freelance workers and small independent companies, with the majority of workers on precarious, project-based, short term contracts with few benefits and little workplace protection” (Berridge 2019). Go West (2019) finds the sector is made up of a high proportion of freelancers, who are often employed on short-term contracts to deliver specific projects. Nineteen per cent of freelancers who responded to the 2017 Go West! survey had worked for four months or less over the previous year; 30% reported undertaking non-audio-visual work during the same period such as administrative or customer service roles (Genders 2019). According to Creative Skillset, in 2015, 89% of all workers in the film production sector and 52% of those working in independent television production in the UK were freelance.

Whilst wage levels may be comparatively attractive, the insecure nature of jobs, use of temporary contracts and other factors may constitute ‘precarious prosperity’ (Amacker et al. 2010). In the same way as for other workers precarity can be seriously disruptive of work-life balance. The tolerability and harm of such living circumstances may depend on the social capital and life-stage of the worker – do they have a social safety net, and do they have dependents are critical to understanding the impact of precarious working for all workers including the better paid.

In the report, *An Invisible Army: The Role of Freelance Labour in Bristol’s Film and Television Industries* (2019), Genders provides a critical overview and context to the growth of Bristol’s creative sectors. Although freelancers are central to the creative and cultural industries, their “contribution to the creative economy is statistically invisible and poorly recognised”. She

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reports the precarious nature of their work can have adverse effects on freelancers' mental health, exacerbated by isolation: "With many freelancers asserting the importance of co-working for combatting isolation and improving mental health, the rising cost of office space within the city arguably has a significant impact on health and wellbeing within the freelance workforce." She describes freelancers as the film and television industry's 'invisible army'. This is in part due to the: "transient nature of their work and careers: it is hard to track and map freelancers because, by nature, they are highly mobile across different employers and also across different geographical areas and cities" (Genders, 2019:10). Specifically, Genders states that:

Alongside the skill-specific roles individual freelancers occupy, the freelance workforce fulfils an important economic role by responding to opportunities in the market as they occur. In this sense, freelancers constitute a 'reserve army' of cultural workers, allowing employers to offload the financial risks and precarity of creative work onto the workforce itself (pg.10).

Notably, this sector, while precarious was not felt to be accessible to BAME young people. Babassa's research report states that young people interested in the creative sectors, "felt potential roles were not well understood, with creative pursuits often seen as a 'hobby' rather than potential career" (p.9). Creative firms have also expressed concerns about the impact of Brexit and the proposed new immigration system undermining opportunities for international cultural collaboration.

COVID-19 greatly impacted the activities of film production, and many productions ceased during the pandemic. On 16<sup>th</sup> April 2020 Bristol Film Office issued a statement that it would not be able to "support any filming activity within Bristol City Council public spaces or on the public highway within the city of Bristol". The Film Office also stated that they would not be "accepting or processing any new filming permit applications until further notice", with the exception of filming for journalism. Bristol Film Office and BottleYard Studios released a statement in March 2020 concerning the sector's impact and response to COVID-19. It states:

"COVID-19 has caused unprecedented changes to film and TV production around the world. In the UK, nearly all production has halted. At this time of extreme uncertainty, we know that many of you in Bristol have either lost work, or face losing work. We know that the Government measures announced on 20th March do not go far enough to provide the vital support needed by self-employed workers and freelancers in this sector."

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<http://filmbristol.co.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Covid-19-A-message-to-self-employed-freelance-workers-in-Bristols-film-TV-moving-image-sector.pdf>

The statement goes on to note that the Bristol Film Office and The Bottle Yard Studios were liaising with Bristol City Council's Economic Development team, senior leaders, councillors, local MPs and local/national sector bodies, to ensure the “needs of the workforce in this sector are fully represented during city and regional planning”.

Various government initiatives were put in place to support creative industry workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Art Council England announced a £160 million emergency support package, which included a £20 million fund allocated for individuals (artists, creative practitioners and freelancers). Grants of up to £2,500 were made available to creative practitioners whose main work focused on the following creative areas: Music, Theatre, Dance, Visual Arts, Literature, Combined Arts, Museums. This fund also included the work of choreographers, writers, translators, producers, editors, freelance educators in the arts, composers, directors, designers, artists, craft makers and curators.

The BFI and The Film and TV Charity set up a creative industry backed Covid-19 ‘Film and TV Emergency Relief Fund’ with £1 million donation from Netflix. The fund was set up to help support the creative community to provide “emergency short-term relief to the many thousands of active workers and freelancers who have been directly affected by the closure of productions across the UK”. The fund offered grants of up to £500 to provide stop-gap support.

The Film and TV Charity, along with BFI also sought to recognise and raise awareness to the significant mental health pressures arising as a result of COVID-19 for creative industry workers. In line with the charity’s existing Whole Picture Programme for better mental health, they developed new advice specifically tailored for the industry on “how to stay mentally well at home and creating a new supportive community forum for freelancers”. Netflix’s donation to the fund was part of a broader 100 million Netflix fund for creatives whose jobs had been affected by the pandemic. Most of the funds would go towards support for employees on Netflix’s own productions around the world, including Bristol, and was in addition to the two week’s pay Netflix already committed to the crew and cast on productions that had been suspended due to the outbreak.

## 6.2 Care

The UK's care sector has faced widespread workforce shortages for over a decade. The Progressive Policy Think Tank (2020) reports that workforce shortages are common across almost every health and care profession in the UK. For instance, it notes that GPs' numbers were at their lowest point since 2003, nursing shortages were standing at 40,000 and there was a shortage of 110,000 people in the social care sector. It states that workforce shortages result in "significant pressures on both access to services and quality". This was published before COVID-19, which has exposed the desperate straits of the sector and put it under further pressure. In a context of substantial labour shortages, Skills for Care estimates that around 8 per cent of roles in adult social care in England are vacant, and with a rapidly ageing population, the ability to recruit migrant workers in social care is of critical importance for the sector. Approximately 850,000 migrants work in health and social care, around one in five of the total workforce (IPPR Briefing 2020). A quarter of care workers are on zero-hours contracts and the median pay rate in the private sector is £8.10 an hour (The Guardian 14/04/2020).

The Women's Budget Group 2020 report, '*Gender, Work and Care: Explaining Gender Inequality Across the UK*', part of its Commission for a Gender Equal Economy, highlights the disproportionate role women play in the formal and informal care sectors. The report notes that the crisis in social care placed increasing pressure on women to care for elderly relatives, often at the expense of their employment. Women aged 45 to 54 are more than twice as likely as men to have given up work to care and over four times more likely to have reduced working hours due to caring responsibilities. Similarly, the lack of affordable, high quality childcare and cuts to services for people with disabilities can constrain women's opportunities for paid employment. The report states that "unpaid caring by women plays a role by slowing career progression and constraining opportunities for involvement in public life".

Against a backdrop of a projected national funding gap of £3.6 billion by 2024/25, adult social care is a core priority area for Bristol City Council. 'Caring, leisure and other service occupations' make up 8% of the West of England's employment occupations (WECA 2019). Demand for nurses in the West of England saw a sharp increase between 2017 and 2018. Human health and social work is by far the largest employer in the West of England, in particular the National Health Service which is the West of England's largest single employer, posting more job listings than the other top 10 employers in the region put together. WECA's 2019 Local Industry Strategy report further states that the 'human health and social work activities' represent 13% of all jobs in the region with 78,000 jobs. A disproportionate number

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of BAME people and migrants work in care. In the West of England 13% of BAME people work in care, compared to under 10% for White British (WECA 2019) and non-EU migrants are more likely than average to work in health and social care – around 20% of the health and social care workforce are migrant workers (Go West 2019).

Durrant, Lane & Hayward's 2010 report, *Vulnerable Employment in the Care Industry: Report from CAB/SPAN Social Policy Event, Bristol* summarises a discussion on vulnerable employment in the care industry that took place at Bristol's Citizens Advice Bureau co-organised by Single Parent Action Network. The report states that variable working hours and income in the care industry make it "difficult to budget resulting in debt, including rent and council tax arrears". Another labour issue identified in the report was caused by "terms and conditions not reflecting actual working conditions" and the fact that "overtime is not counted for sick pay, pensions etc". Furthermore, this was in the context of "increasing conditionality in claiming benefits but lack of flexibility within the benefits system to cope with varying hours" of employment. This makes claiming in-work benefits difficult for those who are in unsalaried or precarious employment in the care industry.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, care workers were routinely described by the government and media as working on the 'frontline' of the pandemic and were recognised as 'key workers'. Critics of the government's response however noted that care workers were often risking their lives. Many care workers lacked PPE equipment essential for safe working. The Progressive Policy Think Tank's April 2020 report, 'Care fit for carers: Ensuring the safety and welfare of NHS and care workers during and after Covid-19 report' noted one in five health professionals across the UK said that safety concerns around COVID-19 had made them more likely to leave the profession. These concerns were not unfounded. The Guardian (27/04/2020) found that deaths in some of the largest care home networks in the UK surged by more than 70% in early April 2020, with leaders in the sectors calling on the government for additional support and protective measures. Public Health England said that in the week ending 19 April, 651 of the 682 COVID-19 outbreaks reported across the whole of England were in care homes. Care UK reported 244 COVID-19 deaths in its facilities, a 74% rise in a single week in April, including 18 deaths in a single care home in north London where a care worker had also died.

The vulnerability of BME workers in the sector gave serious cause for concern and the Nursing Times (17/04/2020) reported that the pandemic highlighted the inequalities faced by nurses from BAME backgrounds. In an interview with *Nursing Times*, Carol Cooper, head of equality, diversity and human rights at Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Trust, said BME nurses

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and healthcare assistants felt they were being picked to work on coronavirus wards more so than their white colleagues. Black South West Network released a statement in April 2020 entitled, '*We are not all in this together: The Racial Divide of COVID-19*'.

"In the UK, our health service relies heavily on migrant workers. NHS staff who are exposed to the virus are disproportionately drawn from minority ethnic group. The first 8 doctors who died were from Egypt, Nigeria, Pakistan, India, Sudan and Sri Lanka, which only confirms the dependence of the NHS on migrant workers ([telegraph](#)). It's a sign of the systemic racism which permeates our society as white doctors dominate prestigious disciplines while foreign doctors find work on the front line".

The increased need for the health and social care of the vulnerable and the sick during the pandemic meant increased demand for care workers. In March 2020, the UK government announced that doctors, nurses and paramedics with visas due to expire before 1 October 2020 would have them automatically extended for one year. The extension would apply to around 2,800 migrant doctors, nurses and paramedics, employed by the NHS. The extension will also apply to their family members, demonstrating how valued overseas NHS staff are to the UK. The Women's Budget Group also highlighted the affect the pandemic had on women, with women being disproportionately represented in the formal and informal care sectors. Hundreds of refugee doctors were among thousands petitioning the General Medical Council to register experienced foreign doctors who had waited sometimes for years for UK accreditation, so they could use their skills in the COVID-19 crisis (*Observer*, *Observer* 12/04/2020). The British Medical Association called on the government to grant indefinite leave to remain for all international doctors working in the NHS during the Covid-19 pandemic. (*Independent*, 13/04/2020). In response to the pandemic, union leaders call on the UK government to fund a new £11.50 an hour minimum wage for care workers, to put them on a par with supermarket workers and delivery drivers, after the Scottish government announced a 3.3 per cent pay rise for care workers (*Guardian*, 14 April 2020).

Women's Budget Group published a statement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic entitled, '*Covid-19: Gender and other Equality Issues*' (March 2020). It states that: "both the health and economic impacts of Covid-19 will be gendered. Women are the majority of those providing care, paid and unpaid and the majority of health workers". In Bristol, a temporary NHS Nightingale hospital was built on UWE's Frenchay campus to treat patients, with a capacity to treat up to a 1,000.

### **6.3 Hospitality**

The hospitality industry includes “enterprises that provide accommodation, meals and drinks in venues outside of the home” (Oxford Economic Report 2015:2). There is limited information on the hospitality sector in Bristol, but national data and statistics from various reports help to understand the industry make up in the city, the region and the UK at large.

In 2014 employment in the UK hospitality industry stood at 2.9 million jobs, equivalent to 9% of total UK employment and accounting for 17% of total UK net employment growth between 2010 and 2014 (Oxford Economic Report 2015). It is the UK’s fourth largest industry in employment terms and made a substantial contribution to the UK’s private sector jobs recovery after the 2008 recession. The hospitality industry makes an important contribution to employment across all UK regional economies, and in the South West accounts for 10% share of total regional employment. It consistently ranks between fourth and sixth place across all regions in terms of industry size. The West of England Local Industrial Business Environment 2019 report states that accommodation and food services made up 7% of the region’s employment and highlighted FoodworksTM, a significant food and drink development centre under development in the region.

The Progressive Policy Think Tank found approximately nine per cent of EU workers and seven per cent of non-EU workers are employed in accommodation and food services, compared to five per cent of UK workers (IPPR Briefing 2020). Between 12.3% and 23.7% of the UK hospitality sector workforce is made up of EU nationals and pre-COVID estimates were that it needed around 62,000 new EU migrants per. According to this scenario by 2029 the hospitality sector could face a recruitment gap of over one million workers due to lack of access to EU workers (KPMG 2017).

Go West’s 2019 report on the effects of Brexit to the West of England’s economy also found that EU migrants tend to be concentrated in hotel and restaurant employment. It estimates there are some 60,000 jobs within the hospitality and tourism sector in the west of England region (Business West 2019) and the industry was particularly vulnerable to restrictions on freedom of movement, as it is one of the largest employers of EU workers. Of the businesses responding to the Business West Skills and Training Survey, 18 per cent reported hard-to-fill vacancies in the last 12 months, of those, 14 per cent were in semi-skilled or unskilled roles.

Firms in the hospitality industry have reported significant recruitment challenges since the 2016 Brexit referendum. Bristol Hoteliers, part of the Bristol Hoteliers Association (BHA), represents 40 major hotels in the city, with around 4,000 rooms. BHA estimates that hotels

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contribute approximately £200 million into Bristol's local economy and reported a significant rise in vacancies - 15.2 percent month-on-month advertised vacancies being advertised (CV-Library, 2019). BHA states that several of Bristol's top hotels reported that filling their current vacancies is proving to be challenging, but that rising wages across the industry may help.

Raphael Herzog, General Manager of De Vere, Tortworth Court, and acting chair of BHA, states:

"The hospitality industry is often seen as a low-wage industry and is therefore less attractive to potential recruits. The fact that salaries are rising will hopefully encourage people to think again about a career in hospitality. There are some great career paths available in our industry, which could take people all over the world. There is also a lot of potential to follow many different career paths within the industry; you could start as a receptionist or waiter, then move into sales, HR, accounts, maintenance, marketing – there are so many opportunities to expand your skill-set and experience new things."

The UK hospitality industry as a whole has suffered from a skills shortage, partly caused by prolonged uncertainty over Brexit and its impact on the value of the pound, which has deterred workers from Europe from taking up jobs in the UK. In 2019, BHA members said they had vacancies for reception staff and a number of hotels said they needed to recruit chefs, room attendants, restaurant staff and night duty employees. A BHA survey showed salary increases of 14.3 percent for head waiters in 2019 compared to the previous year, with assistant front officer manager salaries rising by 13.46 percent. The median salary for an assistant night manager rose by 11.11 per cent, executive head chef salaries rose by 10.94 percent year-on-year, and the median salaries for receptionists rose by just over nine per cent over the year.

Mr Herzog, acting chair of BHA further stated:

"It's an exciting time for the hospitality industry locally, which is another reason to hope more people will be attracted to our sector. In September, Bristol was the only place in the UK to be named on the semi-final shortlist for the World Food Travel Association's Food Trekking Awards. Bristol is one of the most visited cities in the UK and have the most Michelin star restaurants outside of London, so it is an exciting time for anyone joining this sector. We've had the opening of The Wave surfing centre just outside the city and plans for the nation's third biggest concert and entertainments

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arena were also recently revealed, so the city's hospitality scene is truly vibrant – and in need of more people to help keep that momentum going".

The hospitality industry is an important and thriving sector in Bristol. Labour shortages are an enduring issue in this sector in the West of England, and pre-COVID it was anticipated they would be exacerbated by Brexit immigration reforms. The sector aims to attract workers by making hospitality industry jobs better paid and more secure, as the Go West 2019 report notes that the industry is being targeted for the national Living Wage Campaign.

Across the UK the hospitality sector was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The UK government asked all hotels, restaurants, and non-essential shops to close, placing significant strain on the UK's hospitality industry and with significant consequences for migrant workers (IPPR Briefing 2020). The UK government initiated some measures to support the sector, including a 12-month break from business rates for small hotels with a rateable value of less than £51,000. UK Hospitality, which represents more than 700 businesses across the UK, called for special measures to support the sector in the light of "pragmatic measures to contain and minimise the spread of coronavirus." It reported that first-quarter hotel occupancy in 2020 decreased by 15 percent, while eating and drinking out decreased by seven percent, and forward bookings across hotels, restaurants, pubs and bars were down by up to 50 percent.

The Bristol Hospitality Association published a statement noting that the UK government's measures to support the sector (including a 12-month break from business rates for small hotels with a rateable value of less than £51,000) would not ensure the sector survived the pandemic. Mr Herzog, chair of the BHA, asserted that the pandemic was negatively impacting a sector already faced with severe difficulties related to post-Brexit immigration policy.

Abolishing business rates for the smaller hotels for one year is definitely good news for those businesses. But the sector as a whole is suffering significantly. The Coronavirus outbreak is having a massive impact on all our businesses. Many conferences – which the smaller hotels are not able to accommodate – are being cancelled because people fear they will be more at risk from the virus, and there are many guest cancellations, too. Across the BHA membership, it is estimated that Coronavirus-related cancellations will have cost at least £2 million altogether, although it could quite easily be double this by the time all the data is studied, just for March and April. You don't need to be an

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expert economist to see that those kind of decreases are simply not sustainable unless more support is forthcoming.

In order to ease the strain of job losses, many businesses in the hospitality sector shifted to the provision of services such as catering for the NHS and or delivering for supermarkets. Bristol Post (9/04/2020) reported that staff from Bristol based catering company, Fosters Events Catering, began cooking for hospital workers for example. Nearly one hundred employees from the company were furloughed but were using their time to produce, transport and serve more than 300 daily meals for frontline NHS staff at Southmead Hospital. Bristol Uber Eats waived delivery and activation fees in order to support restaurants hit by decreasing demand during the crisis. Help 4 Hospitality was launched to provide financial support to the hospitality sector, with a £250,000 fundraising target by August 1, 2020.

## 7. COVID-19 Unemployment and Precarity

The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic had significant and detrimental effect on industries and employment across the world not least because lockdown measures paused much economic activity. In response the UK government set up several schemes. For businesses working in retail, hospitality and leisure funding offered was £10,000 under the Small Business Grant Fund, and either £10,000 or £25,000 under the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/business-rates/grant-funds>). ‘Furloughed’ employees on temporary leave because their employer’s operations have been severely affected by coronavirus were protected by the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme which paid 80% of employees’ usual monthly wages up to £2,500 a month. The Coronavirus Self-employment Income Support Scheme pays 80% of a person’s trading profits again up to £2,500 a month. Between 23 March (the date UK lockdown was instigated) and 6 April 25% of businesses responding to the Office of National Statistics request for data reported they had temporarily closed or paused trading for the period. Of the 75% continuing to trade on average, 21% of their staff were furloughed. **Bristol City Council and the Bristol business community responded to the pandemic in a number of ways and with city focused initiatives.**

Despite these efforts to protect jobs, many people became unemployed and nearly two million people applied for Universal Credit since lockdown was initiated. Universal Credit is ‘a basic allowance replacing Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Housing Benefit, Income Support, income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance and income-related Employment and Support

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Allowance’<sup>18</sup>. A benefit ‘cap’ limits the total amount of benefit a person and household can receive. Child Poverty Action Group (2017) reports that the number of households capped nationally rose by 240% in 2017 (from 20,096 to 68,079). Bristol, in the same year, saw a 310% increase (at 636 up from 155), of those affected by the benefits cap. In April 2019, there were five times more applications than normal for council tax relief, as residents struggled to pay their council tax bills (Bristol Cable 16/04/2019). During 2018, Bristol City Council received 642 applications in one week for tax relief, compared with normal levels of around 100. North Bristol Food Bank reported handing out more than 4,500 emergency food supplies to people in need in 2018, of which 1,800 went to children and claimed that this increase was a result of the continuing issues with Universal Credit and its associated five week wait. Women have been particularly hard hit by benefit changes. They have lost more than men from the 2010-2017 direct tax and welfare reforms at every income level and on average women have lost around £940 per year compared with £460 (Women’s Budget Group 2020).

Before COVID-19 the Office of National Statistics’ (ONS) Bristol Labour Market Profile in 2020 reported the benefit claimant count was 8,430 (February 2020). Bristol City Council is one of 20 remaining local authorities that have retained full reduction of Council Tax for those on passported benefits (Bristol Law Centre 2019). As of February 2019, 21,000 households received full entitlement, and thus were exempt for paying any Council Tax. A further 14,000 households received partial reduction. (**Data on UC uptick in Bristol**)

Bristol City Council’s site page on ‘Homelessness and COVID-19’ details the support for individuals facing homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic. In late March 2020 BCC requested hotels, Airbnb owners and accommodation providers to help with providing 450 rooms needed to house people across the city who are homeless. Individuals placed in accommodation had access to food including a meal handout station in the centre of the city from Monday to Saturday, between 7pm and 9pm (Bristol City Council 2020). Caring in Bristol launched a citywide campaign to highlight the plight of those who experiencing homelessness during these challenging times and ask for public support in helping them off the streets and into safe accommodation. A number of campaigns and initiatives to recognise the response to the pandemic in the city were started. Bristol’s Mayor began the #HiddenHeroes campaign on

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<sup>18</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/48897/universal-credit-full-document.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/48897/universal-credit-full-document.pdf)

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social media, including thanking the staff at WECIL Bristol who provided care and support to the city's disabled community.

## 8. BAME, Migrants and COVID-19

The economic impact of the pandemic was uneven, and certain groups of workers were particularly vulnerable to joblessness and insecurity. In April 2020 Black South West Network published a statement entitled, '*We are not all in this together: The Racial Divide of COVID-19*'. The statement highlights the disproportionate impact the outbreak had on the BAME population in Bristol, noting that: "Our experiences of the lockdown are shaped by race and class and this is glaringly obvious when essential workers are dying on the job". The Women's Budget Group COVID-19 Briefing observed women were "more likely to be employed in service sectors that have been hit hardest by social distancing measures, more likely to be on insecure and zero-hours contracts, more likely to be dependent on social security and more likely to be in an insecure housing situation". In Bristol, taxi drivers were particularly affected by the pandemic, which meant a drastic reduction in movement across the city, in line with the government's lockdown measures. Taxi drivers in Bristol are disproportionately from a BAME background and registered as self employed. Bristol Post (27/04/2020) interviewed an Uber driver from St Paul's, Muuse Mahamood, who spoke about the impact of the pandemic on his livelihood:

"Financially - as someone who is self employed I'm really struggling and I'm just using what I've got saved up, which is what many others who are self employed are doing. It's really, really hard. Because there's no work, there's no money coming into my bank. But before this I would be earning daily".

Migrant workers were also more likely to have jobs in affected sectors, more likely to be self-employed and so not eligible for the government's initial Job Retention Scheme, and more likely to live in private rented and overcrowded accommodation (IPPR Briefing 2020).

Furthermore:

...many migrants in the UK have only a limited social safety net, given that visa conditions often include barriers to accessing public funds. This means that migrants face the unenviable choice of continuing to work in spite of the health risks or losing their livelihoods. This poses a significant danger to both individual workers and to efforts to minimise the transmission of the virus. We therefore propose emergency

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measures to lift restrictions on access to benefits and public services, in order to limit the economic fallout of coronavirus and protect public health (IPPR Briefing 2020).

Key to understanding these pressures is the No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) visa condition that means an individual residing in the UK, who may have permission to work, is not able to claim most benefits usually available to low income earners, including Universal Credit and housing allowances (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-funds--2/public-funds>). NRPF restrictions therefore apply to a diverse range of people, including sponsored skilled workers; family members of British citizens; self-employed people; investors and entrepreneurs; asylum seekers; and undocumented migrants (Gower 2020). Most non-EEA national migrants with temporary permission to remain in the UK have NRPF restrictions (Gower 2020). Certain other categories of migrant, such as people without a valid immigration status, are also ineligible for welfare benefits (NRPF Network 2017). The April 2020 NRPF Parliamentary Briefing states that:

“Accessing public funds in breach of a visa condition has potential ramifications for a person’s current and future immigration status. It is one of the general grounds for refusal/curtailment of immigration permission in the Immigration Rules and is a criminal offence” (Gower 2020)

However there are certain exceptional circumstances that mean a person subject to NRPF may be allowed to access public funds, most notably if a person subject to immigration control is not considered to be accessing public funds if their partner is receiving funds they qualify for in their own right (Gower 2020). If a person has valid leave to enter or remain and there is no reference to NRPF on their immigration documentation, then it should be assumed that they do have recourse to public funds (NRPF Network 2017). Homeless.org reports that individuals with NRPF status are at high risk of homelessness and destitution due to restricted access to “mainstream housing, welfare benefits and employment”. It states that services can find it difficult to engage with NRPF clients due to the limited support options available. Individuals with NRPF are therefore most vulnerable to poverty due to restricted access to employment and training.

COVID-19 accentuated the precarity of the NRPF condition. Migrant organisations and several MPs, including Holly Lynch the recently appointed shadow immigration minister called for NRPF conditions to be lifted in light of the pandemic. In a letter to the immigration minister, Kevin Foster, Lynch said: “If those with NRPF status are not entitled to welfare support and

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cannot undertake their paid roles due to lockdown measures, they face an impossible choice” (Guardian 21/04/2020). Some concessions have been made. The NRPF April 2020 Parliamentary Briefing reports that temporary migrants with a NRPF condition attached to their immigration permission who have lost their jobs completely may be able to claim contributory or “New Style” Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA), if they have paid sufficient National Insurance contributions. The Briefing states that “New Style” JSA does not count as public funds and is only payable to people who were previously employees (Gower 2020). The UK government Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme does include people subject to a NRPF condition (Gowan 2020). However, calls to abolish NRPF status during the COVID-19 pandemic have not been heeded by the UK government.

As well as NRPF conditions most non-EEA nationals have to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS). This is payable for visa applications coming from outside the UK for non-EEA nationals applying for a visa for longer than 6 months (for more details see: <https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application/who-needs-pay>). Under the heading, ‘*Where does charging occur?*’, healthcare advocacy group, Patients Not Passports states that “charging occurs in secondary care, including hospitals and community services provided by both NHS and non-NHS funded providers”. Most primary care, including accessing a GP, treatment in A&E, urgent care centres, and walk in centres are free for everyone (Patients not Passports 2020). NRPF Network notes that some NRPF service users supported by local authorities require access to secondary healthcare, ranging from antenatal support to more intensive treatments, such as chemotherapy. The hostile environment, which led to increasing restrictions for migrants accessing healthcare, led to the creation of a healthcare pressure group, ‘Docs Not Cops’, their mission statement is to:

“As part of its Hostile Environment immigration policies, the Government has been restricting access to care for some people. This drastic shift away from the founding principles of the NHS is having a devastating impact on patients who are unable to pay. The policy is changing the culture in our health service, making charging for treatment acceptable and opening the door to a system where access to care is dependent on ability to pay.”

In response to these stricter regulations, Patients not Passports states that:

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NHS Trusts are now required to question everyone's eligibility for care upfront. This undermines the patient-healthcare provider relationship from the very beginning (Patients not Passports 2020).

The regulations also routinely lead to individuals and families, often vulnerable and at risk to poverty and deprivation, without stable and supportive access to healthcare.

The NHS health surcharge, with its additional costs to migrants, became a topic of discussion across political and social spheres during the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to the outbreak, the UK government introduced regulations on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2020 that stipulated no charge could be made to overseas visitors for diagnosis or treatment of the COVID-19 virus, recognising it was "very important, for public health protection, that overseas visitors are not deterred from seeking treatment for Covid-19" (Independent 14/04/2020). Reporting for MedAct, James Willis states that COVID-19 "the crisis has also reinforced the importance of an inclusive and truly universal healthcare system, free at the point of use for everybody. Only in this way can the virus be successfully countered" (MedAct 2020).

## **9. Bristol City Council and NRPF during COVID-19**

Local authorities provide financial support to certain groups of destitute migrants who have NRPF and who are not in receipt of asylum support (NRPF Network 2014). At the end of March 2018, 50 local authorities were supporting 2552 households with NRPF by providing accommodation and/or financial support at a combined annual cost of £43.5 million. In 2018 Bristol City Council reported that 82 families were being supported through the NRPF team. The team's budget was £1.172m and support to families was given in cash or forms of practical support (Bristol City Council 2018).

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic Bristol City Council has taken a number of steps to support individuals and families with NRPF status. In April 2020 the council had 61 people with NRPF booked into emergency accommodation in Bristol, twelve of whom were asylum seekers or refugees, with the majority of the rest being EEA nationals. This group are also being provided with food and other essentials (David Barclay p.c.). BCC has formed a group to look at longer term solutions in providing support for those with NRPF status. Bristol's Mayor, Marvin Rees has expressed his support for the lifting of NRPF status during the COVID-10 pandemic:

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“The Home Office’s refusal to review the NRPF status represents both a profound injustice and a huge missed opportunity. NRPF represents a second-class citizen status where people are expected to pay into our system without having the safety net that we all rely on and is a hangover of the Hostile Environment which we are told the Home Office moved on from. It was a terrible policy even before the current crisis. This is a missed opportunity to radically improve how we deal with homelessness and destitution. Local Authorities, including Bristol, have responded at speed to house as many rough sleepers as we could, including people with NRPF status. We now have an ideal opportunity to find more permanent housing solutions for these people but those options are hugely diminished if people don’t have access to the basic benefits that millions rely on in the current crisis.” <https://www.politicshome.com/news/article/ex-anger-as-priti-patel-stands-by-universal-credit-curbs-for-migrants-amid-coronavirus-crisis>

A number of Bristol based organisations, particularly those in the migrant and homelessness sector have mobilised to provide urgent support and care to migrants and those with NRPF. An open letter from over fifty organisations calling on local authorities to take urgent steps to protect and support vulnerable migrants, particularly those with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) and those experiencing or at risk of homelessness, during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, was sent to Bristol’s Mayor.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted many of the humanitarian issues associated with NRPF status, galvanising the international and UK migrant sector to coalesce around the pressing issues of migrant rights and care during the outbreak and to apply political pressure on governments and international bodies. Several organisations called for the suspension of NRPF during the COVID-19 pandemic. Migrant Rights, a UK based migrant focused rights organisation, called for several urgent recommendations with regards to migrant rights during the COVID-19 pandemic. In an open letter to Chief Executives of all Local Authorities in England, Migrants Rights asked for:

“councils to ensure that ALL migrants in their area can access the care, support and shelter they need during this crisis, regardless of immigration status and without fear of the consequences. And that means they should also be advocating to central government to end all ‘hostile environment’ policies and suspend immigration-based eligibility criteria for housing assistance and welfare benefits.”

<https://migrantsrights.org.uk/blog/2020/03/20/covid-19localauthorityletter/>