Migrant care workers in the UK: a scoping review of outcomes and sustainability

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Acknowledgments

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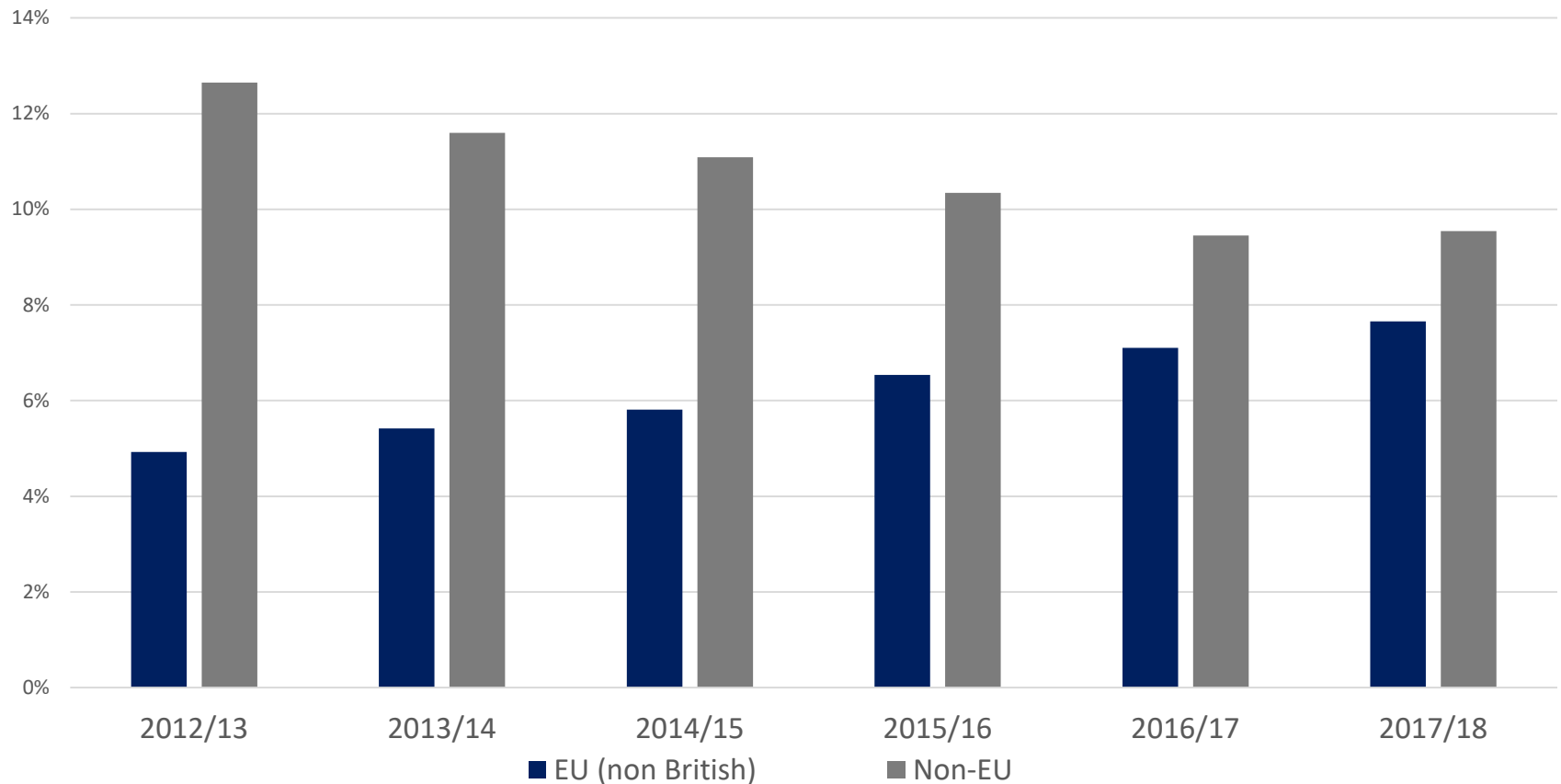
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Background

- Social care in the UK: 1.6 million jobs, over 5% of all jobs

- Marketisation, personalisation, austerity:
  - Complex and fragmented landscape of services;
  - Precarious working conditions: low pay, zero-hours contracts

- Impact on the sector's ability to attract and retain workers

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Background

- Social care structurally reliant on migrants to fill gaps in the workforce:
  - In 2017: 8% non-UK EEA nationals and 10% non-EEA nationals but large regional variations
  - Share of non-UK nationals in social care has been fairly stable overall, but substantial changes in their composition: 2004 EU enlargement, 2012 introduction of points-based immigration system for non-EEA nationals
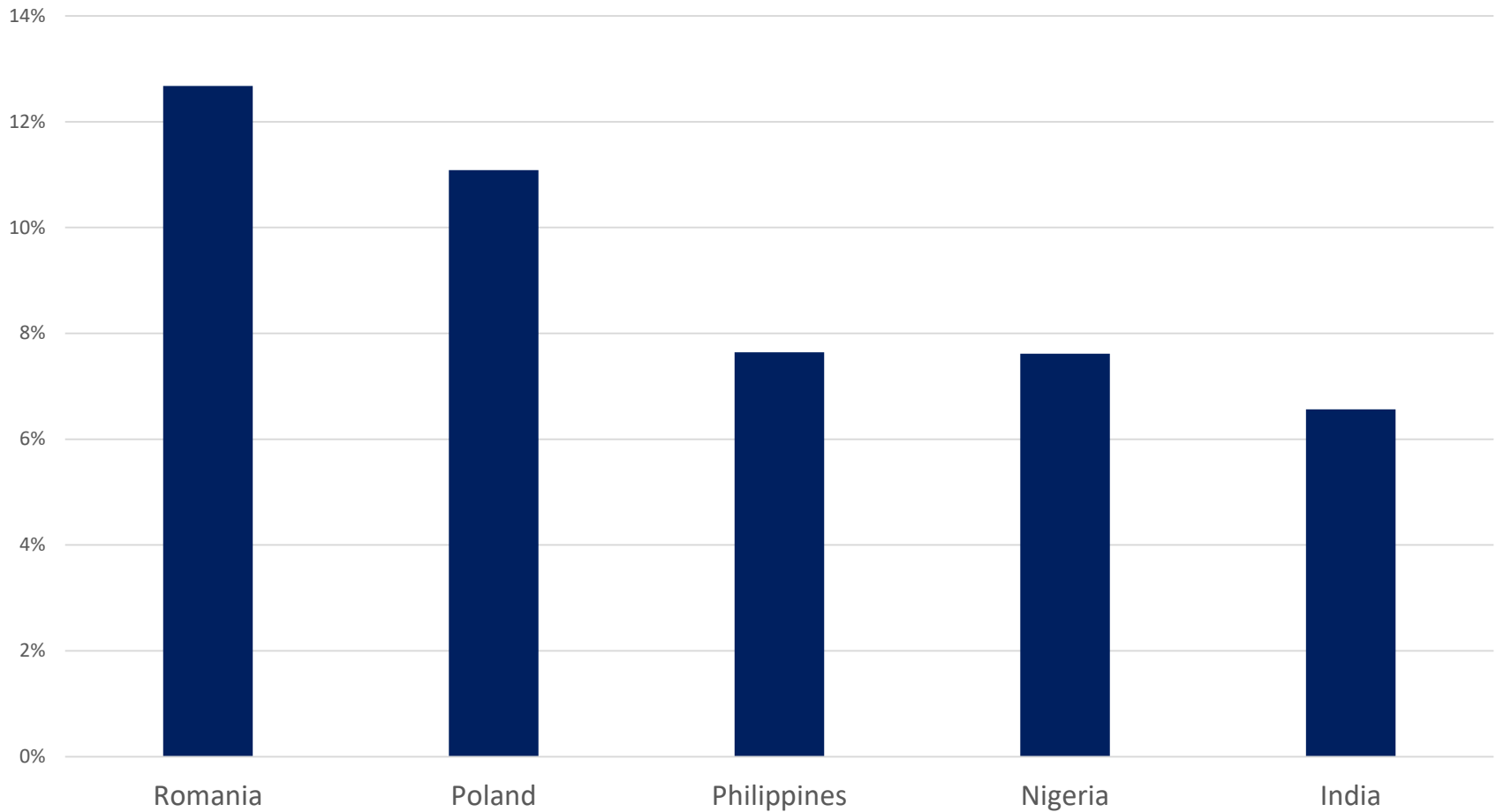
Non-UK nationals in the social care workforce in England*

Legend: ■ EU (non British) ■ Non-EU

Chart values approximately:

Year	EU (non British)	Non-EU
2012/13	~5%	~12.6%
2013/14	~5.4%	~11.6%
2014/15	~5.8%	~11%
2015/16	~6.5%	~10.4%
2016/17	~7.1%	~9.5%
2017/18	~7.6%	~9.5%

* All sectors and job roles

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Top 5 nationalities*
(as % of non-UK nationals)

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Challenges

- Brexit: free movement most likely will end, already signs of falling EU migration

- Overhaul of the immigration system: 2018 White Paper on the post-Brexit immigration system; move towards a 'skills-based system'

- Increasing pressure on the social care system (demand, funding etc.)

Aims and review questions

Synthesise available evidence on the contribution of migrant workers to the provision of home care in the United Kingdom.

1. What are the experiences of migrant care workers in the UK (*migrant outcomes*)?

2. What are the actual and perceived benefits of employing migrant care workers from the perspective of employers (*employer outcomes*)?

3. What are the experiences of care users in relation to home care provided by migrant workers (*service user outcomes*)?

4. What is the impact of migrant workers on the workforce as a whole (*workforce outcomes*)?

5. What is known about the sustainability of supply and demand for migrant care workers (*sustainability*)?
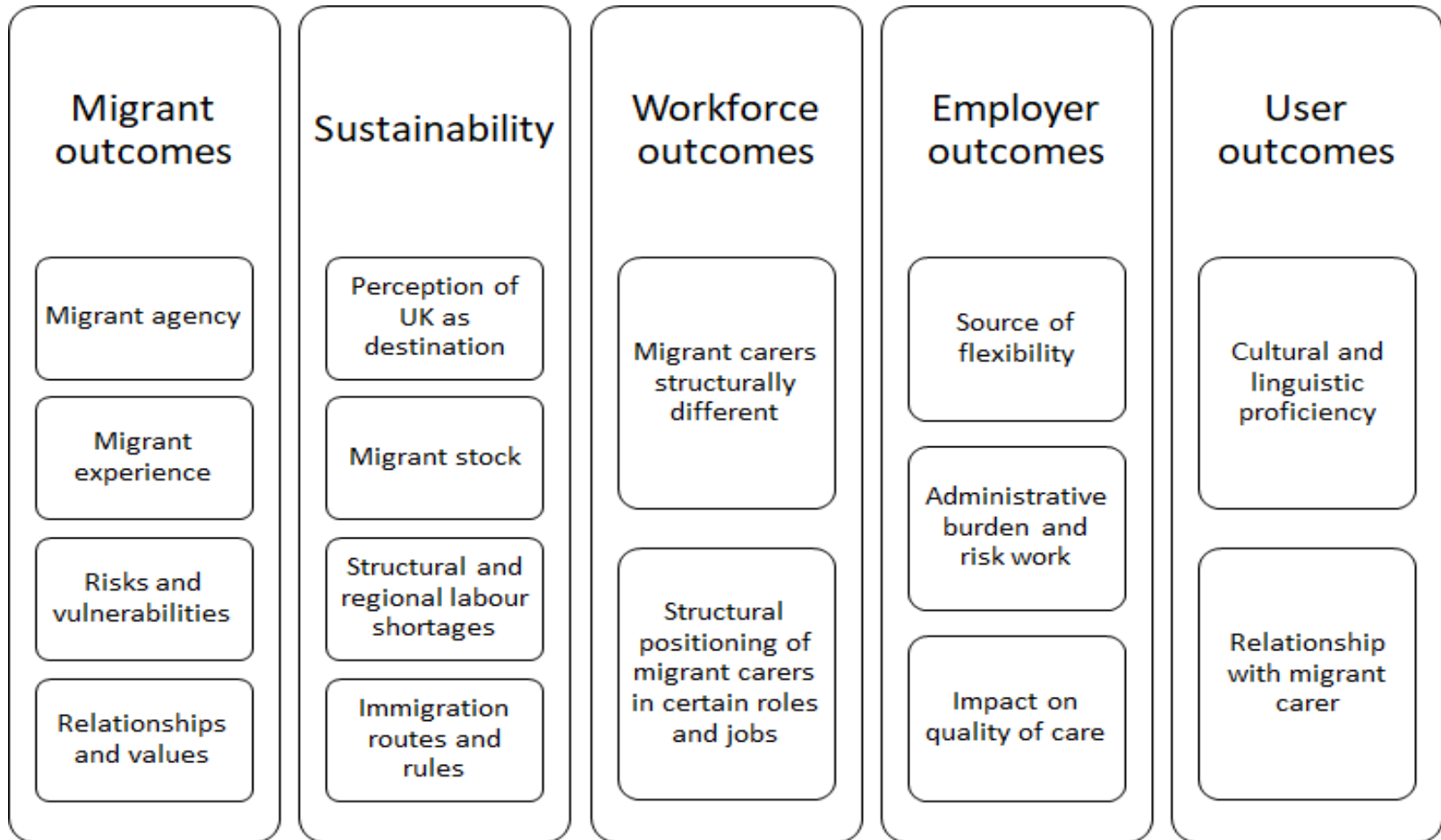
Methods

- Systematic searches

- Thematic analysis

- Narrative synthesis of the literature

- See paper for details

Distribution of papers by review question

MCW outcomes 12	Sustainability 9	Employer outcomes 4	User outcomes 3
		Workforce outcomes 3	

- 22 papers identified, from 7 studies
- Majority qualitative (n=13) or mixed methods (n=8)
- Only 3 focused on home care specifically

Findings

Migrant outcomes	Sustainability	Workforce outcomes	Employer outcomes	User outcomes
Migrant agency	Perception of UK as destination	Migrant carers structurally different	Source of flexibility	Cultural and linguistic proficiency
Migrant experience	Migrant stock	Structural positioning of migrant carers in certain roles and jobs	Administrative burden and risk work	Relationship with migrant carer
Risks and vulnerabilities	Structural and regional labour shortages		Impact on quality of care	
Relationships and values	Immigration routes and rules			

Conclusion

- Migrant care workers combine the risks and vulnerabilities of migrant status and the social care sector.

- Many 'wellbeing failures' (McGregor 2018) identified but there are also positive wellbeing outcomes.

- Various gaps in our knowledge of migrant care work: heterogeneous group – differential experiences.

- Implications for future immigration policy.

McGregor, J.A., 2018. Reconciling Universal Frameworks and Local Realities in Understanding and Measuring Wellbeing. In The Politics of Wellbeing (pp. 197-224). Palgrave Macmillan

Contact us:

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