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The Polish migrant community in Carmarthenshire

Substance abuse and implications
for the criminal justice system

Final Report

Report for
Dyfed-Powys Drug Intervention Programme

Maria Beata Kreft

with Felix Ritchie

September 2009
prepared for publication January 2010

Corresponding author:

Maria Beata Kreft
beata.kreft@virgin.net

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List of abbreviations

| | |
|------|-------------------------------------|
| ARW | Arrest Referral Worker |
| CJS | Criminal Justice System |
| DIP | Drug Intervention Programme |
| DDRC | Drink-driving rehabilitation course |
| MOH | Multiple-occupancy housing |

Executive summary

Purpose and methods of the study

This report was commissioned by Dyfed-Powys Drug Intervention Programme to study substance abuse amongst Poles in Carmarthenshire, with a particular focus on the criminal justice implications of this activity. Given the stereotypical view of Poles as heavy drinkers, substance abuse in this context included both illegal drugs and alcohol.

The information was gathered from various sources, including focus groups, semi-structured interview, and interviewer-completed questionnaires:

- Eight focus groups of Poles (5-7 people each) in three locations
- interviews with Poles, focusing on alcohol users
- interviews with Poles involved in drugs either as users, ex-users, or minor suppliers
- interviews with Polish ex-offenders on alcohol-related charges
- 25 interviews with service providers, including police, drug and alcohol services, civilian support services and charities, councillors and union officials, medical services, and Polish shops
- 120 questionnaires from Poles in Llanybydder, Carmarthen and surrounding areas
- 120 responses from the same questionnaire from Poles in Llanelli, carried out by University of Glamorgan in the second half of 2008

Statistical information was also supplied by several bodies.

Characteristics of the Poles

In the first half of 2009 there were estimated to be around 1,200 adult Poles and 180 children as long-term residents in Carmarthenshire; in the peak season, this increases but is probably below 2,000 in total. Poles therefore count for just under 1% of the population. Poles are concentrated in three main locations and account for about 2% of the local population, except in Llanybydder where they make up 12% of the population. This figure is considerably below the numbers reported in the media, but is based upon a combination of official data sources and direct data collection on Polish workplaces, GP registrations and schools data.

Poles came to Carmarthenshire in two waves. The first, from 2004 to 2006, was mostly single men from small towns in Poland brought over by agencies to work mainly in food processing operations. Since 2006 the composition of both the workforce and the Polish population has changed with more families, more direct employment, less agency work, and a wider spread of origins in Poland. Poles are increasingly living in private rented accommodation, are bringing partners, relatives and friends over, and are having children in Wales.

Poles in Llanybydder are the oldest, and are more likely to be employed, male, single (or have a partner living in Poland) and to work for one company. In Carmarthen, Poles are most likely to have family and friends around them, to be working in a range of jobs, to be younger, to be female. Llanelli sits between the two.

The Polish employment rate is higher than the locals, for both men and women. In Llanelli and Llanybydder employment is still dominated by a small number of very large employers, but in Carmarthen Poles are more dispersed amongst smaller operations. The main employers are food processing, construction, retailing and hospitality. Some Poles living in Carmarthenshire also travel outside the county to work, mainly to Swansea.

The Poles network effectively; for example, in bringing over new workers from Poland. These networks are limited. Poles seem to operate in separate sub-groups in the county: communication within groups is good but across them is less strong. However, these networks do not prevent isolation (primarily by language) within the wider Welsh context from being one of the key concerns of the Poles.

Drinking

Poles have a reputation for being heavy drinkers; this is deserved. However, the evidence to suggest that this is more pronounced than in the local population is mixed. Poles drink differently from the Welsh: compared to the locals they are more likely to binge on spirits, they are more likely to drink at home, they are more likely to drink in public spaces, they are more likely to be seen sitting in front of their houses drinking, and they are less likely to be seen in pubs. Drunkenness amongst Polish women is rare and is frowned upon.

Poles buy alcohol to drink immediately. Hence they do not tend to buy in bulk from supermarkets, but buy small quantities as and when required. This is even true for social gatherings: at house parties, Poles may go to the shops several times of an evening to replenish the alcohol supply.

At home, the Polish men will often return from work and have a beer or two. This 'beer fun' after work is not counted as drinking. Drinking is when the spirits come out: at weekends, or festivals, or just when a few friends get together. Drinking at home is strongly tied to work patterns. Although some Poles will party when they have to work the next day, most reserve the long drinking sessions for the weekend or on days off.

In public areas, Poles tend to gather to drink beer, particularly in good weather. They may also stop off for drinks on the way home from work (if walking).

Pubs are not generally popular. They are relatively expensive and Poles are concerned about the language barrier – not that they won't be able to order a beer, but that they won't be able to communicate with others in the pub. If they do go, they tend to go with groups of Poles. Carmarthen is an exception: Poles there do visit the pub more regularly, albeit still in Polish groups.

Discos are popular with most age groups, but particularly the young. Poles will 'pre-load' (drink before going out) at home before going to the disco. Price is an important consideration for going to discos. The language barrier is less important at the disco compared to the pub. Payday is also important: some are paid on a fortnightly basis, and there is a noticeable change (at least in Llanelli) in numbers partying between the weekends when all Poles get paid and the intervening weekends when only some will be paid.

Younger Poles drink more like the Welsh: they are more likely to visit pubs, for women to go out in groups. They also seem more likely to drink for positive reasons (ie to have fun) rather than the negative reasons (boredom, loneliness, worry) given by the older Poles. This is most noticeable in Carmarthen.

There are some regional differences. In Llanelli, Poles drinking in public meet in the back lanes or on the seafront; in Llanybydder, they drink in public seating areas. In Carmarthen, the dispersed nature of the population means that they meet in houses during the day, and pubs during the evening.

Poles' perspective on drinking is skewed towards seeing this as something done on party days, with friends and family. 'Beer fun' and occasional drinks do not count as drinking. They also do not understand gradations of alcohol use. 'Problematic drinking' is equated with 'alcoholic', and so suggestions that someone might be drinking too much can be taken as a personal insult.

Problems arising from drinking

Poles drinking in public spaces caused concerns over litter and intimidation. Although there have been no cases of actual intimidation, the presence of groups of men drinking has given rise to concerns and led to complaints to the police. The police have responded (as have groups of Poles) but because much of the Polish population is transient it has proved difficult to build a permanent awareness of acceptable public behaviour.

Poles in pubs do not seem to cause problems. Poles in nightclubs do get into fights. Sometimes they are targeted by anti-migrant locals; and one group of Polish troublemakers in the first wave went out looking for trouble. But generally fights are small-scale affairs. Where these are with the Welsh, it is mainly a result of mis-communication: a misunderstood look or gesture, and no common language to sort out the problem. However, Poles will also fight amongst themselves – possibly more frequently than they do with the Welsh.

At home, drinking gives rise to fights amongst men, and to violence against women. The size of the latter problem is unknown – there is little official evidence of domestic abuse - but this research indicates that rate of incidence is increasing. This may be a result of the economic downturn, but more probably it is because Polish women are becoming aware that domestic violence is treated more seriously in the UK than in Poland. Information about support networks is circulating.

Drink-driving is one of the stereotypical Polish drinking crimes. While most agree that this was more of a problem in the past than now, it still persists. Most Poles argued that the idea of Poles driving to the disco, getting drunk and driving back home was out of date (although some younger Poles took delight in recent escapades of exactly this type), and the police agreed that this was less of a problem now. However, Poles agreed that the 'morning after' problem (driving while still under the influence of the night before) existed. It also became clear that Poles do not count short trips made while under the influence (eg going to pick someone up from the station, or trips to the supermarket to refill alcohol stocks during a party). This is a concern as it suggests that Poles know that drinking and driving is wrong, but do not perceive their own behaviours as falling into that category.

Information also circulates about the allowable amount of alcohol. This is somewhere that the Polish information network falls down: much inaccurate or misleading information about UK laws is being circulated.

Poles and the criminal justice system

Much Polish crime seems to go unreported. At home, there is a strong sense that things 'stay in the family'. Police are rarely called unless someone is in serious danger – and even then the caller runs the risk of being seen as a tell-tale. It seems that, for domestic incidents, police are more likely to be called by worried Welsh neighbours than by the Poles themselves. Similarly, if Poles are arrested for fighting in public, they will often be reluctant to press charges against one another, even in serious cases. There is a sense that they can sort things out for themselves.

This is a hang-over from Poland where mistrust of the police runs high. On a personal level, police and Poles generally get on well together in the UK and have a mutual respect. However, this does not mean the criminal process runs smoothly.

Language is the main problem. Poles feel that they are unfairly arrested because they cannot explain to the police the cause of a fight, for example; but they also complain that the police are less likely to want to get involved because of the additional costs of dealing with Poles.

If Poles do get arrested, then their main concern is to get out of the cells as quickly as possible, with as few people as possible knowing (particularly their employers). This means that they tend to be very co-operative, willing to sign whatever they need to – but without any intention of fulfilling their obligations. The Poles are reluctant to take part in anything unless it has a direct benefit or is mandatory; anything to do with the police is doubly suspicious. Poles do not have a good grasp of the confidentiality laws in the UK, and so are unwilling to engage with support services because they are suspicious of what will be done with the information they provide.

In summary, the Poles try to avoid contact with the police; if they do get involved, the Poles will respect them individually but will do only what is necessary to get them out of the cells.

The arrest referral process

The arrest referral process has difficulties when dealing with alcohol-related crimes. These are often not well recorded (the definition is not clear, and recording is not easy). Where they are recorded, referrals may not be made because of different interests of police and the arrest referral workers; the likelihood of a successful referral depends upon the physical presence of the arrest referral worker, and this is severely limited in a working police station. If referrals are made, attendance is difficult to enforce as alcohol is a legal substance.

For Poles, these problems are exacerbated as Poles associate alcohol services with alcoholism; will not attend services which are not compulsory; and get information on services in English, which is largely ignored.

For drug use the arrest referral process is simpler. It is not known whether there would be any Polish-specific problems as no Poles have been through the system yet.

Drug use

The (predominantly British) service providers had almost no knowledge of Polish drug use. Some suspected that there would be drug use because of the demographics, but there had been no arrests and none of the civilian services had dealt with any Polish drug users.

In focus groups, the Poles also suggested that drug use was almost non-existent – possibly a bit of cannabis, but nothing more.

Individually, the Poles were much more open. Cannabis use may not be widespread but it is certainly common. Amphetamines are used at social gatherings; ecstasy and cocaine on occasion. Amongst the major drugs, only opiates are omitted: there was no suggestion of heroin use amongst the Poles in the county.

Cannabis dominates drug use. It is used as a relaxant, a complement to the 'beer fun' after work. It also smoked at parties, along with stimulants. Amphetamines are the most popular stimulants (but come a long way behind cannabis), followed by ecstasy, with cocaine as a status drug. When used, stimulants are typically mixed with alcohol to extend partygoing. Drug-taking at discos seems to be quite common. Drug use is more concentrated amongst the young, particularly those in their twenties.

Poles going to house parties where there will be drugs are expected to bring along their own supply and contribute it to the general pot. There is therefore an element of social bonding here. The exception to this is cocaine: its high price keeps it separate, and use of it has an element of status.

It therefore seems unusual that no Poles have been arrested for drugs. There are three main reasons for this.

First, most Polish smoking is carried out either at home, and in closed circles of friends. Information does not leak out of these groups. A small number of Poles may also smoke at work but generally Poles put a high premium on employment and are careful not to jeopardise it.

Second, Poles using drugs who come to the attention of the police have usually been drinking as well. This is often the direct cause of the police interest, and so further investigations may not be carried out.

Third, Poles in Carmarthenshire do not deal in drugs in sufficient quantities to attract the interest of the police. Most Polish suppliers are acting as intermediaries for friends, or buying in bulk for parties.

Language does not seem to be a major difficulty when obtaining small amounts of drugs. On the contrary, for stimulants there are suggestions that local suppliers like to use the Poles as intermediaries because the language barrier provides a natural firewall if the Poles are caught.

Recommendations

The recommendations were designed to address six main problems. Note that these are based only on an examination of the Polish substance misuse problem, not the service as a whole.

- Organisational issues surrounding the management of referral services
 - 0.1: Performance targets in respect of alcohol/drug referral should be set jointly for police, DIP and Prism
 - 0.2: The Welsh Assembly Government should review organisational structures and allocation of funding for DIP, Prism and the police to ensure effective implementation of the recommendations.
- Identification of arrest referral clients
 - 1.1: Agree and disseminate a definition of 'alcohol-related offending'
 - 1.2: Allow arrest recording systems to easily mark 'alcohol-related' as a contributory factor irrespective of the specific offence
 - 1.3: Extend DIP/Prism remit by including 'alcohol-related' as well as alcohol-specific offences
 - 1.4: Extend DIP/Prism remit by including all alcohol-related arrestees, not just those charged
 - 1.5: Identify those arrested more than twice for alcohol-related offences and prioritise for ARW contact
- Improving arrest referral contact
 - 2.1: Provide sufficient ARWs to cover arrestees on-site at stations for all peak periods, including weekends
 - 2.2: Provide a permanent ARW worker (including working space) in the police station
 - 2.3: Review police training on role of ARWs, focusing on impact of successful interventions on police work
 - 2.4: Review ARW procedures to see if they can be integrated more smoothly into police processes
 - 2.5: Develop an electronic appointment system for DIP/Prism which can be used by both police and DIP/Prism to create appointments from the custody suite.
 - 2.6: Provide a safe room at DIP/Prism offices
 - 2.7: Extend DIP's responsibility for arrest referral/initial interventions to include alcohol cases
 - 2.8: Consider renaming ARWs to remove 'arrest'
- Improving service uptake
 - 3.1: All those arrested for drug or alcohol-related offences to be given written information on DIP/Prism and the ARW process as a part of standard arrest procedures; the written information should emphasise the confidentiality of the process, separation from the CJS, and the lack of a fee
 - 3.2: Make appointments automatically with ARWs for those arrestees unless they ask not to be referred
 - 3.3: Provide arrestees with appointment information immediately as well as information (as in 3.1) on DIP/Prism service
 - 3.4: Refusal to have appointment to be recorded
 - 3.5: Failure to make appointments to be recorded

3.6: Data from 3.4 and 3.5 to be made available to both DIP and police for following up repeat offenders

- Improving compliance with drug and alcohol services
 - 4.1: Increase use of conditional cautions for alcohol offences, with satisfactory engagement with DIP/Prism as the condition
 - 4.2: Consider the feasibility of offering satisfactory engagement with DIP/Prism as an alternative to fines
 - 4.3: Encourage courts to take satisfactory engagement with DIP/Prism into account when considering sentences
 - 4.4 Explore other financial incentives that could be result from satisfactory engagement with DIP/Prism
 - 4.5: DIP/Prism to draw up policy on what would be seen as 'satisfactory engagement', with case study examples.

- Improving understanding by Poles of UK laws and processes
 - 5.1: DIP/Prism to employ at least one Polish speaker
 - 5.2: Leaflets on ARWs (as in 3.1) to be made available in Polish
 - 5.3: Leaflets covering safe drinking and law on 'Polish-specific' drug-/alcohol-related offences to be made available in Polish
 - 5.4: Leaflets to address Poles' misperceptions of alcohol services as only for alcoholics
 - 5.5: Leaflets to be distributed to GPs for personal distribution (that is, rather than left for browsing in waiting rooms)
 - 5.6: Information from leaflets (5.2-5.5) to be made available on DIP websites and in NHS 'Welcome Pack' for migrants
 - 5.7: ARW appointment letter should be in English and Polish; either as a copy of the letter in both languages, or as a letter in English with standard explanatory notes in Polish; the appointment letter to contain information as in 3.1
 - 5.8: DIP/Prism to have performance targets for migrants which reflect the transient nature of the migrant population

- Use of Polish outreach workers to facilitate the other recommendations
 - 6.1: A Polish outreach worker for Carmarthenshire to be appointed, with the function of raising awareness of three main issues: UK law, UK service providers, and basic substance misuse information
 - 6.2: The outreach worker should build contacts with the Polish communities throughout Carmarthenshire
 - 6.3: The outreach worker should use these contacts and Polish networks to set up face-to face meetings to cover topics in 5.2-5.5; for example, workshops or small group discussions.
 - 6.4: The outreach worker should engage with community health services to circulate information to Poles about health effects, and about confidentiality
 - 6.5: The outreach worker should be a channel for Poles to learn about service providers and the CJS, and vice versa
 - 6.6: The outreach worker should seek to make GPs aware of Poles' perceptions of alcohol use, confidentiality concerns and role of GPs
 - 6.7: The possibility of sharing the DIP/Prism outreach work with other service providers in the region should be investigated
 - 6.8: The outreach worker should actively seek to engage with new waves of workers, possibly through major employers
 - 6.9: The possibility of using volunteers to engage the Polish community should be examined.
 - 6.10: The outreach worker should engage with the Polish church in South Wales to identify areas where the latter could contribute to outreach work
 - 6.11: The outreach worker should contact the Red Cross, and possibly other agencies, to build on their experience with Polish migrants

1 Introduction

Since May 2004, the number of 'A8 migrants' (from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia) in Carmarthenshire has increased dramatically. The Polish community has gone from tiny numbers to being, on some measures, the largest single ethnic minority group in the county. Some estimates have put the number of Poles in Carmarthenshire at over 5,000.

The influx of migrants has not had any appreciable impact on the operations of Dyfed-Powys Drug Intervention Programme (DIP), which has had no Polish clients over this period. This is unexpected: patterns of drug-taking amongst the non-migrant population would suggest that there is at least some substance misuse.

It might well be that this is genuine. The majority of migrants are young, healthy, employed and highly motivated. These are not typical substance misusers. On the other hand, a significant proportion of Poles do appear to be having difficulties: alienated from the community, perhaps unemployed or very insecure in their work, and if working, carrying out menial tasks for very small pay. These are all characteristics associated with substance misuse in other communities.

One reason for the lack of substance misuse reports might be that Poles have different cultural parameters, and simply do not take drugs. They are sometimes characterised as a heavy-drinking nation. As alcohol is a legal substance, alcohol abuse is difficult to identify through the criminal justice system (CJS). If alcohol is the relaxant of choice, perhaps this is why there are no Polish drug users.

Another reason might be that there is drug abuse, but that the Polish community hides it. Many of these migrants have little or no language skills, and exist in what amount to Polish enclaves in Wales. These communities are strongly networked, and sharing information on drug use outside these communities would be strongly frowned upon.

There was little evidence available to evaluate reasons for the lack of Poles appearing in drugs records. Accordingly, Dyfed-Powys DIP commissioned this study to answer three questions:

- Is there a hidden substance misuse (alcohol or drugs) problem amongst this community?
- If so, are crimes being committed as a result?
- And if so, why are Polish substance misusers not being identified by DIP?

The report was undertaken by a Polish national, who carried out a mix of interviews, focus groups and surveys with community service providers, health professionals, police, and Polish nationals to build up a picture of the Polish community and their recreational habits. The focus is on the Polish community as this accounts for the majority of new migrants; but the results presented here might be relevant for other A8 migrants.

The results, broadly summarised are as follows: Poles do drink and do take drugs; they do commit crimes, but mainly as a result of alcohol, not illegal drugs; and the voluntary nature of many of the rehabilitation services means that Poles are not taking up these options. There are also institutional factors, many of them related to language, which may lower the chances of Poles' engagement with alcohol and drug services.

The report takes the following structure:

- **Section 2** provides a short literature review of Polish drink and drugs culture
- **Section 3** describes the methods used to collect the information for this report
- **Section 4** contains a statistical overview of the Poles in Carmarthenshire. It uses a number of sources of information to suggest that the population of Poles is less (often,

much less) than most estimates. It summarises the characteristics of the Poles (as detailed in Appendix 1), and relates figures for crime and health service uptake.

- **Section 5** reports on interviews with service providers, including police, who felt that, while there is high alcohol use, there is little or no drug use.
- **Section 6** considers the comments made in the Polish focus groups. While they agree with the service providers that alcohol is the overwhelming drug of choice, there were some suggestions that cannabis might be used.
- **Section 7** the one-to-one interviews with respect to alcohol, confirms the overall impression of the focus groups but provide some more detail; this section therefore only includes additional information on Polish drinking
- **Section 8** reports on the one-on-one interviews with Poles on drugs. During these interviews Poles were much freer with their information. Information across the county suggests that Poles take a variety of drugs (except heroin); and although addiction levels appear to be low, recreational use is common.
- **Section 9** then considers the CJS: what crimes are Poles committing, are they related to substance misuse, and why are arrest referral workers not picking them up? The answers are that Poles do seem to commit a lot of alcohol-related crimes but that these are not recorded; and language difficulties in particular mean that both Poles and police struggle to process Poles and to make the connection with support services.
- **Section 10** discusses the results and the basis for the recommendations
- **Section 11** details the recommendations

There are three appendices:

- **Appendix 1** describes in detail the characteristics and background of the Poles in Carmarthenshire, summarised in Section 4
- **Appendix 2** describes the Arrest Referral process, as background for Section 9
- **Appendix 3** contains the original project proposal

2 Literature Review: Poles, drugs and alcohol

This brief literature review covers Polish attitudes to drinking and drugs. A more in-depth review of the former is provided in Moskalewicz and Zielinski (1995); for the latter, Reitox (2008) is a very detailed study of the Polish drugs world; EMCDDA (2009) is a short overview.

2.1 Alcohol

2.1.1 Historical perspective

Popova, Rehm, Patra and Zatonski (2007) describe Poland as following the 'Northern European' pattern of drinking – traditional vodka-drinking cultures such as Russia, the Ukraine, the Baltic states, and the Nordic countries.

Moskalewicz and Zielinski (1995) report that Poland's alcohol consumption peaked in the 19th Century, at around 12l of pure alcohol per person per year. This figure dropped steadily to fall below 2l in the inter-war years, partly due to a period of prohibition, and then picked up again after the Second World War. It peaked in 1980 at 8.4l per capita per annum, and then dropped slightly until the fall of communism.

Although vodka is a major part of the drinking culture, it is in long-term decline with its place increasingly being taken by beer. Kowalczyk (2004) estimated

Table 2.1 Polish alcohol consumption, litres of alcohol per capita

| Year | Total | Vodka | Wine & mead | Beer |
|------|-------|-------|-------------|------|
| 1980 | 9.0 | 6.0 | 1.5 | 1.5 |
| 1990 | 6.4 | 3.8 | 1.1 | 1.5 |
| 1995 | 6.4 | 3.5 | 1.0 | 1.9 |
| 1996 | 6.5 | 2.9 | 1.5 | 2.1 |
| 1997 | 7.2 | 2.8 | 1.9 | 2.5 |
| 1998 | 7.1 | 2.4 | 2.0 | 2.7 |
| 1999 | 7.1 | 2.1 | 2.0 | 3.0 |
| 2000 | 7.1 | 2.0 | 1.8 | 3.3 |
| 2001 | 6.6 | 1.7 | 1.6 | 3.3 |
| 2002 | 6.9 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 3.5 |

Note: in this context "Wine and mead" includes liqueurs and other sweet drinks

In other words, vodka has gone from two-thirds of consumption (by the amount of pure alcohol consumed) to around a quarter. The main beneficiary of this is beer, consumption of which has more than doubled over this period.

The peak around 1980 and then a long-term decline in overall consumption is common to most developed countries. One of the exceptions to this is the UK:

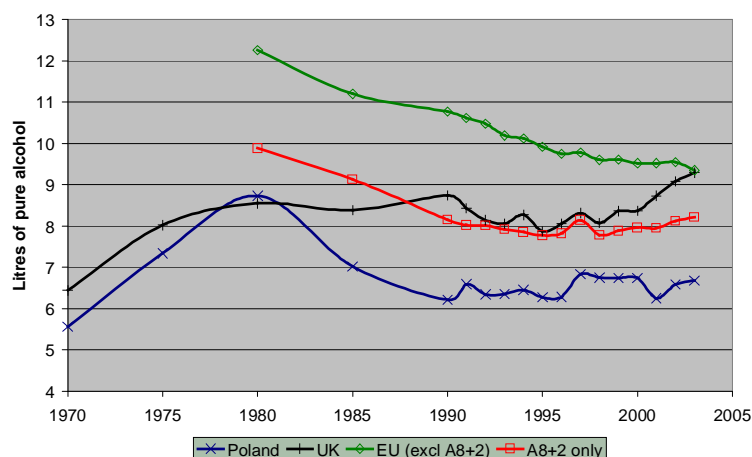


Figure 2.1 Comparative per capita alcohol consumption

Source: WHO European Health-for-all database (HFADB) <http://data.euro.who.int/hfad/>

Figure 2.1 shows that Poles' drinking has remained relatively flat since 1990. Note that, although in Carmarthenshire Poles might have a reputation as heavy drinkers, in international terms they consume a relatively small amount of alcohol. They drink less than the other A8+2 countries, on average, and considerably less than the average 'old' EU member. They also drink much less than UK consumers, and have not seen the latter's rapid increase in consumption since the mid 1990s.

Note that different sources do make different estimates of the level of Poles alcohol consumption, although not necessarily the trend.

2.1.2 Consumption patterns

Polish drinking is identified with the Northern European model, "characterised by non-daily drinking, irregular binge drinking episodes (eg during weekends and at festivities) and the acceptance of drunkenness in public" (Popova et al, 2007, p406).

However, as noted above, the Poles still tend to drink less on average than most other countries in Europe. Mongan et al (2007) put Poland at 24 out of 27 EU countries for alcohol consumption (the UK comes 14th).

Historically, the Polish pattern of binge drinking fitted into an agricultural cycle where domestic production was a significant part of consumption. Vodka was associated with festivals which could last for days, and at which drinking was an essential component. Outside these times, work was hard and little leisure time was available for social events. Some authors argued that the continuation of binge drinking into the late twentieth century is partly the result of a predominantly agricultural nation adapting quickly to a newly industrialising economy after 1945.

One of the key elements of this industrialisation was the development of worker's hostels – low-grade multiple occupancy housing (MOH) which quickly developed a reputation as centres of drunkenness, violence and crime (Kozicki, 1970, quoted in Moskalewicz and Zielinski, 1995). Kubacki et al (2009, p142) give a similar example from the present of the influence of housemates. The use of MOH for agency workers in Carmarthenshire raises the possibility of a parallel development.

2.1.3 Occupation and status

Drinking in Poland is related to both occupation and status. The higher the status, the lower the acceptability of drunkenness, at least in public. Moskalewicz and Zielinski (1995) quote a study on the perception of alcohol consumption amongst the Polish Communist Party pre- and post-1989. The decline in power was seemingly matched by a decline in the expected standards of behaviour.

In the UK, alcohol consumption by social class is often stereotyped by the type of alcohol: regular consumption of wine and real ale for the middle classes, bingeing on beer and alcopops for the lower classes. Despite impressions from the popular press, there is widespread recognition among experts that the large quantities of alcohol are often consumed across a range of social groups.

In Poland there is less sense of a difference in the types of alcohol (as wine is still comparatively rare by European standards), but there is a perception of heavier drinking amongst the less-educated working classes. However, this may mask different patterns of consumption, as in the UK. Moskalewicz and Zielinski (1995) summarised studies finding that university-educated and professionals may drink more often than other groups, but they drank less on each occasion; and while there were few heavy drinkers in this group, there were equally few abstainers.

2.1.4 Gender differences

Moskalewicz and Zielinski (1995) report that women's traditional role in drinking has been as a supporting player; women could take part but were not encouraged to drink to excess. Even at the peak of Polish drinking in the 18th and 19th centuries, women were expected to act with moderation; they could fulfil their social obligations with symbolic gestures. Whereas men were not expected to refuse any alcohol, women were allowed to discard their drinks openly.

This difference in gender attitudes continues, although there has been a shift in recent years. The male-female drinking ratio has dropped significantly since the 1960s, largely because of a higher rate of growth in female drinking.

Although women may be catching up on men in quantity, this is not the case for social acceptance. Moskalewicz and Zielinski (1995) report that "social norms regarding female drinking are still more restrictive, a double standard that occurs in many other countries. According to recent surveys, about one-third of respondents believe that women should abstain from vodka and beer (Zielinski, 1991). Drunkenness on the part of a woman is not acceptable, and a woman who drinks alone in public may be regarded a prostitute." In 2009, a student quoted in Kubacki et al (2009) suggested that

- *"much more emphasis in upbringing was put on personal culture, that girls shouldn't drink, because when a guy gets drunk that's ok, but when a girl gets drunk that's wrong! ... Though it's changing now, more and more girls drink now."*
Young male focus group participant quoted in Kubacki et al (2009, p140)

2.1.5 Generational differences

Poles place a strong restriction on under-age drinking, reinforced by both state and church. According to Moskalewicz and Zielinski (1995), parents generally are unwilling to discuss alcohol with teenagers; or if they do, they limit themselves to the negative aspects. Children do of course experiment, and do so without any adult frame of reference; instead, peers and popular culture are dominant influences. Moskalewicz and Zielinski (1995) suspected that the generation of teenagers they observed would be increasingly 'wet' ie regularly wine/beer drinkers, rather than binge drinkers; it is interesting to note that this generation would now be in its late twenties/early thirties, the peak age for Poles coming to Carmarthenshire. Kubacki et al (2009) suggest that this transformation continues in the current generations.

In summary, the older generations are more likely to be the 'traditional' binge drinkers, focusing on days off and festivals, and drinking with family and friends. The younger generations are more likely to be beer drinkers, influenced more by the Western lifestyle of going out to socialise.

2.1.6 Domestic violence

Domestic violence has been on the increase in Poland since the early 1990s, although court reporting makes it difficult to assess the actual scale of the problem. Makara-Studzinska and Gustaw (2007), in a study on the impact of alcohol on domestic violence, interviewed 400 male perpetrators, along with 400 victims to provide supporting evidence. Their conclusion was that alcohol abusers (defined using the WHO's AUDIT model) are more likely to be younger, with lower education and poor employment prospects. Most importantly, those who abuse alcohol are much more likely to commit crimes of physical violence, not sexual violence.

However, this does not necessarily mean that alcohol causes domestic violence. Aberg et al (1992) report that

- *The director of one district office of the State Agency for Prevention of Alcohol Related Problems estimated that only 3 to 5 percent of domestic violence cases are not alcohol related. Police, prosecutors, doctors, and others share the government's view that alcoholism causes domestic violence. When a survey asked Polish police and prosecutors the question 'is male violence against women a consequence of alcohol abuse?' more than 96 percent of men and 94 percent of women answered either 'most commonly yes' or 'usually yes.' One psychologist suggested that in 95 percent of domestic violence cases, 'aggression from alcohol' causes violence and in 5 percent of cases, 'the perpetrators have psychological disorders.'*

However, Aberg et al (1992) then suggest that much of this is a myth: that alcohol and domestic violence are correlated but not causal; and that underlying reasons (such as a culture of machismo, and declining economic conditions) go much deeper but are lost in favour of superficial explanations.

The final perspective on this is muddled because the terms used are not clearly identified. Alcohol use, alcohol abuse, and alcoholism are all used in this context. For example, Aberg et al (1992) report that "advocates recommend that the government address alcoholism and domestic violence as two separate problems with two separate treatments", but clearly an association between domestic violence and alcohol does not require full-blown alcoholism.

2.1.7 Perceptions of alcohol

Zielinski (1987, in Moskalewicz and Zielinski, 1995) reports that over 30% of Poles would consider an abstainer to be someone who does not drink spirits. Weaker alcohol does not come into it. Twenty years later, this perception is still there:

- *"I can't drink during the week as I work as a driver, but I tend to have a pint a day, more for taste"*
Young male focus group participant quoted in Kubacki et al (2009, p141)

In other words, the respondent was not *drinking* drinking, just having a beer.

This differentiation between spirits and other types of alcohol may be one reason that Poles have very restricted view of 'problem drinking'. Only the alcoholics are problem drinkers; others are merely heavy drinkers, and to suggest that someone has a problem is a serious accusation.

2.2 Drug use in Poland

2.2.1 Prevalence of drug use

According to EMCDDA (www.emcdda.europa.eu; tables PDU1 and PDU6), Poland's rate of drug use is 4.2 problem users per thousand of the population; the UK's rate of 9.9 is one of the highest in the European Union. While there are differences in the measurement methods, it seems clear that Poland is not, by UK standards, a heavy drug-using nation.

Lifetime prevalence (ie those who have tried a drug at least once) are also much higher in the UK, for all adults and for the younger age group:

Table 2.2 Lifetime prevalence rates per thousand population

| | Cannabis | Cocaine | Amphetamines | Ecstasy | LSD |
|------------------------|----------|---------|--------------|---------|-----|
| England/Wales 16-59 | 30.1 | 7.7 | 11.9 | 7.3 | 5.4 |
| Poland 15-64 | 9.0 | 0.8 | 2.7 | 1.2 | 0.9 |
| England/Wales 16-34 | 41.4 | 12.7 | 16.5 | 13.0 | 7.1 |
| Poland 15-34 | 16.1 | 1.3 | 4.8 | 2.1 | 1.6 |

Source: EMCDDA (www.emcdda.europa.eu; tables GPS1 and GPS2); data for 2006

Opiate usage rates are not available from EMCDDA on the same basis. However, Reitox (2008) reports that lifetime prevalence rates of heroin and *kompot* (a low-grade Polish version of heroin) are less than two per thousand. These rates appear to be relatively constant or declining at least in recent years.

Reitox (2008, p23) reports that "...the most drug-endangered group are men aged up to 24. However, risk in this group has been falling in recent years, unlike the group of the youngest women. Drug consumption drops dramatically when both men and women turn 35."

Amongst children, illicit cannabis use rates for 15-16 year-olds have been increasing since the mid-1990s, although they may be dropping off now. Cannabis dominates children's illicit drug use, with 9% of 15-16 year-olds having tried the drug, compared to 4% for ecstasy and amphetamines, and 2% for all other drugs (all information from EMCDDA, 2009).

Single persons are also more likely to be using drugs than couples, and men much more likely than women. Reitox (2008) quotes studies into child experience rates and notes that children from small towns or the countryside are much less likely to have tried drugs than those from the cities.

The distribution of drugs in Poland as compared to the UK is similar, except that the Polish market is more skewed towards cannabis and, to a lesser extent, amphetamines. Cocaine use is very small, and put down to the high cost, especially when given the availability of other stimulants. Very little data on opiate use is made available, possibly because of the very small number of users. Even on offenders convicted of drug-related offences, only 0.8% showed any lifetime experience; for *kompot*, 4%.

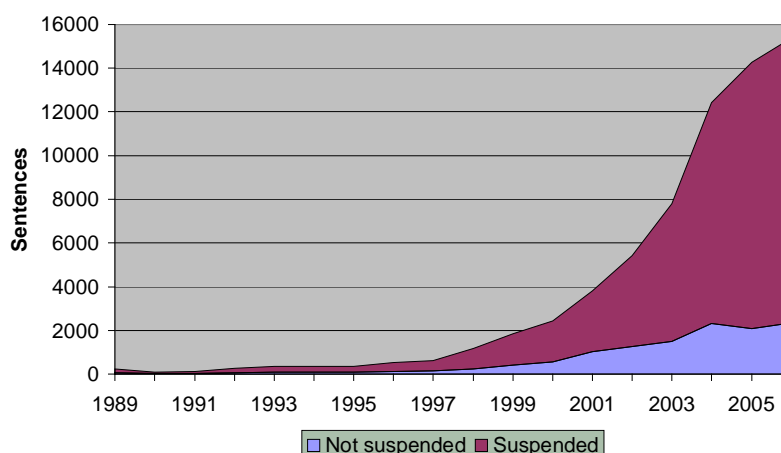
2.2.2 Drugs and society

Reitox (2008, p84) reports on a study of occasional users in Poland: "occasional drug users rarely experience drug-related problems, especially if they confine themselves to using cannabis".

However, this may change. There has been a major shift in drug-related crime. In the early 1990s, the major offence was home cultivation of marijuana or poppies, the latter to make

kompot. Since then, cultivation has declined steadily; *kompot* in particular has been replaced by a large increase in imported, high quality heroin. Whilst most drug-related crime has increased in the last twenty years, possession has soared from 1,380 offences in 1998 to 31,260 in 2007 (all data from Reitox, 2008, ch.8). In response, conviction rates leading to a jail sentence have increased massively:

Figure 2.2 Types of sentences for drug offences in Poland



Source: Reitox (2008), Table 29

It is difficult to separate the specific causes for this change, as over this period the Poles experienced a major change in society, a new law on drugs, and developments in policing methods. These have changed the nature of drug taking, increased the list of drug-related offences, and led to improvements in both the prosecution and recording of crime.

Moreover, Poland has traditionally been an entry point for heroin and cocaine into Europe; and it is a major supplier of high-quality amphetamines - possibly up to a quarter of all European supply (US Department of State, 1998). Poland's entry to the EU improved the attractiveness of its role in the supply chain; the move to join the borderless Schengen Area in 2008 increased this still further. Reitox (2008, ch. 10) details the manufacturing and import-export trade.

These effects are likely to be still working their way through the market, but Poland gives the impression of developing a more Western-style drugs scene. This does not however seem to have led to a change in the composition of drug use, with cannabis and amphetamines still dominating.

Poland therefore seems to have moved from being a cottage industry supplier of drugs to its own people, to being much more part of a globalised supply chain. This has happened in the last twenty years, within the lifetime (and growing-up time) of the migrant Poles, who are dominated by the 20-40 age group.

2.3 Poles and criminal behaviour

In Britain, there has been some discussion in the UK press of the likelihood of Poles avoiding justice in Poland (eg Daily Post, 2007) or committing crimes in Britain (eg Lewis, 2008). Slack (2008) reports on evidence given to the Home Affairs Select Committee on knife crimes amongst Eastern European migrants. One rape in Carmarthenshire by a Polish ex-offender in 2005 is regularly cited in newspapers (Turner, 2006), and was a central element of the BNP election campaign in the area (eg Green Arrow, 2008). However, this would imply that the offences themselves are actually rather rare; and Szmigielski (2008) demolishes Slack's argument with basic statistics.

Therefore, at this stage we merely note that the issue of Polish criminals coming to the UK (possibly to avoid sentences) has been raised in the popular press, but the extent or consequences of such activity are unknown.

3 Methods

Data was collected for this project through focus groups, face-to-face interviews, and questionnaires. The main initial sources of contacts were the Polish Centre in Llanelli and polish shops in Carmarthen, Llanelli, and Llanybydder.

3.1 Resources

It proved impossible to employ a regular research assistant for the project. Temporary research assistance was provided for focus groups and the writing-up. All interviews were conducted by the researcher with the support of a gatekeeper to ensure the personal safety of the researcher.

All focus groups and most interviews were digitally recorded, deleted after transcription. Transcribing was mainly outsourced to Poland and India; agreements were in place to protect the confidentiality of the data. Transcriptions were deleted on completion of the report.

3.2 Included population

This report concentrates on Poles from the C2DE socio-economic group¹. Very few Polish interviewees or focus group participants were from the ABC1 segment. It was thought that this group was a relatively small part of the Carmarthenshire Polish population and would not add significantly to the analysis; work for Poles is overwhelmingly semi-skilled or unskilled manual or service work (although the survey did subsequently show that the female migrant population seems to be relatively highly educated). Whilst the results of the report do seem consistent across all participants, there is evidence to suggest that Poles in the UK exist in strongly defined subgroups. Hence there may exist sizeable subgroups which act differently from those described here.

3.3 Focus groups

The original project proposal called for 2 focus groups to supplement the semi-structured interviews. However, early discussions with the Polish community suggested that the community tended to organise itself into discrete subgroups, and so the number of focus groups was expanded. Contact was made with different groups via the Polish Centre and Polish shops. Participants were paid £10; in some cases, the organiser was paid to arrange the event. The focus groups were all held at weekends (daytime or evening) to fit in with participants' work patterns.

Focus groups were segregated along gender lines; it was felt that this would encourage open discussion. Participants included employees from the major employers in the areas, as well as those employed in smaller businesses. The male participants were largely skilled or unskilled manual workers. The female participants worked in a greater variety of occupations. Participant ages ranged from under 20 to over 50.

The following focus groups were run:

- Llanelli: one males only, one females only
- Carmarthen: two males only, one females only
- Llanybydder: two males only, one females only

The researcher was supported in each focus group by a paid Polish-speaking assistant taking notes to supplement the recordings. Focus groups in Llanelli were held at the Polish centre

¹ Occupational group ABC1 is more senior, professional white-collar work. C2DE includes manual, and semi-skilled or unskilled service work.

and the Catholic church hall. Focus groups in Carmarthen and Llanybydder were held at the Polish shops in those towns.

3.4 Interviews

Against a planned target of 30 interviews, over 60 face-to-face interviews were carried out across all three sites.

The interviews can be broadly split into three types:

- Polish service providers: Polish Centre workers, Polish retailers (Llanelli, Carmarthen, Llanybydder), Polish hospitality employees, others
- Non-Polish service providers: police and community support officers (both on the beat and in custody suites); translators; arrest referral workers; church and charity workers; health professionals; substance misuse services; union officials; local councillors
- Polish migrants: occasional, regular and heavy drinkers; drug users and occasional suppliers; ex-offenders on alcohol-specific offences

In this report, interview responses are generally split between 'service providers' and 'Poles'. The 'Polish service providers', as described above, are generally included in the 'Poles' interviews, as they were thought to be sufficiently involved in the Polish community under scrutiny. However, some Polish service providers clearly identified more with the local population than with the Poles, and so their responses have been included in the 'non-Polish service providers'.

In general, most interviewees were content for interviews to be recorded for later transcription. There were some objections, and for these only notes were taken. The recordings and transcripts were securely destroyed at the end of the project.

While most of the drug users were happy to talk about their use of drugs with the researcher, some would only talk through an intermediary. The intermediary was given a list of topics to follow up and specific questions to ask. Not all of these interviews were recorded; for some, only the intermediary's notes are available.

Interviewees were contacted in a variety of ways. Service providers were identified and contacted directly by the researcher. Llanelli Polish Centre, Carmarthenshire Local Health Board and Carmarthenshire Constabulary were particularly helpful in identifying relevant individuals.

Contacts for Polish interviewees came from focus group participants and identified gatekeepers from the Polish community. A snowballing technique was used to follow up possible contacts. The advantage of snowballing is that a chain of trust can be built up, which was particularly important in a project dealing with very sensitive issues, including illegal activities. The disadvantage is that certain sections of the community might be over represented. While this is possible, the similarity of responses across gender, age and location suggest that the interpretation put on those responses is fairly robust.

3.5 Questionnaires

During the preliminary investigation, it was brought to the researcher's notice that researchers at the University of Glamorgan (Lukasz Doleczek, Paul Chambers, David Dunkerley, Andrew Thompson) had been carrying out a survey of Poles in Llanelli. The questionnaire focused on the condition of Poles in Llanelli: age, gender, family relationships, living conditions, education, home town, reasons for coming, reasons for staying, language skills, earnings.

Questions were in Polish, in closed form and completed by the Polish-speaking interviewer (Doleczek) in the presence of the respondent. 115 questionnaires had been completed in Llanelli, which was the focus of the researchers' work.

Much of this information was important for understanding the background of the Poles being interviewed. It was decided that extending the questionnaire to other parts of Carmarthenshire with significant Polish populations and combining the results would improve the reliability of results, as well as allowing the researchers to determine whether the Poles in all parts of Carmarthenshire were the same. The original questionnaire only mentioned that the work was being carried out for Glamorgan, and so a rider was added to include the Welsh Assembly Government as a recipient of the data.

149 further questionnaires were carried out. Due to the logistical difficulties of meeting the Poles, local assistants were recruited to carry out the interviews. Interviewers were paid £10 per questionnaire. Interviewees were asked to provide contact details so that the researcher could confirm that responses were genuine. One set of 30 questionnaires was omitted from the analysis due to concerns over the veracity of results. To encourage participation, respondents providing contact details were included in a draw to win £100 or £50 (first or second prize). The draw took place on July 27th and was witnessed; winners have received their prizes.

Of the remaining 119 valid responses, these were equally split between Carmarthen and Llanybydder. Data collection ran from March to July. Data entry and preliminary analysis for all 234 entries were carried out by Lukasz Doleczek at Glamorgan in July 2009 (Doleczek, Chambers, Dunkerley and Thompson, 2009a). Initial tables extracted from the data and supplied to the researcher form the basis for the results presented in Appendix 1. These questionnaires confirmed the suspicion that there are notable differences between the Poles in different parts of Carmarthenshire.

Only simple tabular results are presented in Appendix 1. While multivariate analysis might be expected to reveal important relationships, there was insufficient time to construct and test multiple hypotheses, and some doubt as to whether this would add much to the information requirement for this project. Further analysis is therefore left for follow-up work.

3.6 Other sources of information

Carmarthenshire Local Health Board, Carmarthenshire Constabulary, and Carmarthenshire Council (METAS), and the Polish shop in Llanybydder provided the statistical data presented in Section Four.

The researcher contacted a number of other agencies, including Citizen's Advice Bureaux, by email and telephone. These either failed to respond or had no knowledge of Polish clients.

4 Statistical analysis on Poles in Carmarthenshire

4.1 Official statistics measuring A8 migration

Carmarthenshire CC Social Justice Scrutiny Committee, in its report on migrants to the county, noted that

- *“There is insufficient and incomplete data available regionally and nationally about the numbers of migrant workers in the county at any given point, which has affected forward planning and funding of services.” (SJSC, 2007)*

Ethnic groups are traditionally identified by Census data. However, as the last Census in 2001 precedes the EU enlargement date, there is a widespread acceptance that this data does not represent A8 migrants to the UK. Instead, information relies upon administrative and survey sources.

At present, there are two administrative sources of information on the immigrants entering the UK labour market:

- *Worker Registration Scheme (WRS)* which should identify a worker’s place of employment, nationality, latest employer, and status as an A8 migrant, non-student, looking for work; these are used to produce the Accession Monitoring Report (AMR)². Workers are required to keep the Home Office informed of their whereabouts if they change employers, but only until one year of work has been completed.
- *National Insurance Number allocations (NINo)* which should identify all those, irrespective of status, taking up a PAYE job in the UK; these data are used to produce NINo registration statistics. Registration only happens once.

Neither shows an exact figure for any of the A8 nationals currently working in the UK. They both calculate inflows, but do not show outflows - the number of immigrants leaving the country. Additionally, each system has its own characteristics that affect the final calculation. For example, WRS records data according to the location of the employer rather than the residential address of the applicant, as is the case with NINo.

As a result, figures both differ between data sources. NINo records 23,822 A8 applications in Wales (May 2004 – March 2009) whereas WRS records 21,895 over the same period; both these numbers are subject to the criticism in that they do not record movements out of the area.

Both schemes also only cover the employed – they omit the self-employed and those not working. Both of these groups may still be making a claim on services, which is not being recorded.

Another administrative source for estimates for the number of migrants is the NHS patient database (populated, for example, by GP registrations). These have the advantage of covering all migrants, not just workers, and are felt to provide better estimates of internal migration within the UK. The disadvantage is that registration is thought to be driven by health events rather than migration per se; and that de-registration is notoriously difficult to enforce.

Finally, school records are being investigated as a potential source of information about migrant families.

Apart from administrative records and the decennial Census, there are a number of surveys that could provide information on migrants. The most important are:

² http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/aboutus/reports/accession_monitoring_report/

- International Passenger Survey (IPS) – detailed information on migrants to and from the UK, including reason for travel, intended length of stay, and intended destination
- Labour Force Survey (LFS) – information on migrants can be inferred from previous residence, employment status, and so on

However, the sample sizes are too small to allow much of a breakdown below national level (and in the case of the IPS, there is a concern that ‘London’ acts as a default destination and so is over-represented).

Since A8 accession, accurate measurement of migration, particularly at the local authority level, has become a source of some controversy. There are a number of reviews of migration statistics in progress (Chappell, 2006; ONS, 2007; UKSA, 2009), along with guidance on how to reconcile different estimates (eg Green, Owen and Adam, 2008).

Acquiring data for Carmarthenshire presents additional difficulties: as a small county, much of the registration data is subject to confidentiality restrictions. However, Carmarthenshire Health Board was able to supply detailed GP registration data on a confidential basis for statistical use. Numbers of children in schools were supplied by Carmarthenshire CC’s Minority Ethnic and Travellers Achievement Service (METAS).

The lack of language skills and unwillingness to respond to official documents (discussed below) decreases the likelihood of Carmarthenshire Poles responding to either the IPS or the LFS. However, the University of Glamorgan developed an assisted self-completion questionnaire for Poles in Llanelli, in Polish, with 120 respondents. For this project the same questionnaire was distributed amongst Poles in the rest of Carmarthenshire, with a similar number of valid responses. This survey does not allow estimation of the number of Poles, but with a completion rate of around 10% of the estimated population makes for a valuable source of additional information.

In summary, the following sources of statistical information are used in this report:

- NINo allocations – likely to be the most accurate representation of Poles coming directly to Carmarthenshire to work
- WRS data – likely to be the most accurate representation of current workers
- GP registration data – likely to be the most accurate indicators of longer-term migration
- Children in school – for triangulation of results
- 240 questionnaires – information for calibration of administrative data

4.2 How many Poles in Carmarthenshire?

4.2.1 Official and administrative sources

The 2001 Census gave the ethnic breakdown for Carmarthenshire as:

Table 4.1 Census data on ethnic groups

| | Carms. | | Wales | |
|---------------|----------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| White British | 168,060 | 97.2% | 2,786,605 | 96.0% |
| White Irish | 1,018 | 0.6% | 17,689 | 0.6% |
| White other | 2,141 | 1.2% | 37,211 | 1.3% |
| Non-white | 1,623 | 0.9% | 61,580 | 2.1% |
| Total | 172,842 | | 2,903,085 | |

Source: ONS

However, NINo registrations identify a large increase in Carmarthenshire A8 residents looking for work since 2004:

Table 4.2 NINo registrations 2002-2008, thousands

| | | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2005-8 |
|------------|--------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Carms. | All | 0.16 | 0.29 | 0.45 | 0.94 | 1.00 | 1.35 | 0.62 | 3.91 |
| | Polish | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.13 | 0.58 | 0.67 | 0.98 | 0.41 | 2.64 |
| | Other | 0.16 | 0.29 | 0.32 | 0.36 | 0.33 | 0.37 | 0.21 | 1.27 |
| Wales | All | 4.82 | 6.50 | 9.20 | 15.37 | 14.28 | 19.30 | 14.10 | 63.05 |
| | Polish | 0.02 | 0.03 | 1.05 | 4.85 | 5.51 | 7.54 | 3.91 | 21.81 |
| | Other | 4.80 | 6.47 | 8.15 | 10.52 | 8.77 | 11.76 | 10.19 | 41.24 |
| UK | All | 311 | 362 | 413 | 619 | 633 | 797 | 670 | 2,718 |
| | Polish | 5 | 9 | 38 | 145 | 192 | 243 | 152 | 732 |
| | Other | 307 | 353 | 374 | 474 | 441 | 554 | 517 | 1,986 |
| Poles | Carms. | 0% | 0% | 29% | 62% | 67% | 73% | 66% | 68% |
| % of total | Wales | 0% | 0% | 11% | 32% | 39% | 39% | 28% | 35% |
| | UK | 2% | 3% | 9% | 23% | 30% | 30% | 23% | 27% |

2008 figures may be reduced due to shorter collection period

Source: DWP NINo allocations to Dec 2008 http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/tabtool.asp#ni_alloc

In Carmarthenshire, the registration rate since accession has been far higher for A8 migrants. Poles account for 90% of A8 registrations, and twice as many new registrations as all other nationalities combined. Assuming that most A8 migrants would come into the category “White Other”, this implies that the size of this ethnic group has more than doubled since 2001, largely due to Polish migration since accession.

The Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) data is not published in multiple categories. However, some estimation of Polish migration can be made. The May 2009 Accession Monitoring Report notes that Poles account for 66% of A8 applications. Applying this to Wales gives:

Table 4.3 Polish migrants based on WRS data

| | Total A8 | Polish |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| 2004 | 2,430 | 1,603 |
| 2005 | 5,490 | 3,623 |
| 2006 | 6,875 | 4,537 |
| 2007 | 6,010 | 3,966 |
| 2008 | 3,515 | 2,319 |
| Total | 24,320 | 16,051 |

Source: March 2009 AMR

How accurate are these figures? As noted, the NINo figures only give indications of the applicant’s address when he or she first applies to work in the UK. The WRS data gives a more accurate indication of current activity. However, the AMR only describes individuals at first application, not at current occupation; therefore we would expect it to be consistent with NINo data as both represent first jobs. The March 2009 AMR reports 25,000 A8 national registered as working in Wales over the period, which is consistent with the 22,000 Poles reported in the NINo data. Figure 4.1 demonstrates this.

Figure 4.1: WRS and NINo applications 2004-2008

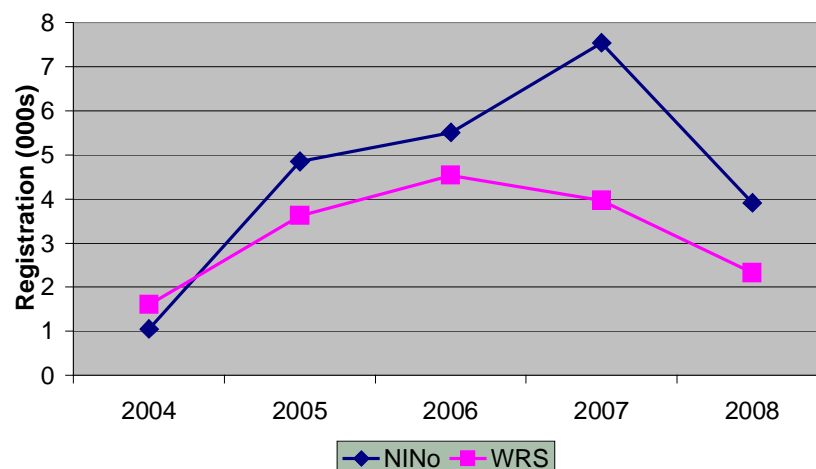


Table 4.4 shows the Annual Population Survey (APS2007³) estimates of the number of A8 nationals in Wales over the period:

Table 4.4 APS estimates of nationality of Welsh population, thousands

| | UK | A8 | Other EU | Rest of World |
|------------------------|-------|----|----------|---------------|
| 2004 | 2,814 | 2* | 37 | 60 |
| 2005 | 2,814 | 3* | 37 | 66 |
| 2006 | 2,812 | 10 | 38 | 72 |
| Oct 06 - Sep 07 | 2,813 | 15 | 38 | 73 |
| Oct 07 - Sep 08 | 2,819 | 18 | 39 | 79 |

*=insufficient numbers to provide reliable estimates
Source: ONS

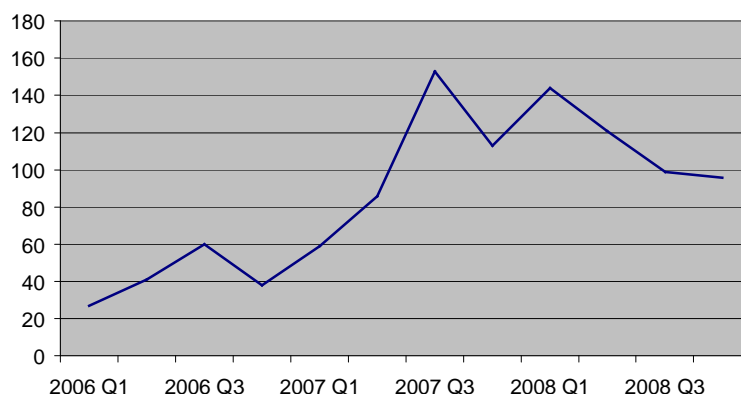
This data is based on a sample of 0.3% of households, which is reflected in the uncertainty of the early estimates. The numbers here are lower than the WRS/NINo data, but partly because they appear to be lagging by a year or so. This would seem to suggest that the registration data gives a good indication of current numbers.

Two points are worth noting: even in 2008 A8 nationals account for less than 1% of the Welsh population. Second, although the percentage growth in A8 nationals has been meteoric, in actual numbers, migrants from the rest of the world have increased as much as A8.

As noted above, GP registrations provide another source of evidence for the number and location of Poles. Using data supplied by Bridgend Local Health Board and by individual practice managers, growth in registrations since 2006 can be mapped:

³ APS web page: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=15147&Pos=1&ColRank=1&Rank=272>

Figure 4.2 GP registrations, quarterly



Source: Bridgend LHB (excludes Llanybydder)

Note: Figures from individual practices obtained in 2009 generally show slightly higher numbers, but as the general pattern is the same the BLHB figures are used to give consistency across all surgeries.

These are new registrations, not re-registrations from one practice to another; and they exclude known withdrawal from registers. Although the total number of Polish registrants is still rising, it is clear that the rate of new arrivals has been relatively constant at about 120 per quarter since mid-2007. Total registrations over the period 2006-2008 were 1037 Poles.

Individual registrations reflect the concentration of Poles in particular areas:

Table 4.5 Registrations at GP surgeries in Carmarthenshire 2006-8

| | Polish registrants | | | Adults | | <18 | Mean age | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|------------|--------|-----|-----|----------|----|
| | No. | % of non-UK | % of total | M | F | | M | F |
| Adfer Medical Group, Llanelli | 580 | 88.7% | 3.7% | 35% | 46% | 18% | 34 | 35 |
| Brynmeddyg Surgery, Llanybydder* | 160 | n/a | 6.3% | 55% | 39% | 6% | 34 | 34 |
| Furnace House Surgery, Carmarthen | 120 | 45.1% | 0.8% | 43% | 39% | 17% | 32 | 30 |
| Ty Elli Group Practice, Llanelli | 80 | 47.2% | 0.6% | 45% | 35% | 20% | 37 | 36 |
| 20-40 Poles (5 practices) | 140 | 39.7% | 0.4% | 41% | 43% | 16% | 30 | 29 |
| Under 20 (15 practices) | 120 | 26.2% | 0.1% | 43% | 39% | 19% | 32 | 33 |
| Total | 1200 | | | | | | | |

*Age data for Llanybydder only supplied for adults overall and in bands; numbers are from May 2009

Numbers have been rounded to nearest 10

Registrations still live at December 2008

Source: Bridgend LHB, Llanybydder Medical Centre

Llanelli has many more registrations than other areas. Llanybydder and Carmarthen both have surgeries with large Polish sections. Beyond that, Polish registrations are scattered throughout the county, with many surgeries having less than five Polish patients registered.

In Llanelli, Poles account for a much higher proportion of both migrant registrations and total number of patients. This is also the only area where registration of females is significantly higher than for males.

Llanybydder is unusual in having a larger proportion of Poles registered relative to UK and non-UK nationals. It has a much higher proportion of males, and relatively few children. This

is likely to reflect the work opportunities: Llanybydder is a small village with one large employer, a predominance of physically demanding manual jobs in agriculture and food processing, and relatively few opportunities for partners to find complementary work.

GP registration data shows low numbers relative to the APS, WRS and NINo count. As noted above, GP numbers may be excessively low because registration is often prompted by events rather than a part of living in the UK, although most Poles do seem to register with their GP. WRS should be accurate but it only records workers, and so if anything it may underestimate the total number of Poles in the county. However, it is not available below the county level; and the current publications only show when and where Poles first registered, not where (or if) they work now.

4.2.2 Reconciling estimates

It is possible to attempt a reconciliation using Llanybydder for calibration tool. A variety of sources indicate that the main employer there employs roughly 350 Poles at peak times; however a substantial part of the peak workers are on short-term contracts, and so may be unlikely to register with a GP. About 250 Poles seem to be regularly employed at the main processing plant, and these are most likely to register with a GP. There is only one GP surgery in Llanybydder.

Of those Poles, 100-150 live in Llanybydder (estimates supplied by police, employees, and focus group estimates that 60% of Poles drive to work ie live outside the town) and the rest commute from Carmarthen, Llanelli etc. There is a small amount of other employment - perhaps another ten or so adults. Although most couples are both working, there may be some unemployment or childcare. In summary, it would seem that the adult Polish population of Llanybydder is 160-170 at most.

The view from focus groups is that the split of adult GP registrations (59% male, 41% female) is reflected in the workforce. This would seem to validate a broad assumption that most of the regular Polish workforce are registering with the GP. This accords with the questionnaire, which found that about 73% of Poles in Llanybydder claimed to have used a doctor (and this questionnaire covered 60 people, so roughly 40% of the population of Llanybydder). However this 73% registration rate would imply an adult population of about 200 adult Poles in Llanybydder. There is turnover of Poles in Llanybydder, and de-registration is notoriously difficult to enforce. If the difference between the maximum adult population and GP registrations is due to unrecognised de-registration, this would imply that GP data overestimates current patients by about 20%.

Using these assumptions (that the questionnaires do reflect GP registrations accurately, but that GP data includes about 20% unrecorded de-registrations) and an additional assumption that 100% of children are registered, this enables us to estimate the Polish population for Carmarthenshire as follows.

Table 4.6 Polish population in Carmarthenshire based on GP registrations

| Practice | Adult registrations | Registration rate | Est pop. | Child Registrations | Est. pop. |
|--------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------------|------------|
| Llanelli | 580 | 65% | 715 | 130 | 104 |
| Carmarthen | 140 | 73% | 154 | 30 | 24 |
| Llanybydder | 150 | 73% | 164 | 10 | 8 |
| Other | 130 | 70% | 148 | 30 | 24 |
| Total | | | 1180 | | 160 |

See Appendix 1 for registration rates

This gives a Polish population for Carmarthenshire of 1,340.

Note that the children figure compares with figures supplied by METAS of 169 Polish children in schools in the county (132 in Llanelli and surrounding area, 37 in Carmarthen and around). The school figures do not include pre-school children, and so the GP estimate might be low;

on the other hand, it is calculated with an assumption of every children being registered with a GP and the same amount of out-migration as for adults, both of which may be challenged.

To get an estimate of population proportions, the 'other' Poles are allocated to Carmarthen and Llanelli in proportion to the population estimated above. The 'other' are not allocated to Llanybydder as it assumed at that the GP practice in Llanybydder is the only relevant one for the village.

Table 4.7 Polish population and population shares

| | Adults | Children | Total | Population (mid-2007) | Polish share |
|--------------|--------------|------------|-------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Llanelli | 837 | 124 | 961 | 46,358 | 2.1% |
| Carmarthen | 180 | 29 | 209 | 13,148 | 1.6% |
| Llanybydder | 164 | 8 | 172 | 1,423 | 12.1% |
| Total | 1,181 | 161 | 1342 | 179,500 | 0.7% |

There are other ways to refine these totals: for example, it is known that women are more likely to register with GPs, and that the turnover rate (and hence unrecorded de-registration) is highest for single men. However, given the other uncertainties and assumptions needed in coming to this estimate, this was not pursued for this study.

It is then possible to compare these population estimates with official estimates:

Table 4.8 Alternative population estimates

| Source | Estimate |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Calculations based upon GP registrations, adjusted | 1,340 |
| NINo registrations | 2,640 |
| WRS (Wales adjusted to Carms) | 2,000 |
| APS (Wales, adjusted to Carms and for A8) | 1,485 |

Adjustments to WRS/APS data made on the basis of Carms = 1/8 Wales in NINo data.
Additional adjustments to APS data on the basis of 2/3 of A8 migrants being Polish

The APS data is lower than the worker registration data, and much closer to GP registrations. It could be argued that the APS is the only point-in-time measure whereas WRS and NINo are cumulative, and so it should be seen as more accurate. The APS does not have a sufficiently large sample size to generate robust observations at this level of detail, but it does seem reasonable to assume that there were around 1,400 Poles living in Carmarthenshire at the end of 2008. Note that this means that the published worker registration estimates (WRS and NINo) overestimate the current population by 50%-100%.

There are some reasons to suppose a higher number than this:

- Seasonal workers will boost numbers, particularly in the meat processing plants that dominate employment; these could be up to 200-300 at the peak
- Visits to relatives are unlikely to show up in records, although it is known that some will be coming to stay and work for a few weeks (for example, students during the summer holidays)
- There are reports of cash-in-hand agricultural workers; again these are unlikely to be identified in official records. The only estimates given were that 50 Poles would be working on a farm during season. Even for the largest farms this is an unlikely number; it may be more likely to relate to the total number of agricultural workers known to the respondent.

Even allowing for these factors to be simultaneous and exclusive (for example, assuming visitors do not find temporary seasonal work in agriculture), these seem unlikely to generate more than a few hundred extra Poles, even at peak times. Taking this, and assuming that errors in the above estimate of 1,400 Poles all lead to an underestimate, it would seem fair to state that there are probably at most 2,000 Poles (adults and children) in Carmarthenshire, and considerably fewer out of season.

4.2.3 Inconsistency with reported estimates

It is interesting to compare these figures with general comments on the population. Using the above estimates as the benchmark, Table 4.9 presents some alternatives from the interviews and focus groups::

Table 4.9 Popular population estimates

| | Llanelli | Carmarthen | Llanybydder | Carms. |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--------|
| Estimated | 960 | 210 | 170 (250*) | 1,340 |
| Focus groups | Well over 1,500 | 800-1,000 1,000-1,500 | 300* 400* 500* | |
| Service providers | 250-300** 800-1,200 1,000-2,000 2,000 2,500-3,000 'A few hundred families' | | 200-250* | 4,000 |

* Estimates of employees, not residents

** Major employer only

While some of these are in the same ball park as our estimates, generally figures are much higher – in some cases higher even than the NINo/WRS estimates. This may be due to seasonal workers (although estimates of the numbers of seasonals were also wildly variable), or it may be due to the turnover of staff producing misperceptions of momentary totals. One commented that, of his estimate of 2,000 Poles in Llanelli, only 1,000 were 'permanent':

- *"...the margin of the people who come and go back is quite big; generally speaking it may be about one thousand people."*

In the case of Llanybydder, there is probably some double-counting with Poles being counted as both workers in Llanybydder and residents in other towns. However, note that the working population of Llanybydder is generally reasonably well estimated.

One explanation for the high estimates given by the Poles is that groups may tend to oversee the importance of their own group – see discussion in Appendix A1 on the age of workers in Llanelli. This effect may be particularly strong if (as is the case with Poles) the respondents only tend to mix with their own group and have no contact with the wider environment. When everyone you meet, work with, talk to, drink with is Polish, you assume that the town is full of Poles. Gardner (2008) refers to this as the 'Example Rule'.

The figures present here are also much lower than widely-circulated public estimates. The *Western Mail*(reproduced in Wales Online) reported that

- *Llanelli's population of 40,000 has been bolstered by an influx of at least 2,000 Polish immigrants, and thousands more in the surrounding Gwendraeth Valley... Some estimates put the number of Poles living in the wider Gwendraeth Valley area at around 8,000.*

Source: Turner (2006)

The source of the comment about the Gwendraeth Valley appears to be a radio interview by a local politician. There is no support for this whatsoever, but it has been re-quoted in numerous

places. The Wales Online article has also been referenced by several BNP websites⁴. The quote of 2,000 Poles living in Llanelli is sourced, in a *Guardian* article, to 'local community leaders'⁵.

One issue might be that valid statistics are deliberately or accidentally misinterpreted. For example both Carmarthenshire CC and the BBC report, accurately, that Carmarthenshire has seen 2,635 migrants in total between 2004 and 2007, based on WRS data⁶. It is easy to speculate how this might then have been mis-interpreted as a point-in time estimate; then how the migrants could mutate into Poles, the dominant group. Additionally, the WRS data is first registration not current registration. It is also worth noting that A8 migration to Wales since 2004 is matched by the increasing migration from other countries.

A TUC report (Winkler, 2007) describes total numbers for Wales, accurately. It also, with reasonable accuracy, suggests that these could account for 3% of the working population. This is feasible, as the migrants have much higher employment rates than the UK average. Again, however, it is possible this estimate of 3% of the workforce could be corrupted into 3% of the population – which, in the case of Carmarthenshire, would give an estimate of 5,000 Poles.

In summary, there are a number of potential sources of error for estimates of migrants:

- Cumulative data mis-interpreted as point-in-time data
- Historical data misread as current data
- Proportion of different groups (workforce, population) being confused
- Inability to distinguish between migrants (Poles, A8, other)
- Perceptions based solely upon own experience
- Unfounded speculation

4.3 Characteristics of the population

Detail on the characteristics of the Polish migrant community can be found in Appendix A1.

4.1.3 Poles and work

The Poles in Carmarthenshire probably amount to the biggest ethnic minority group in the county; the post-accession Poles are overwhelmingly work migrants, with employment rates up to 98% (see Appendix A1). The majority are coming to the county to earn money to boost their home budget in Poland, and then to return. Often they come with a fixed financial target: anything from paying back debts or a mortgage to fitting a new bathroom. However, once they arrive in Wales, it may be a different story. Many quickly find that, even on a minimum wages, they can be financially better off and live more comfortably in the UK than back in Poland.

Whilst many Poles do not come with a fixed idea of the length of stay and can be seen as semi-permanent, there are also transient workers: students from one to three months in summer; relatives for temporary work; seasonal butchers for six months. Agency workers typically came on two-year contracts.

Initially, the Poles came to Carmarthenshire through the actions of job agencies, mostly British. These job agencies actively targeted the Poles in regions of Poland with high unemployment, low income, or both. The attractiveness of the work in Carmarthenshire for the Polish nationals came down to a few factors: better money, no language or qualifications required, and work and accommodation arranged by a single agency.

⁴ For example, <http://bridgendbnp.blogspot.com/2008/12/llanelli-councillors-and-bnp.html>

⁵ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/jul/01/bnp-llanelli-race>

⁶ <http://www.sirgaerfyrdin.gov.uk/English/news/Pages/Migrantmythandmysterymasterplan.aspx>
http://online.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/agendas/eng/SJSC20080318/REP03_01.HTM
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/6748457.stm>

A change to the Polish migrants' group took place in 2006/7 when the two biggest migrant workers' employers in the area, Dawn Pak and Dunbia, started the process of taking over the agency workers, giving them more stable and secure income. Since 2006, increasing numbers have been brought over by friends or relatives already here. These earlier arrivals have taken over the role of the agencies in arranging life for the new arrivals.

The Poles often come on short notice: within 3-7 days of a telephone call from an agency or a friend/relative, they can be on a production line or a building site. They don't know the country or the language because they do not come here to stay - at least initially. In the beginning, migration was dominated by men, coming alone, and living in agency-provided multi-occupancy housing (MOH).

Poles' presence here is tightly linked to their employment, although it is possible to overemphasise this: when a large agency made some 230 workers redundant earlier in 2009, many returned to Poland – but many did not. In the current economic crisis, the Poles themselves think there is a visible slowdown in the numbers coming to work here; but this does not mean more returning home. Partly this is because the Polish employment situation is worsening as well; many Poles see staying in Britain as the least-bad option. As a result, it is difficult to tell what the end result will be, but the Poles interviewed certainly felt that staying in Britain was the preferred option for many. The majority of the current group is planning to be around for at least the next couple of years.

4.3.2 Family life

The current profile of Poles is different to the initial wave of 2004-2005. Five years on from accession, the Poles in Carmarthenshire are a more settled group: there are more similar numbers of men and women, and more families. The majority of the Poles have been living here now for between two to four years, and they have moved from the initial stress of MOH to privately renting accommodation with families, partners, and friends.

The initial group was dominated by single men, but the current group is nearer 50-50 men and women (except in Llanybydder where two-thirds are men), and children are increasingly common. Migrant women have been having children in the UK for some time; and midwives report that the first families with a second child born in the UK have appeared in 2009.

Where Poles have partners or children, they are most likely to be living with them (as opposed to having them in Poland). There are some differences between parts of Carmarthenshire: Carmarthen has the highest number of couples, but the lowest proportion with children; Llanybydder has the highest proportion with children and/or partners back in Poland. Over 80% of those arriving in Carmarthen or Llanybydder knew someone on arrival, whereas in Llanelli it was under 60% - although in all towns most people made the journey unaccompanied.

There is a suggestion that Poles exist in discrete sub-groups, even within quite small areas. However, within these subgroups, effective networks exist for sharing information.

4.3.3 Personal characteristics

The population is younger than the general population in Wales or Poland, with almost half being under 30. Carmarthen has the youngest population, with almost a third being 25 or under. Women are on average younger than men.

The women are also better educated – in fact, better educated than the Polish population average. The men tend to concentrate in the middle range – fewer graduates than the Polish population, but also fewer with no qualifications. Hence, although stories are spread about jobs being filled by unskilled 'hands for hire', the workforce is, on paper at least, reasonably skilled.

However, the one major skill lacking is command of English. Generally, the Poles interviewed or surveyed have negligible (self-reported) language skills; of more concern is that they do not

seem to be improving them over time. Only those whose work required good language skills (care work, hospitality) seemed to have a working knowledge of English. The habit of living in MOH or renting with other Poles, and the presence of a number of Polish-dominated workforces, means that the need to learn English is diminished considerably. As a result, many Poles require the help of a translator even for relatively simple transactions.

4.4 Crime rates

Rates of arrests for Poles were calculated from evidence supplied by Carmarthenshire constabulary. This data covered arrests registered at Llanelli, Carmarthen and Ammanford police stations, for both males and females, for all offences and for alcohol-related offences. The data was available up to first quarter of 2009 but only data to 2008 is used.

Table 4.10 Arrest rates, Poles and general population

| | | Males | | | Females | | |
|---------------|-----------------|-------|--------|-------|---------|-------|------|
| | | Carm. | Llan. | Amm. | Carm. | Llan. | Amm. |
| All offenders | All arrests | 9,645 | 11,240 | 1,655 | 2,100 | 2,060 | 0 |
| | Alcohol-related | 1,970 | 1,415 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Poles | All arrests | 90 | 105 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 0 |
| | Alcohol-related | 20 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Numbers have been rounded
Source: Carmarthenshire Constabulary

Due to low numbers of Polish arrests, there was insufficient data to make statistically meaningful reports of general arrest rates in Ammanford and for females. No alcohol-related arrests were recorded for females or in Ammanford. In 2009, the partial-year results again meant that the number of Poles being arrested was too small to make judgements about a trend. Accordingly the figures below are only for males 2005-8, and only relate to the two major towns. Note that the values for alcohol-related offences should be treated with some caution as the number of Polish arrests is very small.

Table 4.11 Polish proportion of arrestees

| | All offences | | Alcohol-related | |
|------|--------------|----------|-----------------|----------|
| | Carm. | Llanelli | Carm. | Llanelli |
| 2005 | 0.7% | 0.5% | 0.7% | 0.6% |
| 2006 | 1.1% | 0.5% | 1.0% | 0.8% |
| 2007 | 0.8% | 0.9% | 1.4% | 1.0% |
| 2008 | 0.9% | 1.8% | 1.1% | 2.0% |

Source: Carmarthenshire Constabulary

In Carmarthen the proportion of offences committed by Poles is around 1%, and seems to have stabilised or been falling since 2006. This is probably lower than the proportion of Poles in the population. The inflow and outflow of migrants over this period (compared to the relative stability of the general population) means that the proportion of total Polish migrants arrested is lower than in Table 4.11. In Llanelli the proportion appears to have been rising, and may be around the population proportion.

The proportion of offences which are alcohol-related appears to be higher in the Polish population:

Table 4.12 Proportion of alcohol-related arrests

| | Carm. | Llanelli |
|---------------|--------------|-----------------|
| All offenders | 20.4% | 12.6% |
| Poles | 23.3% | 15.2% |

Source: Carmarthenshire Constabulary

Of those alcohol-related offences, motoring dominates:

Table 4.13 Type of alcohol-related arrest, 2005-2008

| | Proportion of total |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Motoring | 40% |
| Drunkenness & public order | 17% |
| Violence (incl sexual offences) | 21% |
| Theft | 7% |
| Other | 14% |
| Total arrests 2005-2008 | 42 |

Source: Carmarthenshire Constabulary

However, these should also be interpreted cautiously; for example, over half of the motoring offences occurred in 2007.

In summary, Poles appear to be proportionately less likely to be arrested compared to the general population, but with a higher rate of alcohol-related crime among those arrests; motoring seems to count for a large proportion of the latter. However, given the very small numbers involved, these should be treated as indicators only of likely behaviour, rather than accurate estimates.

4.5 Health statistics

Over 50,000 referrals were made to Community Safety partnerships over the period 2005-2009 for drug or alcohol problems (source: Health Solutions Wales Information and Statistics). Of those, under 1% were 'white-other' - non-British and non-Irish whites. Carmarthenshire accounted for 5% of all referrals, and 3% of non-British referrals. For comparison, Cardiff accounted for 12% of all referrals but over 40% of the 'white-other' group. Referrals for this group are so small as to be statistically meaningless for all but a few places.

Carmarthenshire A&E reported that there had been no Polish admissions with drink or drugs problems in the first six months of 2009. However, it should be noted that individuals interviewed confirmed that they had used A&E or they had treated Polish patients. It therefore seems likely the lack of Polish admissions is due to the recording system.

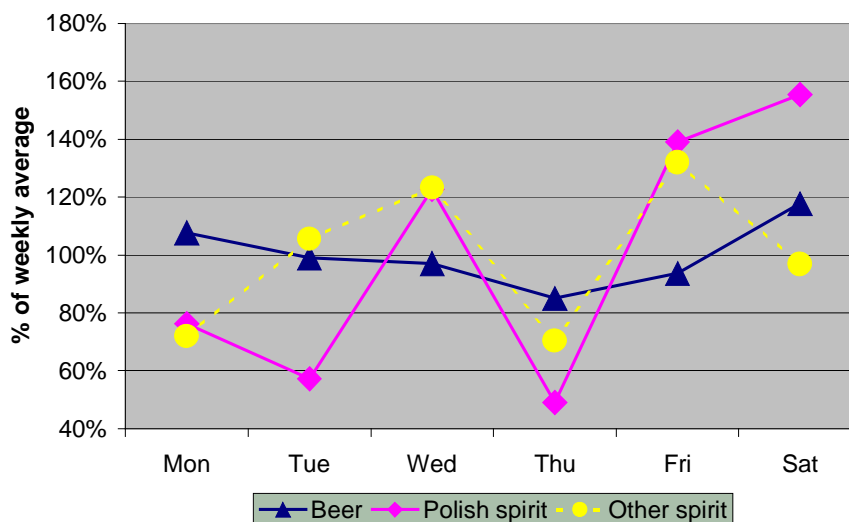
4.6 Alcohol consumption data

Alcohol consumption data was supplied by the Polish shop in Llanybydder. Using a simple tally-marking system, purchases of alcohol were recorded over a seven-week period April-May 2009. Unit sales were recorded for:

- Beer (Polish, Guinness, Other UK, other)
- Cider
- Spirits (Polish vodka, UK vodka, other)

The numbers were dominated by Polish beer, Polish vodka and UK spirits. Over the period, the pattern of weekly consumption seems relatively stable. Figure 4.3 gives the overall average consumption of beer and spirits over the week.

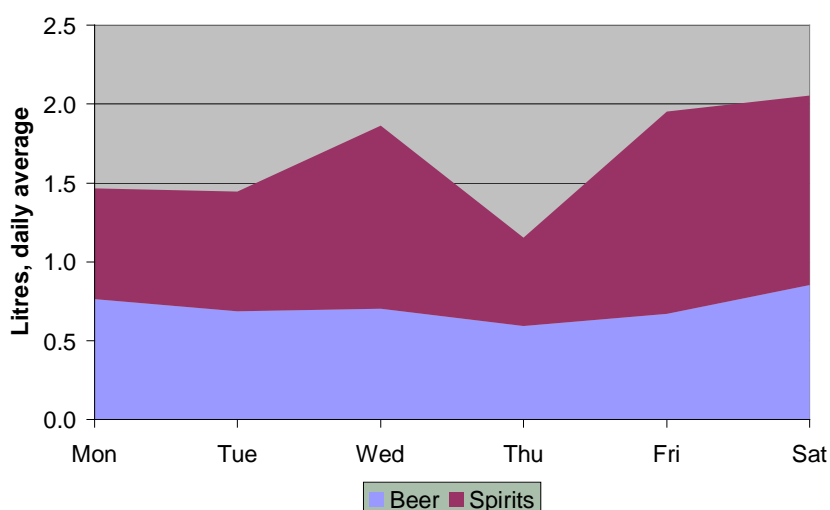
Figure 4.3 Daily alcohol purchases, Llanybydder



Beer consumption is relatively flat during the week, but does increase at the weekend to 20% above the average. Spirit consumption peaks mid week and weekends, for both local and Polish spirits. While in general there are more Polish than UK spirit sales at the weekend, it is impossible to say whether this is statistically significant from this small sample.

Whilst sales of beer outweighs the sale of spirits in number of bottles by almost ten to one, spirits have a higher alcohol level and are sold in bigger bottles. As only few brands of alcohol are sold in the shop, it is possible to calculate an estimate of alcohol consumption. Polish beers, which dominate sales, come in 500ml bottles at around 5%. Spirits come in 0.7l bottles at around 40%. On this basis, alcohol consumption is as follows:

Figure 4.4 Daily purchases of pure alcohol



It is clear that most of the variation in alcohol consumption is due to spirits sales. Note that while this pattern of a mid-week peak in drinking is not uncommon amongst the young working community (see Ritchie, Ritchie and Ward 2009), in this particular place it was suggested that this might be more pronounced because Wednesday is often a day off.

There are several caveats with these numbers. First, these numbers were only collected from one shop; the other shops in town selling Polish alcohol declined to co-operate with the researcher, and supermarkets in other towns were not contacted. Second, the shop which supplied this data has shorter opening hours. Poles will re-stock on alcohol during a party, rather than buying all the alcohol in advance. Given the earlier closing time of this shop, it is likely that it is missing, in particular, party sales. Third, this shop is not on the route home for workers, and so picks up less passing trade – this means it is likely to underestimate beer consumption during the week. Fourth, the figures are subject to much variation; for example, the survey period coincided with the better weather which has a large impact on sales.

For more details on the behavioural aspects, see Sections 6 and 7.

As such these figures can not be treated as estimates of alcohol consumption by Poles. However, this does suggest behaviour consistent with that described in interviews and focus groups. Given that the sales data was collected independently of the interviews and focus groups (and analysed after them), this provides some statistical justification for the accuracy of descriptions..

5. Interviews with service providers, or how others see Poles

The results in this section come from some 25 personal interviews, from the CJS, support services, medical services, church groups, local councillors, union representatives, and local charities. Almost none of the interviewees included in this section are Polish nationals; the exceptions are a small number of individuals whose involvement in the Polish community places them in a similar position (and with a similar viewpoint) to the other interviewees. Those Poles working in support and other services with regular and detailed involvement in the community under review are included in the next section.

5.1. General observations on the population

5.1.1 Welsh drinking culture

Welsh drinking culture is focused on social events, particularly big sporting events and holidays. On regular weeks, the weekend is the focus for drinking. As Ritchie, Ritchie and Ward (2009) note, there is a strong element of pre-loading in Welsh drinking culture (drinking cheaply at home or in pubs before moving to clubs):

- *“the Welsh predominantly will like to go to the pub and have a drink. Most people won’t drink ridiculous amounts of alcohol and have drink socially, pub is a very social place, there is not that much trouble I would say but they are very much into going out one of the sporting events...or if it’s a bank holiday event people go out and then they will drink quite a lot and they like to go out and they make a real good job of it, drink as much as they can”.*
- *“from Friday onwards is seen as party time where it been drinking, drinking until people are insensible.”*
- *“I would say a lot people drink to excess of the weekends, they work all the week and they haven’t got any interest in their life and then they will go out to the weekend and they will drink heavily on a Friday and a Saturday...Sunday is not so much unless it’s a Bank holiday weekend.”*
- *“A large portion of those people who have done it Friday or Saturday night will not just be having two or three drinks, they will be drinking as much as they can either afford or as much they barely can go home.”*
- *“I think the culture that I live with people tend to go out and drink when they are celebrating something and they have a bit of a blowout with the international rugby games or now it will be, this Saturday we know it’s going to be busy.”*
- *“The people we get engaged with – we tend to notice it on the weekend, there is a lot of binge drinking...Saturday tends to be the peak, people go out on a Friday, but Saturday seems to be the peak. You do get people out on the weekend, on Sunday. Sunday tends to be busy on our public holidays, because there is no work on a Monday.”*
- *“[Peak is] ten o’clock onwards, I get the feeling that people tend to buy alcohol in the supermarkets, and they tend to drink at home or in a friend’s home or something like that. This obviously works out cheaper than having to go to a pub and spending three or four times as much on alcohol...I think that would be reflected in the Polish community – they are no different.”*
- *“A lot of pubs don’t open late of a night, some pubs only open Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and they rely just on the trade from the weekend to sustain their business.”*
- *“There is a bit of a drinking culture in the town anyway on weekends. Like, people drink more at the weekends than they would during the week because of work. I don’t think that would be an exception for the Poles, because a lot of them work as well”*

There is some all-day drinking

- *“In Carmarthen there are people in [the pub] drinking 9 o’clock in the morning... Every day of the week. You know, people who aren’t employed – maybe old persons or persons who are unemployed”*
- *“Some people will drink all the day and those are Welsh people, they are not Polish people.”*

The Welsh population is younger than Polish, from 16 upwards for drinking. The upper limit of about 40 for heavy drinking is the same for all.

People stay in the pubs until 11.30-ish and then move on to clubs, saving money. The phenomenon of pre-loading is also present in Polish culture, except that home dominates for early drinking.

Offences are not necessarily related to regular abuse of alcohol:

- *“So [drink-driving] is about 80 % male... It can be then anybody; we get professional people with good jobs and have gone to some function or do and who have taken these risks a number of times because [they do] this sort of business thing a lot. We get people who have got a drink problem. Not mostly – it is far more people who don’t have a regular issue with alcohol. They might drink regularly but it is not to a problematic degree.”*

5.1.2 Welsh drugs culture

In Carmarthenshire, there is some dispute as to the prevalence of various drugs:

- *“there is lots of drugs in Llanelli... Heroin... [and] crack, cocaine is, it’s been in here for a while but it’s actually here all the time. Now it’s same as heroin so you don’t have to go out of town to get it, it’s all here it is, yeah. They are the two main drugs out there. There are illegal benzodiazepines [and Valium] and cannabis.”*
- *“Age group of cannabis is big”*
- *“Skunk is quite popular in Llanelli but it depends on, if it is being grown here like but more often are not, you will get resin but I do hear that there is quite a lot skunk around when before you wouldn’t hear of skunk being about. [Cannabis use more likely to be recreational or problematic/habitual?] I think it’s problematic”*
- *“I don’t think that Llanelli or Carmarthenshire is any different from any other urban area really. Yes there is evidence of cannabis in the town... I don’t think there is any defining age group with cannabis users”*
- *“My perception was [cocaine] was taken as a recreational drug on the weekend.”*
- *“There are drug issues in Llanelli and Carmarthenshire, like any where else.”*
- *It is not a massive problem, but for a town like Llanelli, it is too big a problem for us to have... It is not obvious, but there is certainly drug taking going on in the pubs and clubs. But more discretely, as it is not an open culture that you can do.... it is not done openly in front of everybody.”*
- *“It is a range. You have got your cannabis, your uppers and downers, the pills you take at night clubs. There is certainly heroin addiction going on; there is needle exchange programme set up in Llanelli...”*

Heroin is seen as the main drug, followed by benzodiazepines. This impression is reported by various part of the CJS and service providers. Some interviewees also reported high levels of cannabis use. The difference in perception may be because the heroin/benzodiazepine users may be disproportionately problematic users, compared to cannabis users. Cannabis use seems to be picked up more as an adjunct to other investigations, rather than being a source of problems in its own right.

It has been suggested that amphetamines used to be the primary drug, but that this has now been supplanted by heroin; however, where amphetamines were taken to ensure performance at work (rather than for recreational use) they may still be important:

- *“I think it’s a closed minority of a group...who are taking it, as you said, to kick start their Monday morning from their weekend and see them through all these long shifts as well”*

There are concerns about increasing availability of drugs:

- *“I think it’s becoming a culture...It’s like so many people taking drugs now, people think this is the way of life, that’s how big it’s got...When you are taking drugs everybody you know takes drugs. That’s what I mean, it’s like a culture and how can you see yourself stepping out of that like.”*

Some service providers have questioned the soft drugs-hard drugs progression model as no longer relevant:

- *...[Everyone used to believe] that you first start taking cannabis before you starting in heroin another drugs, but I think that has changed a little bit now. I think drug addicts starting taking their first drug is Heroin these days, yeah... It has now been as it is for about five years here, very right for Llanelli then.”*

5.2. Alcohol use amongst Poles

It is important to note that many observers commented on the change in the Polish population over time:

- *“I think things have changed over time. Initially, you know, people have come to accept the fact that Polish people here are other nationalities and then also I think the relationship has got better... Probably both sides are equally possibly to blame for, maybe some friction at the start because the local people, the Welsh, someone else comes into their backyard, so to speak...they are coming over here, they are noisy, they are instantly recognised because they speak a different language and there is a little bit of friction there... I think the Polish didn’t help themselves because they were going out quite frequently, they were drinking a lot probably because they have a new place to go out and they were bringing attention on themselves, they were going in groups and being quite noisy... The situation seems to got more better, there is not that unfamiliarity the Polish people here, people accept that there is quite a few of them here. The Poles are not behaving as maybe some of the ones did initially, they tend to be more settled and they tend to be more comfortable I think, you know, rather than having to go out to pubs and clubs. So I think the relation is better ... I have detected some friction ... because of the economic situation as well.”*

5.2.1 When do Poles drink?

The Polish focus groups (see section 6 below) give a consistent picture of Polish drinking: a little each night, a lot on paydays and weekends. The picture from outside the Polish community is rather more complex.

Interviewees agreed that payday has an effect on Polish drinking, so that even at weekends the town can be devoid of Poles if this is an ‘in-between’ weekend for those paid fortnightly. If Poles do go out, the proximity of payday is reflected in the amount they drink.

Interviewees see the Poles as very much following the Welsh pattern of weekends being the prime drinking times. Drinking during the week is seen as part of the problem of the ‘first wave’ of Polish migrants, as was excessive drinking.

- *“I think it is across the board, I certainly think the economy has played a part in it. The night-time economy is much quieter than what it used to be, the town isn’t as busy on the weekends...If I go back two years ago, Llanelli town would be quite busy on a Friday and Saturday night, in terms of the community in general going out to pubs and clubs was busy but now it isn’t as busy, because of the economy in the last*

twelve months really. Obviously, the Polish community are no different from anyone else, and again it is proportional to the amount of people that are in the town ... [Do they drink differently?] I don't think it is noticeable."

- *"I think originally when Polish workers came over they were going out quite a lot and they were quite visible and the fact that, you know, it was obviously different for people to see them, but I think there were quite a few Polish people going out to pubs and clubs, probably they come over different country and you like to see what's what and what's going on, whereas now I think, I don't think you could honestly say that there is large groups of Polish people out and they are obvious, but they are out in clubs and pubs now. I think they tend to be staying in their homes and houses a bit more, socialise more than they used to."*
- *"Initially it would have been any day of the week but I think obviously circumstances have made that. I think generally in the week previously you are quite likely to see Polish people out in a bar in a week, out in pubs and clubs may be more so than some of the locals. However, now I think they are following the same patterns of locals and because money is a bit tighter they are only going out on the weekends generally."*
- *"The figure seems to suggest that they seem to be just drinking as social drinking as opposed hardcore drinking because there is less incidents now than they used to be originally. I would say they probably did have a bit of drinking problem, they were drinking more than they should have done. But now I would say the figure seems to suggest they would drink socially in a group and they wouldn't be drinking to such a ridiculous level that it was obvious"*

Social drinking (as opposed to drinking to get drunk) seems more common now, although this is a relative issue: Poles still drink a lot. However, drinking in a 'Welsh' way improves the impression:

- *"They are just fortunate that a lot of people like to drink until they can't stand up, so they just blend in"*
- *"Again 20-40, male, they have just finished their shift and, you know the old adage of work hard and play hard, I think that is mirrored in my experience with Polish people. They are hard-working people and when they are not at work they like to enjoy themselves."*
- *"My perception is, it would be similar to the Welsh, so they actually may go to pub, yes, they may drink at home. They may meet on a friend's house and have a drink along with friends. I don't think there is a vast difference between our sort of drinking cultures...I don't think there is much difference between both."*

The view that Poles drink much like the Welsh is not universally accepted; for example, Poles are thought to drink spirits after work, and to binge more heavily on party days:

- *"Poles got a totally different drinking culture whether it's because they feel that they may be not welcome in pubs, I don't know. The Welsh drinking culture is, you will find very few people in the pubs during the week perhaps a few core hard drinkers that will drink all day, full stop, but then you will find that coming to weekend the pubs will be absolutely packed from Friday afternoon through till Sunday evening, whereas with Polish, generally they tend to steady drink during the week and you don't see them at weekend. I presume they still drink during the weekend, but you don't actually see them out in the pubs or anything."*
- *"With the Poles I think it's after work it's a norm, it's normal that they will finish work and have a litre of vodka...I would say that the majority of them that I have come into contact with, and I don't want to stereotype them, but they do work hard and have in their spare time their way of relaxing and socialising is to have a good drink."*
- *"People have often said to me that the Poles can drink more than anybody they know...They consume a lot more in one night out than the Welsh."*
- *[Of Poles drinking spirit] Perhaps it is what I have become aware of, perhaps knowing a little bit about the Polish culture, and perhaps the way of life in Poland. And they shouldn't be any different when they come over here; they still want to keep the culture and the way of life, what they have adopted in Poland – it's what they know."*

And they have brought it with them. That being said there is nothing overtly within the community that gives me any substance to my perception."

There was some awareness that Poles will be drinking in public places at unusual times of the day – morning, mid-afternoon and so on. This is usually put down to shift working, although some have identified this as a trait brought over from Poland:

- *"This is one of the things that would draw my attention. I have seen it on a few occasions three, four maybe five males of that age group and it could be 11 o'clock in the morning, 3 o'clock in the afternoon, early evening, and you could tell that they were drunk. I think it's probably a symptom of the fact that they are shift workers... They don't work 09:00 to 05:00 Monday to Friday. So I think when there is a day off, it could be a Monday, it could be Friday, it could be a Sunday, that's the drinking day then..., I wouldn't say often, but it's obvious"*
- *"I have dealt with a lot of Polish men in particular; at times you wouldn't expect people to be drunk."*

When Poles do go out, age groups are mixed; nightclubs are not limited to the younger generation. There is a feeling that those going out are more likely to be those without families, and that much more socialising goes on at home – although, for obvious reasons, this group is unable to be sure about how and how much Poles drink at home. This view of Poles going out on the town regularly contrasts with the view of Poles themselves (see section 6): that home drinking is the norm and going out a treat. This difference in views can be attributed to few interviewees visiting Poles in their homes.

5.2.2 Where do Poles drink?

Despite an observable pattern of going out over the weekend, Poles in general are not thought to go out to pubs much.

- *"They prefer [partying] at home rather than going to some pub, they prefer to start at home, and a bit tipsy they will go to a disco, and there they will finish [a day]"*
- *"[The 'second wave'] know a few more communities here and they maybe would prefer to go to someone else's house and drink"*
- *"It's very rarely I see the Polish people out on the street into the community. ...I am aware that a lot of people go, Polish people as well as locals go to the clubs and so on, you know, the nightclubs, the general night life in Llanelli ... You are really probably talking between 10 and 20 public houses [in Llanelli]... but I have rarely come across any Polish people in those establishments. Now my experience of the Polish in terms of drinking is that they are usually drinking in the premises, at home rather than out on the street or in the pubs... Although I am aware that they do drink in the nightclubs in town and some of the pubs in town as well in the town centre... Generally the drinking habits, I don't think they drink that many in pubs and clubs, clubs maybe I would say in the town centre on a weekend they may go and socialise, youngsters, young single people, but generally I would think they buy most of the stuff from supermarket or the cheapest place you can get it, off-license supermarket and drink at home or drink in friend's house. They may go to their friend's house."*

If Poles do go to pubs, they are more likely to frequent ones with beer gardens, or where they can be on or close to the street. This is due to the high incidence of smoking amongst the Poles.

- *"Not on the streets drinking, I would say more likely they like to be in a public house either sort of in the public house or if a pub's got like a beer garden or some area that sort of that you can maybe able to see from the street, that type of location"*

Nightclubs are more popular, especially amongst the young and the single. As with the Welsh, visits are preceded by drinking in advance at home, apparently to save money.

- *"Single Poles tend to go to a disco in small groups; a couple will go on their own or with another couple or two"*
- *"The Poles do not go to pubs. They meet up at home, drink alcohol and go to a disco. The discos are open here about 10pm."*
- *"I suppose like particularly younger ones like the local people they tend to – particularly at weekends they tend to congregate in the town centre where most of the discos, the clubs and the music and all the rest of it which you don't get as much out on the periphery, on the rural areas."*
- *"There is very little place for them to go, particularly again their command of the English is not that good."*

The most popular nightspots tend to be large and selling cheap alcohol. They may sell Polish beer, but this is a bonus. Generally the Poles go where drink is cheapest; for example, almost all Llanelli-based interviewees mentioned a £10-and-all-you-can-drink nightclub as popular place. Similar places in Carmarthen were identified. In this the Poles do not differ much from the Welsh – a fact commented on by many of the interviewees.

- *"The ones who go [to the £10-and-all-you-can-drink places] would drink a lot - and so would the other nationalities who go there"*

It is also possibly that Poles go to more expensive places, but the service providers had no awareness of this.

The question of drinking in public areas is complex. Some interviewees claim that Poles do not drink in public areas. Others cite problems with Poles drinking in playgrounds, public squares etc. Some describe Poles clustering in the back lanes of the larger towns. Others argue that Poles may be seen drunk in the streets, but rarely do their drinking in the streets. Finally, some interviews take the view that Poles do drink in public areas, in much the same way that groups of locals would do; but that the Poles are a more visible group.

- *"I have seen them, but I wouldn't say anymore often than I have seen local people drinking in the street, in fact, you will probably see more local people drinking in the street than Poles...I honestly believe that they mostly drink at home and maybe then go out to the club on a weekend."*
- *"I would say that they drink in the pubs and then walk home, but obviously they are too drunk to walk home and so fall, but I am not aware of them actually drinking on the street ... I've never heard any complaints of them drinking on the street, so I would assume that it's at home and in public houses."*
- *"I can't say I have noticed any groups of Poles, congregating on street corners about Llanelli. Having said that [there have been complaints] that there are groups of Polish males drinking in the back lanes, just outside the town, they were just drinking there"*
- *"The Police have got a lot of problems with Polish people going to parks and going to tourist places. We have got lovely walks along the sea, benches and everything, and they take alcohol and they sit on these benches and they drink in public."*

There is also no consensus on whether public drinking is a problem or not.

There is no clear distinction in behaviour between large towns and small villages. Drinking in public seems to happen in both, albeit in different ways (eg more open in Llanybydder, more furtive in Llanelli).

The general consensus seems to be that Poles do go out drinking in the streets, although the scale and impact of this is uncertain. What is agreed is that the drinkers tend to be single men, and a mix of regulars and occasional drinkers; associations seem to be quite fluid; and places to drink are geographically convenient:

- *"My feeling is that, the people who drink [in back streets in Llanelli] are from that locality. They are drinking quite close to where they are, quite to where they are living really."*

Drinking at home is acknowledged, which, as noted, are more likely to be mixed groups: men, women, families, singletons of both sexes:

- *“Mainly I would say definitely the private houses they would drink amongst themselves because obviously they can talk in their own language. It’s quite natural you want to talk and converse in your own language and enjoy themselves, socialise like everybody else, but I will say then there may well be women as well, you know, women, the single people and of course then some of the local women might be involved.”*

It was noted that Poles will often go out to the front of the house to drink, which is not common in Wales. This may be part of the reason why there is confusion over whether the Poles are drinking ‘in public’ or not.

5.2.3 Are Poles heavy regular drinkers?

There is no dispute that Poles drink a lot. What is in dispute is how unusual this is:

- *“my perception is that really a number of Poles drink quite a lot.”*
- *“I can give you my own perception, they drink harder spirits, but that is just a perception.”*
- *“I think the general perception is that they drink a lot, that’s the general public perception. Having done quite some work looking at service provision and dealing with the Polish community in general, I don’t think that they drink anymore than anybody else. It is just a case of we notice it more because they are a minority group.”*
- *“I would say they have the same drink culture as the Welsh people, you know, sometimes they drink too excess and sometimes they drink sensibly, you know, they will probably drink in their homes, the same as I drink at my home...”*
- *“[Relative to the Welsh] it’s very small, you know, when you think of the number of people who are arrested the majority are Welsh, it’s not that I have not a lot of dealings with the Polish people.”*
- *“They are quite heavy drinkers. I would say the majority single men, certainly quite heavy drinkers... They drink a lot and they tend to get quite drunk some, not all of them.”*
- *“They are sort of a youngish group, round about 30s which is the type of thing that people of that age would do anyway.”*
- *“My perception is because I am working in the custody environment and sort of the majority of people I am seeing are Polish people, are people that are being arrested and a lot of them are drunk when they come in... But it would appear that they do drink a lot. Sort of Welsh. So whether there is a massive difference between the amounts of both cultures drink I don’t know.”*

Some blame the media for inaccurate reporting, creating an environment for stereotypical views of Poles as hard-drinking, drug-taking, unsavoury characters:

- *“I don’t know whether it’s the paper or not, but they might be exaggerating it a bit too because there are lots of Welsh on drugs and drink. I haven’t heard so much about the Polish being on drugs, but I hear quite a bit about the town, ‘Oh, those Polish, they are always drinking and no good and they have no...’ ‘Have you talked to them?’ I asked; ‘where are they? Who did you..?’ They say they are sitting at night with cans drinking in the benches... I don’t see that. Sometimes some people like to make it worse when they see them drinking... Sometimes when they are a bit anti, I don’t listen very much to them because they are exaggerating and they did say, oh they are stealing in the town and they are drinking. They make statements. I haven’t met anyone; really, I haven’t seen any Polish person actually sitting and drinking this town. I haven’t seen that, but I have seen others”*

Reconciling these views suggests that Poles can drink heavily; however this is not significantly different from the Welsh population. For example, Poles will go to the all-you-can-

drink places and throw down alcohol with as much abandon as the locals. Apart from being slightly older, there seems to be little difference between the two communities in the amount of public drinking.

5.2.4 Do Poles integrate?

In terms of accommodation, Poles seem to be integrated – “there are no ghettos”. But in social and business interactions, language becomes a defining characteristic. The lack of language skills amongst the Poles means that they can develop a culture of isolation, helping each other but not communicating outside their groups:

- *“There is a language barrier... They can speak a little English, but not as much as they need to really to get by it... They rely on friends to help them along.”*
- *“I think the Poles certainly stick together, but I think the problem being is that there is no familiarity between the two languages. I mean, Polish is a Slavic language and it might be as well be Martian to us because it’s got a different set up - I mean the alphabet is slightly different. So that there are next to no similarities in the sense at least with somebody French would be able to pick certain things up and explains it.”*
- *“The local people have a lot of places to go ... There is a lot that can be done for them and has tried to be done for them in the past, but obviously with the language barrier and trying to explain to them what it’s for and then trying to help them, you can’t... So there are places where they could go and all different community groups. [Poles] could go too... But they don’t know, no.”*

However, the situation is not quite black-or-white. Some Poles do have good language skills, some develop them, and some seem to develop them as the need arises:

- *“The majority have a little bit of [English] and when they come to us they usually bring somebody with them if they don’t have much knowledge, so they are very good at it. We rarely have somebody who doesn’t speak any English and nobody with them.”*
- *“You usually find it’s only one person. You usually find in the group there’s only one person who will say, and the rest will sort of ‘mmm...’ and make out they don’t understand but they probably do know what I’m saying. [So the understanding is there?] Yes, I think so. And they have the one person there to talk with them. You usually find that.”*
- *“I think the more sober they are the better their language skill is... My experience is you can book somebody into custody who is drunk and doesn’t speak a word of English, but by the time they are sober and when they want to get out of here their English is pretty good... I can say that it’s improved quite a bit [in the last two years] because I think when I first started in custody just about every Pole that came in I needed to use like a language line or an interpreter”*
- *“Of course there are a lot of families across here who we just happen to see from things like house-to-house enquiries. We meet them... They’re not on our radar at all. Perfectly normal, fitted into the community.”*

Those who have the best English – those who need to speak it for their work – are not seen as having integration problems:

- *“I just get the impression that they seem to be a very well behaved and a well integrated group of people.”*

However, in general the Poles keep separate:

- *“I think they keep themselves to themselves.”*
- *“I don’t know whether they go in groups ... We don’t seem to have problems with large groups of Polish people drinking, but certainly the one off, you know, I would say my perception is, no, they would have small groups or even on their own.”*

Anonymity is suspected to be one of the reasons the Poles prefer to travel to the large towns, rather than going out in their home villages; and services in the larger towns have moved to accommodate Polish clients, if not always to a full extent:

- *“I would say they probably go more into Llanelli town centre than drinking in any the local pubs and I suspect there are some method in that as well they would probably stand out more because there are so few of them. They would probably stand out more in a local pub like in a village or somewhere as opposed to in a busy town centre where they can mingle and probably go unnoticed. So I suppose that’s an attraction as well, to go into the bigger areas and the nightclubs and so on where they can just mingle and nobody would know they are any different. Say, for instance, if there was somebody who had a bit of a gripe against Poles or any other foreign nationals, they would tend to lose themselves more in a bigger area.”*
- *“In Llanelli, I don’t think they stand out in a crowd; they have integrated well into the community. There are a lot of developments with service provision like banks which now have Polish desks. And are able to correspond with the Polish people.”*

And Poles are not necessarily the worst catered-for:

- *“There are gaps in service provision, not just for the Polish community but for other minority groups as well.”*

On the other hand, in the smaller villages, Poles who have made contact have created a positive experience:

- *“I think over a period of time they have actually shown that they can live in the community without causing too many problems, just seems to be the sort of key core, 20-30% maybe they do cause a bit of a problem from time to time...And when you look at them, when they got their children in school, nicest people you could meet, and I think that the Welsh are generally mixing quite well with them.”*
- *“Here in [a small village] with the people we have got to know, they have been most helpful and there was one story where they were clearing the church yards, the grass, and one lady was trying to push the wheelbarrow and there was quite steep hills here and one of the Polish people who have come to live here pushed it up there for us. So there is such positive stories like that here which is wonderful...Absolutely, here we have had no problems at all”*
- *“[In Llanelli] I get the feeling that they are accepted into the community and there is no real community tension there”*

The local Welsh community has also been active in trying to bring groups together, and has had some success; for example, in Llanfihangel:

- *“So we had an event in May last year and we had a taste of Polish food, [Polish shop in Llanybydder and Polish Catholic Community in Lampeter] baked some lovely cakes at home and she bought them here. And we had a lovely day where people not only from here, some people from Llanybydder, Lampeter, Aberystwyth and Ammanford, Cwmann, and the place, there was about 70 people here, Welsh and Polish people and we had music as well and following that we had a game of football in the playing fields here ... We mixed the teams in the last game.”*

5.2.5 Do Poles cause trouble?

To some extent, Poles getting drunk cause the same problems as Welsh getting drunk – rowdy behaviour, noisiness travelling home late at night, brawling in nightclubs or in the streets. But there are important differences; for example, the Poles have a reputation amongst some interviewees for getting drunk and just lying down in the street:

- *“The complaints that come in, well, they are not complaints, they are just concerns, really is to that they can’t - when they are walking home are they going to be safe walking home because they are so drunk?”*

- *"I know there are reports from Llanelli on a regular basis of drunk males lying down on the road and when they get there it turns out to be a Polish gentleman who just had a bit too much of drinking, just needs to be taken home"*

There is a sense that Poles tend to fight more freely:

- Poles tend to be more expressive in their physical movements. This can increase the sense that they are being aggressive, particularly when coupled with speaking loudly in a different language.
- The lack of language skills can be a source of frustration which alcohol exacerbates.
- Poles have more of a tradition of fight-easily-make-up-easily.
- Poles misunderstand local drinking customs. For example, being told "you're drunk – it's time to go home" as very likely to be taken as an insult rather than a piece of advice.

However, some observers feel that Poles are no more aggressive than locals when drunk:

- *"They display the normal characteristics of some who has been drinking, they are more loud, they would probably be a bit more aggressive maybe, enabling more attention to themselves because they start speaking louder in a language that people don't understand, so no different to anyone else, I think"*
- *"[Are they more aggressive?] They are certainly not louder in my experience of seeing Poles people drinking in the public place tend to be quite clear and keeping to themselves.[They keep a low profile?] Yes, I would say that's my perception ... My experience of dealing with Polish people whether they are drunk or not, they are very courteous and they cause us less problems when we are dealing than the Welsh public or British public."*
- *"They can be quite violent. Again like they are no different, well here there is plenty of local people who can be quite violent in drink and normally they are not, but most if they had a lot to drink they turn nasty."*
- *"Polish people have had issues with the local community in terms of fights etc. outside pubs and clubs. We have had one or two, but it hasn't been regular, and again it wouldn't be unique, because they are Polish, because that happens, you may get a group of people from one part of Llanelli town may wish to fight people from another part of Llanelli town. I wouldn't want to say that just because they were Polish that they were singled out, and they became involved in a situation... There were a few Polish males ejected from the premises, for disorder shall we say. But again I wouldn't like to say that is unique to the Polish community... It just happened that they were Polish guys that night, next week it could be the Llanelli men."*

Part of the difference in perception may be that the 'first wave' seemed to be more involved in fighting, and the reputation has persisted. The initial confrontations may have arisen because there was a need for the two communities to 'bed in' and understand each other; it may be because Poles have learnt to adjust to Welsh attitudes and manners; it may be because the Poles who came over later are a different type:

- *"[Of assaults with bottles and knives] Less than double figures this year, so I don't know how much but it's significantly less than we've had before. So you are talking a handful of incidents, which isn't very many at all"*

However, one notable difference, reported a few times, is the Poles' reputation for carrying weapons:

- *"The perception of the licensees is that a lot of Polish people will carry a weapon... There is a bigger knife culture within the Polish community than there is in the Welsh community. Why that is I don't know and it might be based on one or two incidents which has been blown out of proportion."*
- *"Local boys they like to fight with somebody. It doesn't matter who it is. A lot of the time they would go in the taxi ... and they will fight with the boys in [other areas] even though they are Welsh. It has become a sort of Welsh tradition on a weekend, Friday"*

and Saturday night to have a fight with somebody. So if a Polish could be identified to be on receiving end of it, all well and good, but when they were having this fights it was always a fistfights and few punches thrown here and there and everywhere and nothing major whereas when they clash with the Polish it was the weapons that were coming out, that was the problem...Big problem with knives with the Polish."

Poles drinking in public areas, or even in front gardens, can create an intimidating atmosphere, leading to complaints to the police. Part of the intimidation comes from the number of Poles, often speaking loudly; but another part is because the Poles gather in unusual places for drinking, at least according to Welsh norms.

- *"They stay in large numbers of people in one or two houses, multiple occupation, so you will see them outside having a drink... [While not causing trouble directly] it has to be looked at if they are boisterous, if they have had too much to drink...if they tend to speak in a louder voice, that would give people impression they were having an argument, that would certainly lead to complaints."*
- *"the drinking in the lanes, in the parks, can be an issue. Not because they are, in any way, anti-social, what have you. I think a lot of the issue is, people feel quite intimidated when they see half a dozen or more men, standing in the back lane, drinking, and talking, sometimes eight o'clock in the morning they could be there. They're there sometimes in the early evenings, afternoon ... It's not that they intimidate people. It's just that people feel intimidated."*
- *"I get complaints from residents saying they've seen Polish drinking in the lane when they're taking their kids to school in the morning, and I don't think that's a good thing. Don't get me wrong, like: they've not caused any trouble but the very fact that some mothers' walking past the lane with their kids seeing people drinking out of bottles or cans that time of the morning, it's not a good sight; and that's one of the things that they don't like. And of course when they're putting their rubbish out in the early evening, they open the back door and there's five or six out there drinking...although they don't do anything or say anything they feel quite intimidated by it and they don't like it."*

There is also a litter problem identified with drinking in the public spaces:

- *"Obviously, the rubbish that gets left behind. That was an issue because youngsters get hold of the bottles, the empty bottles, and they smash them all over the lanes. That becomes an issue for us. Of course the parks as well, the same. When you've got a group of maybe ten or more sitting around on the grass, not really causing any harm, but when they leave we tend to find a huge amount of debris left behind."*
- *"[Drinking in public places] is not an actual offence here, but the Police will chase you away. In Poland you will pay a fine, if you are caught drinking alcohol in a similar place. Yet here they do it blatantly, they do it all the time. They just chuck the cans behind them or whatever. Or leave them all over the parks and places, you know, around Llanelli"*

Whether this is a uniquely Polish outcome is almost irrelevant. As noted above, the Poles are often quite a visible minority, and tend to be blamed for a number of antisocial activities, whether committed by the Welsh or by other, non-Polish, nationals. One example was given of Poles being accused of littering because some local hooligans had developed a taste for Polish beers. So, although Polish littering is clearly a problem, it is open to misinterpretation.

- *"I think it doesn't help people's perception; let's put it that way. Don't get me wrong: there are plenty of people [born and bred here], who drink and leave their rubbish around. But it doesn't help people's perceptions."*
- *"We see Eastern European as Polish...If we hear of an accident in this village at the moment first thing it brings to everybody's mind is, is Polish involved."*

Drink-driving has been a problem in the past, but is becoming less so:

- *“Initially when they came over they were drinking quite a lot and they were causing themselves problems. They were drinking and they were driving, at the same time drink driving, lots of that, they are not very responsible. Not so much now; I still think they drink quite a lot, but they drink indoors.”*

There is a question whether troublemaking is reported. There is a feeling that Poles are unlikely to call the police for fights with other Poles. While out on the town, there is a suggestion that bouncers are less likely to report incidents involving Poles – possibly because they consider Poles are less likely to complain.

- *“[bouncers] probably would report less if it’s Polish people than they would if it was Welsh people. So there was a fight among Polish people they may just throw them out and they are not reported.”*
- *“We don’t get many calls into people misbehaving within nightclubs, but they have their security staff I suppose in the clubs would deal with them anyway.”*
- *“My perception is that really a number of Poles drink quite a lot. They fight amongst themselves, but they never make complaints. So that’s the first thing, they keep themselves to themselves in that respect”*
- *“but it’s certainly private drinking, fighting amongst themselves as opposed to fighting the local people”*

So generally, it seems that Poles are drunks much like the Welsh. However they are more likely to be identified as problematic in a public area, and possibly less likely to be picked up in a private (house or pub) setting. Moreover, much of the ‘aggression’ could simply be loudness and a wish to make themselves understood. Certainly the police report that the Poles are generally well behaved and respectful towards them.

- *“I think it’s frustration rather, they want to speak to you and explain to you where they are and obviously they are getting agitated because we can’t understand them and they can’t understand us. So I think they are more inclined to shout at us, but I don’t think it’s deliberate, it’s just frustration and because they can’t explain to us.”*
- *“It’s the respect thing. I think they obviously show the authorities a lot more respect than more British would show I would have thought either. [Is it behaviour brought over from Poland?] I would have thought, yeah.”*
- *“I wouldn’t say they would be more or less [disorderly] than the Welsh people who are brought in; generally, they are better behaved when they come in.”*

Finally, there are no reports of alcohol problems with Polish women:

- *“I have never heard of a woman being drunk on the street”*

5.2.6 Evidence of alcohol abuse

Alcoholism is reported in the Polish population but, as with drinking generally, it is difficult to tell whether this is a uniquely Polish problem. One interviewee estimated that, because alcohol is such a key part of socialising, especially among men, 30% of the population could be classed as having an alcohol problem: that is, restricting alcohol use would severely limit their ability to properly function socially.

Formal diagnoses of alcoholism are rare – less than one a year. However, there seems to be some resistance to seeing alcohol as a problem – and even more to seeing it as a public or medical matter, rather than a private concern. Poles attending rehabilitation courses do so to reduce their sentences – not to address alcohol problems.

- *“I’ve never had a Polish person sort of describe as something that’s a problem, you know...I think they sort of think that it is not really any business of the police... The only thing I remember Polish people agreeing to is to attend this Prism course [Drink Driving Rehabilitation Course, or DDRC] ... They are quite keen to go on that often because they want to be banned for less time.”*

Perhaps the unusual aspect of Polish drinking is the day-to-day element. The lack of alternative ways to fill leisure time encourages drinking; Polish interviewees noted that drinking often seems to be a negative choice, driven by loneliness, boredom, separation from the family, and so on.

- *“They drink anywhere they can, any time. It is not drinking for pleasure, it’s not social, it is just whenever, where ever you can. And I think that is the problem with the Polish nation...It seems when two blokes meet, it’s “let’s have a can”, “Let’s have a bottle”, anywhere they can. My father used to do it, so it is ingrained for generations in the Polish culture.”*
- *“I think it is a case that there is very little to do and there is no service provision for minority groups within the county. I would say they tend to stick with their own people, and there isn’t much out there where they can integrate with the community, and join in community activities.”*

Given that Poles are unlikely to admit to alcoholism, one way to get a handle on whether alcohol is a problem is to consider alternatives uses for money:

- *“[Why are Poles drinking when they should be sending money back to Poland?] Because it is in their culture. Once you have one drink, you sort of, your judgement goes. It is like with cigarettes, it depends, how strong a will you got to stop yourself. And if you are in company it is very difficult to control – the common sense just goes.”*

Absenteeism at work is not a reliable measure of alcohol abuse:

- *“I don’t think that is relevant to one sector of the population. So I don’t think that Polish people are any better or worse than we are”*

The Poles are different from the Welsh in that drinking is very strongly related to having a job:

- *“I think the people who drink are the people who are working. I think we don’t get many who aren’t working and I think they like to work hard and relax with the drink.”*

Poles put a very high value on work, and are more likely to turn up drunk or with a hangover than miss work. Stricter measures introduced by the major companies in Carmarthenshire in recent years are thought to have reduced alcohol problems – and may also account for the strong recognition of the need to sober up before work days. In the case of large-scale construction, with an exceptionally high level of monitoring,

- *“I am not aware of a single case where a Polish worker has failed either a random or a just cause alcohol test on site”*

Whilst personal problems have been suggested as the reason Poles may abuse alcohol in the UK, the source may also lie in Poland. Some Poles facing difficulties or crises at home may come to the UK to kickstart a new life. This is clearly a high-risk strategy, and anecdotal evidence suggests it has failed in at least some cases. However, there is no indication of whether this is a common problem, or just a set of special cases. It is interesting to contrast GPs experience of Poles with an earlier group of migrants:

- *“We had a lot of problem initially with the Portuguese community that came over here, with drugs and alcohol. They went back.”*

Or with the UK population

- *“[Amongst the UK patients alcohol abuse is] probably even less than 10%, but it’s still a significant number, you know, 5% of the main population is still a big number.”*

Finally, one difference between the Welsh and the Poles is drinking amongst women. Drunk Polish women are not seen, and the few Polish women who have come into contact with the police have been arrested for theft.

5.2.7 Summary on Polish drinking

Overall, the impression of the interviewees is that

- Poles drink a lot, although not necessarily more than the Welsh
- They are more likely to be drinking spirits, and to be bingeing
- They are less likely to be in the pubs, although discos are popular, and more likely to drink at home, in their gardens, or in public spaces
- Being drunk in the streets is often seen as a key 'Polish' characteristic
- Their drinking in public space can give rise to concerns over litter and intimidation
- The trouble they cause is not dissimilar to that of the Welsh, with the exception of a tendency of some to carry knives
- The Poles are a very visible minority
- Income, cash flow, and working patterns are important factors in drinking decisions
- There is no acknowledgement by the Polish community that alcoholism might be a problem
- Women are noticeably lower drinkers

5.3 Drugs

Ascertaining the scope of drug use amongst Poles is difficult: Poles are unwilling to discuss this in large groups, and very few interviewees outside the Polish community had any knowledge of Polish involvement in drugs.

5.3.1 Prevalence of drugs use amongst Poles

Most interviewees denied any knowledge of drug use in the community or in the workplace. Interviewees who were aware of drug use tended to see Polish use as nothing special:

- *"I would believe that there is no belief or intelligence to suggest that there is a higher propensity of Polish people using drugs than there are local people."*
- *"[Prescribed drug use is] nothing compared to the British population."*
- *"[This town] has enough of a drug problem itself, long before the Poles came here. They haven't created a drug problem. I am not saying that they are not part of it. I am sure they are. I am sure they take drugs; in every sector of the community people take drugs for what ever reasons."*
- *"I am really not aware of a single issue with regards to substance abuse [by Poles at work in Carmarthenshire]...I probably would [be one of the first to know]"*
- *"I have never had any contact with Polish people who are into drugs, it's all Welsh people"*
- *"[Substance related problems?] Not that I know of."*

5.3.2 Specific drugs

Some service providers reported anecdotal evidence of taking cannabis; and there was one report from the CJS of some amphetamine use:

- *"I know one or two Poles [in custody] when they have been searched they had a bit of amphetamine on them, but very few and far between ... Where Poles have been brought into custody and they got some drugs on them and it's the drug of choice around here that they would have had, you know, it's not heroin or Class A that we got on them, it would be amphetamine...But amphetamine is more associated with drinking and clubbing then heroin would be, so there is more of a likelihood that in a public club to have cocaine or amphetamine available or ecstasy."*

Apart from very small numbers of prescription drug dependency (single figures), no GPs reported knowledge of illegal drug use amongst their patients. The prescription dependencies originated in Poland.

There were no reports of Class A drug use amongst the Polish community.

6 Focus groups, or how Poles see themselves

The description in this section is based upon the responses given in focus groups. These are all-Polish groups, conducted in Polish, and hence the quotes have been translated. The focus is on alcohol as almost none of the focus groups were willing to discuss drug use. Drug use was only discussed in detail in the individual interviews.

The questionnaires, focus groups and interviews all suggest that the group of Poles that have come to the UK since 2006 are very different to the 2004-5 group – better behaved, more families, less confrontational. The focus groups largely reflect the opinions of the current group, rather than harking back to the earlier groups.

6.1 Which Poles drink?

The consensus is that most Poles (80%-90%) drink; the low-/non-drinkers will tend to have families and children. There is a recognition that there is a Polish way of drinking – regular beer, bingeing on neat spirits at weekends and days off:

- *"The Welsh are not at all better than us... They spend time in pubs. Maybe they are taught this, we are coming from a different culture, from a different country, but they go to a pub straight after work, and they are sitting there for 6 hours, of course maybe not drinking the same way as us Poles, they are sitting for 6 hours and drinking all the time... [and we like shortly but properly!].. And we do not do this"*
- *"when I go, and buy a bottle [of alcohol], a big one or say two smaller ones, and [the Welsh] loads up a full trolley of different kinds of vodkas, beer, and wine...[but they drink weak alcohols and we drink proper alcohols].. taking my own example, I will take a big bottle and it will be enough for me for the whole evening, ...and [the Welsh] will load up with weak stuff ... and drink for 50 hours."*
- *"[Poles] are sitting home and drinking, and then they go to a bar ... For example, they have a bottle or two at home, and then: 'Eee! Feeling like having more, Tesco is closed. So, where?!' ... The whole week working har' har', and on Saturday to a bar! So they go off ...two beers each."*

There are some differences in practice with Poles living in the larger towns more likely to drink like the locals, in pubs and clubs. It is thought that the younger generation is becoming more 'British', which is interpreted as drinking less throughout the week and more at the weekend.

Financial matters may also be changing the habits of the migrants:

- *"[In Poland] I can't afford [drinking] earning only 1000zl [£200]. To earn more I would have to work a day and a night ... I can afford here to have a beer every day, to smoke cigarettes. There, I would have to cut it short, I wouldn't afford it: a beer costs two loaves of bread in Poland."*

Interestingly, one focus group also mentioned women getting together to have a drink, which is a significant departure from Polish practice, but not unusual in the UK.

6.2 When do Poles drink?

Polish leisure time is dominated by socialising, much of which involves alcohol.

Polish drinking habits are largely driven by two factors: pay days and work schedules.

- *"A Pole respects his work. Maybe not everyone, but 90% for sure ... It happens that one has a drink, but one controls oneself, and at 6am, an alarm clock is off, one has to get up and go to work."*

Poles carrying out manual work are generally drinking a beer or two on work nights, with spirits and beer in volume reserved for the weekend or days off. Many of the Poles in Carmarthenshire work long and/or early shifts, and so the options for evening socialising are limited.

- *"One can hear the most often [case], that with beer they are relaxing, spending the evening."*

Drinking during the week – a couple of beers in the evening with the television – is seen as 'beer fun', winding down after work, rather than drinking, as the aim is not to get drunk:

- *"if you are on your own, you don't have friends and so on, so you'll buy two beers to take home, you'll drink them up watching TV."*
- *"During a week, sometimes a beer. Because, you know, a beer or two to chat away a bit, isn't it? And at weekend, obviously, you know, in a hard-rock way, I would say.... one thinks responsibly that the next day in the morning one is getting up, aren't they?"*
- *"Alcohol is not relaxation...Relaxation for me is a gym, going to the cinema, going for a trip.. it is the way I am relaxing [but not everybody is relaxing this way!]"*
- *"After one beer one has appetite for more! [And one is sleepy!]"*
- *"At least, one is not in Poland but one feels the people, that they are [around us] our countrymen, one can joke away, talk away, drink together, but all this in moderation."*

On weekends and days off, Poles are likely to meet up with friends and drink heavily, often spirits:

- *"For example, we are a group...living together in the some house. 'So what, we will poison ourselves with beer, boys?! You buy two beers you give £5 ... So let's buy 3 bottles for 6 or 7 of us, let's drink, and we go to sleep' ... Good fun and go home! This is a rule. It is not that ... 'Ahh, this one has had six beers and come to you and... hasn't had enough' It is not the rule."*
- *"For example, we were living in a big group, we may not be living together now; we have a day off now, and I don't fell like going anywhere, ... and my pal's saying: 'Ah, I'm not going anywhere either', so my pal's saying: "Eh, what are you doing in the evening?"-'Well, nothing'- 'Shall we organise anything?'- 'We could organise something' - 'Eh,who is coming?'- 'My cousin will come, too' – 'OK, are you going to Tesco?' - 'Yeah, I'm going. What shall I take?' - 'so take one [bottle]'. So they come – television - good fun - we talk - we drink up - a coffee, and Goodbye!"*

Drinking often starts straight after work and will continue over the rest of the days off. This does not carry through to Sunday (or whichever is the last day of the break) – the need to be sober for Monday morning (and the ability to drive to work) is still there. Days off, usually two a week, are treated as weekends, as are special occasions such as holidays, weddings, name days, birth days, first communion. When housemates or friends have different days off, often the working Poles will join those partying once they have finished work, regardless of whether they are working the following day or not.

These party days tend to be communal events, and are often spontaneous.

- *"the best parties happen when they happen spontaneously. One comes, another one comes.[It's the best time then!]. From nothing it will turn to be the best party."*

Poles in MOH will seek out their housemates; single men will meet up with other friends; individuals or families will offer 'whisky and a barbecue'. The only Poles who do not behave in this way are single females with no family, often with children and/or other relatives: there was only one report of groups of single women meeting up to drink together, as would be the case for British women.

When Poles on shift work only have one day off instead of two; some will treat the day as a weekend and party, others as a weekday and stick to a beer or two:

- *"It happened very often this way, it wasn't even planned, but it was enough to have a telephone call from the agency: 'You have a day off tomorrow'. Suddenly, and one was immediately dashing for a bottle. One needs to take an opportunity, when it comes."*

When couples are both working to different shift patterns, the picture is more complicated. It was seen as more likely that a partner with a day off would not treat it as a holiday if his/her partner was working. Interestingly, it was suggested that couples may drink less when both have a day off, as they tend to go off and do things together. However, these are also the couples who tend to be more sporadic drinkers through the week as well.

There are reports that some Poles do drink heavily and continuously, and will turn up to work drunk and/or hungover:

- *"For some [Poles] even every day, ... every day is good [for drinking]."*
- *"Usually there are some groups one can expect of them [to drink], regardless whether it is Monday, or Friday, Sunday, day off or not, he will have a drink, a bigger amount, and will be seen."*
- *"Sometimes it happens that the evening lasts longer, and one has to get up in the morning, and one is not able to get up, so one makes a telephone call."*

And some who do shift work may also drink heavily when at a loose end:

- *"if one finishes work at 11am, so what is one to do? Sitting at home?... to kill time ... one takes a beer, one, the second, the third, the fourth one. And he is killing time. There is no TV, there is nothing"*

In all this, the Poles' feeling is that they are little different to the Welsh; that is, most people drink but only a few drink excessively.

Finally, drinking is affected by money. For example, those workers who get paid fortnightly tend to have more concentrated bingeing sessions. Those on weekly salaries will drink each weekend. Compared to Poland, where salaries are usually paid monthly, here one waits only until Friday:

- *"One has constantly money on them. It's good."*

6.3 Where do they drink?

Poles tend to drink either at home or in public spaces, rather than in pubs, particularly in the more rural communities.

6.3.1 Home drinking

Drinking at home is the main option for 'beer fun', the mid-week drinking. It is also a focal point for get-togethers on party evenings, a 'barbecue model' of socialising. There are a number of reasons for this.

First, Poles often live with those they socialise with. To some extent, this has similarities with student life where a group of friends share a house together as none of them can afford a place on their own.

Second, there is convenience: Poles complain that they are too tired after work to go out to drink, and there is nowhere to go. This is most relevant for single men.

Third, there is the tradition of communal drinking. Drinking spirits in the 'old Polish' way requires food to be served while the spirit bottle circulates. Even if younger generations are mixing soft drinks with spirits, the tradition of food with spirits remains. Providing guests with

food is a key part of Polish hospitality and is managed at home. Poles do not have an eating-out culture, which is coupled with the lack of pub-culture.

- *"It looks differently - Depending on an occasion, and say, whose place it is. But, usually there is 2-3, up to 5 blokes, there is 'white vodka', a shot glass, some sort of a soft drink, and that's it. But, if we umowic sie na ['agree amongst ourselves'] for a party, so there are some bites: Polish sausage, Polish cucumbers in brine, of course."*

Fourth, drinking at home reduces the cost for both hosts and guests. Often Poles will contribute to a kitty to purchase the alcohol for a party.

Fifth, Poles like to discuss private matters in gatherings, more so than the British. The home environment amongst trusted friends provides a more relaxed atmosphere for Polish-style discussions.

- *"As they say, we don't want spectators."*

Sixth, Polish women rarely go out drinking except to private houses. This is a key opportunity for Polish women to socialise.

Finally, Poles are concerned about their reception in British public spaces. In a Polish home, surrounded by other Poles, the atmosphere is more relaxed and there is no need to cross language barriers to get a drink, for example. For singletons, this concern about not being able to operate in a British social environment is particularly important, and so single people (typically men) will tend to drink at home.

As in Poland, Poles socialise mainly at home via a visit and re-visit system, as opposed to the British pub-socialising culture. There are too many obstacles for the Poles to pick up on the local habit: cost, the smoking ban (many Poles do smoke), language barriers, and lack of privacy of one's own company to talk;

In multiple-occupancy housing, the common space is used for meetings of housemates. The model here is of shared experience, rather than host-guest, with every participant contributing to the cost of drinks.

Use of common space in MOH sometimes causes friction for non-drinking/non-partying housemates: excessive partying by housemates is cited several times as one of the key reasons people in MOH change accommodation.

6.3.2 Public spaces

In good weather, public spaces are popular in the smaller villages. This seems to be mainly due to convenience: In Llanybydder, one particularly popular spot was on the way home from work, and near to the off-licence. Another was the bus stop in the centre of town (although bus stops were seen by the Poles as the proper province of other A8 groups).

- *"[a Pole on their way from work] drops in the shop, leaves it and the beer is already open...But it is true! ... As for the men especially who... live together because they like to drink... regardless of whether he is going to work following day on hangover or not, he is going to shop, he is leaving, and stands outside Spar and 'zlopie' ['necks'] this beer.. ['or on a bus stop'].. or on the bus stop!"*

This has caused some concerns for local residents, and complaints to the police, but this doesn't seem to have changed opinion or habit. Unless moved on, once the Poles have settled on a place they tend to visit it exclusively and regularly. For example, as noted in the Section 5, Poles drinking in the back lanes in Llanelli has been identified as a public nuisance.

Poles acknowledge that they can congregate in big groups of eight or ten people, but they did not identify this as a problem during the focus groups. They did agree that Poles are visible

drinking in the streets but thought that Poles are only sporadically seen drunk in public during the day.

6.3.3 Pubs

Poles generally avoid pubs

- pub drinking is not strictly Polish culture
- they are relatively expensive
- you can't share costs as easily between friends – the pub may not be an option if not everyone can afford it
- they require some basic language skill
- it's not a private atmosphere
- you can't smoke inside
- they are too tired after work to go out
- there's no time to go out after work and dinner
- for singletons, no-one to go with
- Poles worry that they don't know how to behave around the Welsh
- they may not be welcomed by locals

The latter point is disputed: some Poles report very positive experiences, some negative. This may be related to the degree of language skills.

Poles tend to go out in a group, and speak Polish amongst themselves, rather than mixing with the locals (although it does happen on an individual basis).

There is agreement that pub-going is becoming more popular amongst the younger age group, and with single men and couples. There are even reports that Poles are learning to pub-crawl – this is a significant change from Poland, where the usual practice is to stay in one place all night. Poles have also developed the concept of buying rounds to reflect financial circumstances and the Polish emphasis on returning favours:

- *“After a round [for everyone] each ... not that one is paying more than others. In a British way.”*
- *“It depends how one starts. If one goes and buys for everybody, obviously ... ‘you have bought, so now it is my turn’.”*

So four people, four rounds; but if it is a big group, like 6-8 people, they may stop on 2-3 rounds:

- *“Sometimes, we will have 2 rounds and we don't feel like more, next time those two will buy you two rounds. It is not always that eight of us will go and eight rounds must be drunk, no”*

Carmarthen does seem to be an exception, with Poles going to a wide variety of pubs across the town centre. This compares with Llanelli where, for example, Poles concentrate on one or two large cheap places; or Llanybydder, where Poles are unlikely to visit the pub at all. This more integrated approach may reflect a different profile of migrant, carrying out a wider variety of jobs and hence with stronger Polish-Welsh communication skills (Poles in Carmarthen are the least likely to report no skills in spoken English). Certainly language is not seen as an issue:

- *“Everyone knows how to say that they want a beer.”*

In Carmarthen, large numbers of Poles will go to a small number of pubs in the town centre, and often just stay in one place. This is in contrast to the Welsh who will be moving between pubs and gravitating to the nightclubs from 10pm onwards. As a result, at closing time some pubs can have an almost entirely Polish clientele. This supports the view that Poles are mainly concerned with finding a place for conversation, rather than seeing going to the pub as

an end in itself. The Polish population in Carmarthen is relatively dispersed but most of the Poles live within 15 minutes walk of the centre, so gathering in the centre is an attractive option. On the other hand, Poles are like the Welsh in that going out tends to focus on Friday and Saturday nights; mid-week visits are relatively rare.

The Carmarthen pub culture has changed over time. In the first wave of Poles in 2005-6, dominated by single men, there used to be more heavy or all-night drinking. With the arrival of families, the dynamic has changed:

- *"When we came here, we were so-called single men. There were meetings; liberated husbands had gone abroad, without wives, without restrictions. There were meetings, there were parties in pubs, there were parties in houses: one would wake up, before one would properly wake up he was handed out a drinking glass. Now it has changed because obviously one has brought some people over. Generally it's good, but there is something missing. One is missing this."*
- *"It was easier when one didn't have the family. A man could go, do what he wanted. No one was shouting [at him] the next day."*
- *"Not every girlfriend wants to sit on her own with 6 guys"*

6.3.4 Nightclubs

Nightclubs in the larger towns are popular. Poles follow the local habit of 'pre-loading' – that is, drinking at home before going out, starting the evening later, and often drinking non-alcoholic or low-alcohol drinks at the nightclub. Poles may take this to the limit by going from home straight to nightclubs, avoiding the stop at a pub for a few quick drinks on the way.

Note that one focus group saw this as uniquely Polish behaviour – the Welsh were believed to go straight from work to the pubs and then clubs.

When Poles do go to a pub or nightclub, they seem less loyal to a particular venue than the locals – possibly because they are a very price-sensitive crowd. Both Llanelli and Carmarthen groups list the most frequently visited pubs and discos, and the same names keep repeating, usually with a comment on how cheap they are.

6.4 How much do they drink?

During the week, Poles generally limit themselves to a couple of beers of an evening to relax and accompany any conversation; two or three beers are enough to generate a 'good humour'. There are some who will put away 10-12 beers in a night quite regularly, but they are seen as the exception. At weekends, there is a wide range of drinking. Poles are often drinking to get drunk: 10%-15%, according to one focus group; one bottle of spirits per person, according to another. Certainly, there is no perception of a need to limit drinking.

- *"from 5pm to 1am, certainly [it's] a double figure... for sure more than 10 [drinks], if from 5pm to 1am."*
- *"No rule. There could be anything from a beer to a half a litre of [spirit] per person."*
- *"Lots!"*

But even on days off, women are likely to drink much less than the men; for example, one bottle of beer for women. The Polish men who drink 'mainly for taste' will stick to two or three beers even at weekends.

When partying, the Poles express a preference for 'real' drinks which provide a stronger kick. Several times, a disdain was expressed for the local habit of drinking 'weak stuff' (beer, spirits with soft drinks) over a long period. This may be related to the idea that one of the aims of drinking is to get drunk (see below).

Groups differ as well. Families/couples, when socialising, tend to talk more and drink less; alcohol is part of the host-guest relationship, rather than being an aim in itself. In contrast,

groups of men, and the young, are more likely to be drinking for the sake of it, and so consumption is higher.

How much one drinks depends upon who one is drinking with. Polish drinking culture is still often very macho:

- *“We are ordinary males, we feel freedom, there is no woman there, nobody to control, and one goes wild: ‘I am having a day off, aren't I?!’ A woman is in some way controlling a man if it comes to drinking”*

On the other hand:

- *“If two, three couples meet together, to spend time together, to sit longer, to talk, they drink alcohol for good humour. If three, four men meet together, they tend to drink more; often to get drunk.”*

Note that, when asked about drinking, Poles tended to associate this with the binge-drinking, rather than the ‘beer fun’. The latter is not seen as ‘real’ drinking, and so there is a suggestion that Poles might significantly under-estimate the amount they drink:

- *“Today he is drinking, tomorrow he is not. But the fact that he is drinking 2 beers a day he is not taking into account.”*
- *“We are not taking about alcoholics, because alcoholics drink all the time”*

In Poland, having a shot is a common way to ‘warm up’ eg after cold weather. No-one mentioned having post-work shots in the focus groups, although the cold working environment of the meat-processing plants came up a few times. This may be because Polish habits do not translate; or it may be because this is another case of non-drinking drinking – almost a medicinal use.

Beer was described as ‘neutral’ drink: if you don’t drink enough to fall over, what’s the difference between it and a cup of coffee?

- *“I like vodka. I don't like beer ... If my wife were not shouting at me, I would prefer to pour myself a shot of vodka, colour it with something, and I would put these two beers aside. But my wife thinks that beer is better.”*

Price was an important determining factor for those going out to drink:

- *“It depends on one’s pocket and appetite.”*

Or perhaps not. Given the relative expense of going out, decisions on actual amounts might be marginal. The same focus group made two contradictory comments:

- *“I don't think that one will drink, [spend] in a pub more than up to £40 at one sitting ... But in a range of £30-£40, and thank you, no more, it's what I planned [to spend] ... unless a sponsor happened; because it is like that, that one drinks up a bit more, and he doesn't care, and brings more ‘we are drinking, OK.’, and he's sponsoring, and they keep bringing and bringing [more alcohol]”*
- *“If one goes to a pub one doesn't stick to the budget [‘generally one can control the budget to some point, and then the budget can grow bigger...one can spend more’] ... One will ponder whether to go to a pub or not! There is no need to think about the budget.”*

6.5 Why do they drink?

The focus groups highlighted a large list of reasons for drinking:

- to have fun

- to avoid boredom
- lack of alternatives: nowhere to go, nothing to do
- to counter loneliness
- they like it
- for the taste
- to escape from problems of work
- to escape from problems back home
- to warm up after a day in a chilly environment
- to kill time after shift work, particularly early ones
- to relax
- bad news from Poland
- to celebrate an occasion
- to be sociable with colleagues
- to fit in with a housemates/the community
- to wind down from work
- as an accompaniment to an evening in front of the TV
- when one is too tired to go out and socialise
- addiction
- for young Poles, as Dutch courage before going out to cause trouble

The last was identified as a particular problem with one group some years ago.

These identified aims of drinking can be broadly classified as

- having fun
- relaxing
- forgetting
- whiling time away
- lack of other options, often associated with the language barrier.

One focus group suggested that 20% of drinking was for taste, the other 80% was for the 'buzz', to be 'na rauszu'; this latter group puts more emphasis on alcoholic content. Females are more likely to account for the former group.

In many of the focus group reports, the implicit aim of party-drinking was some form of oblivion, often related to isolation:

- *"Oh, yes, we're in a foreign country. We are doing better here, but all the time one feels one is not in their own place... There are many people, especially the people – not the young ones – who are missing [...] all the time. Meeting up in a group ... drinking up and remembering [and talking away, about everything, and one will drink up]...of course!"*
- *"If they return from work, they are living in the agency house, sitting in their room ... they are drinking out of boredom ... because there is nowhere they can go. They are afraid to go out, they do not know the area. They prefer to go to Asda for drinking stuff... One does not know in a foreign country what to do with oneself."*
- *"lots of the people are drinking because of loneliness, as they are on their own here ... not knowing the language.."*

In contrast, for the Welsh the primary purpose of drinking is merrymaking (see below).

6.6 Who do they drink with?

Poles drink with friends and family. This is a consequence of much of the drinking taking place in people's homes.

It is also, indirectly, a consequence of the changing employment conditions. In the 'first wave' of Poles in 2004-5, many Poles were living in MOH provided by an agency. There was little

choice of flatmates and things to do; there was little money in one's pockets; and an aggressive approach to communal drinking was often present. Flatmates not drinking were accused of being wet blankets, of not having a community spirit, and could be ostracised. Refusing alcohol can be taken as an affront; this is brought over from Polish drinking culture.

Since 2006, a lot has changed. First, a number of 'troublemakers' have gone back to Poland. Second, the single men drinking after work have been increasingly replaced by families and couples. Third, as Poles have acquired money in their pockets, they have moved out of MOH into private rented accommodation. While this is still often shared between several households, these are voluntary arrangements, and so drinking-related friction has reduced substantially.

There are still 'closed circles' for socialising. Poles often live close to other Poles, although there are no Polish 'ghettos' anywhere in Carmarthenshire. In Poland there would be more communication between streets, but in Carmarthenshire there is less opportunity.

There is still some element of needing to socialise with work colleagues, but there is not the same sense that this is a requirement. Poles will drink with friends, not necessarily with housemates, and usually not with mere 'acquaintances'. Drinking is more 'Polish' now – a Pole will not drink with someone he doesn't like – or trust:

- *"One is rather drinking with the people one has some contact, with a colleague, with a friend."*
- *"There will be people who are drinking with a friend and in a moment they are fighting with him. And there are some... for example, you will go to somebody's party, you are sitting with him and drinking a beer with him, and he's beating his girlfriend in your presence... or later he is starting a row ... There are also such people. One needs to know who one can drink with and how much one can drink."*

Poles do mix with the Welsh but very much on a one-on-one basis. Neighbours and work colleagues occasionally invite Poles to the pub or for a drink, and the Welsh will try to strike up a conversation in a pub or nightclubs – first moves are usually made by the Welsh. These are positive experiences, even if, for example, Poles are less likely to repeat a visit to a pub on their own. Although not stated, the expectation must be that the Poles that benefit and can develop the interactions are those with the best language skills – which are thought to improve after a few drinks. However, language is not the only problem. The difficulty is that the Welsh only have the weather to complain about; the Poles are looking to complain about everything ... This reflects the way Poles socialise in general rather than being specific to the Poles in the UK. While there are some reports of locals picking fights in pubs, interactions with the Welsh, when they occur, are generally seen positively.

If Poles go to the pub they tend to go in groups of other Poles. They have picked up the idea of taking a turn at buying 'rounds', extending it to multiple visits. This is probably an essential element of group drinking given the expense of going out and the variation in paydays.

When the Poles get drunk in groups, there is a strong sense of joint responsibility and a code of conduct: it is bad form to leave your mate somewhere, even if he is drunk and has passed out.

Finally, there are accounts of women socialising and having tastings with other female friends, with wine, liqueurs and beer.

6.7 What do they drink?

As with other aspects of Polish life in Carmarthenshire, money and work dominates the choice of drink. The idea of 'beer for the workdays, spirits for the weekend' has already been mentioned; a couple of beers is seen as a safe relaxant. However, Poles will also drink beer at the weekend to recover from hangovers.

The beer drunk is usually Polish – British beer is seen as weak and strange-tasting, although this varies from group to group. Men do not tend to experiment, whereas women are happy to try new brands. Women's drinking is much more taste-orientated; men are more focused on price, strength and habit. Women drinking with men will tend to drink the same as the men, but in smaller amounts; amongst themselves they are more adventurous.

The strength of Polish beer was frequently mentioned as important, which supports the idea that much Polish drinking is negatively motivated (relieving boredom, loneliness, pain). For these, British beer is sometimes drunk – but apparently mostly because it is much cheaper than Polish.

- *"I don't feel like walking far to buy beer if everything is here [in a local shop] ... And the price, of course. There is promotion! Of course, the price, and location."*
- *"Polish beer is too expensive."*
- *"There is no point to overpay as the local beers are not so bad, and similar to the Polish ones, and cheaper. Why to buy [Polish beer] if it's more expensive"*
- *"[Of cheaper brands] one drinks the way [the money is] not going to run out"*

And yet

- *"And I like [Polish beer]. For me, I don't look at the price. It can cost even £3. If I like it, I'll buy it."*
- *"If one is a fan of beer, one will buy it despite the price"*

Mass-market cider is also drunk, but is not well-regarded. The selling-points of cheap cider which make it appealing for young Britons (large volume, low price and high alcohol) also make it attractive to Poles before pay day. There are no positive perceptions; it is very much a low-quality drink with unpleasant side-effects; what one drinks when there is no alternative.

- *"It's big and cheap"*

Polish choice of alcohol is very sensitive to income. As well as Poles trading down to cider when money is short (eg mid-week), they will trade up to more expensive spirits if funds allow or the occasion demands⁷. For example, many Poles drink whisky in the UK, in preference to vodka. This is because cheap British vodka is seen as low quality, and Poles would prefer to drink a local drink rather than a pale imitation of their national drink; some may also have just acquired a preference for it in the UK. However, on special occasions (or when just feeling flush) Poles will splash out on expensive but more desirable Polish vodkas.

Some Poles, men and women, will drink spirits mixed with soft drinks, but this is still unusual for men. And the men make sure that their drinks are less diluted than the women's. Women are also, and it depends who they drink with, more likely to drink home-made liqueurs and other sweet drinks.

Poles rarely drink wine: it's expensive and there is no tradition of wine-drinking in Poland. However, there appears to be a developing model of wine-drinking amongst 'older' women (forty-plus). Two women might meet and share a small bottle of wine, sometimes as a tester, sometimes as a social lubricant. This reflects a growing trend in the UK, particularly amongst women (Ritchie, 2007) whereby wine is replacing tea and coffee as the default refreshment offered to guests. The appearance of this habit in older women may reflect higher incomes.

This example only came out of one focus group, which was also the one to mention women getting together for drinks. It is not known whether this is a widespread development or a local variation. It came out of one of the women-dominated meetings. It may not be surprising that it was not mentioned in the male-dominated meeting, but the lack of similar behaviour in the other females-dominated focus groups suggest a local sub-culture might have developed.

⁷ For example, the Polish shop in Llanybydder only sold cider during the week, and none at all at weekends.

6.8 Where does the alcohol come from?

Alcohol buying is a mix of price and convenience. The large supermarkets (Tesco, Asda, Lidl etc) are the preferred locations because of price, but the Poles can do their food shopping at the same time; being able to buy Polish food is an extra attraction. This is particularly the case for those living outside Carmarthen or Llanelli, who will often do a big 'weekly shop' there. However, alcohol will not necessarily be part of that:

- *"A Pole doesn't buy a bigger amount. If he's got all the beer at home, he'll drink it up. So, one buys the amount not to have too much. ['According to one's needs!'] Because if they have more, there will be a party."*
- *"It depends what one goes to Tesco for. If one goes to buy a bigger amount [of beer], one usually goes to buy mainly beer. If one goes to do a daily shopping, one doesn't buy beer, or one takes 1 or 2 or 3 [beers]."*

Smaller supermarkets, grocery stores and specialist Polish shops are visited when the big supermarket is closed, too far away, or just inconvenient; increasingly, the non-Polish shops stock Polish food to attract the Polish clientele. For example, the habit of dropping in to the local Spar on the way back from work has already been mentioned. In Llanybydder the attraction is enhanced by having a sub-Post Office in the off-licence, so Poles can take out money, send it home, and then buy food and drink all in the same place. In contrast, the Polish shops are mainly used for smaller or specialist purchases (only the one in Llanybydder stocks spirits), although they do play a significant part in providing a focal point for the community.

Out of regular shopping hours, Poles will go to garages or the big 24-hour supermarkets if necessary, but prefer to visit neighbourhood convenience stores. In Llanelli the fact that most of those visited by Poles are run by ethnic minorities has given them the generic name 'Turek' ('Turkish') amongst the Polish community.

- *"If one runs out of [alcohol], one runs where it's closer"*

Buying alcohol is primarily for immediate use:

- *"Today I buy and invite friends, tomorrow they will buy and invite me"*

6.9 What trouble do Poles get into?

Poles getting into trouble after drinking generally fall into three categories: fighting, public order problems, and dealing with the after-effects.

6.9.1 Fighting in private houses

Poles fighting after drinking together is not the norm but neither is it rare. Poles acknowledge that some drink to be drunk, and then look for trouble, even in private homes. In fact, some may be more likely to drink at home if they know they become aggressive when drunk. This is because there is a sense of 'what happens in the family, stays in the family'. However, the social network tends to circulate news about fights quickly, particularly if the aggressor attacks buildings and gardens.

In MOH, the situation is more complex. The pressures of MOH living can lead to explosions when flatmates have been drinking; one group suggested fights happen every one or two months. On the other hand, there are typically uninvolved flatmates who can step in to defuse the situation.

There is an element of bravado in having a fight after drinking, and some actively seek to develop a reputation. Nevertheless, the feeling is that most fights are transient events, with brawling Poles just as likely to be seen sharing a curry as bruises the next day.

In all domestic situations, the police are unlikely to be called unless there is an accident or a real risk of someone going much too far. The reasons for not calling the police are concern about the language barrier, fear of revenge, or just not wanted to get involved. In MOH, Poles did report problems to the agency (there was no language barrier there), but nothing came out of it.

For most fights, police are more likely to be called by concerned neighbours. Calling the police is almost like becoming an informer. It still seems to be a remnant of the attitude towards cooperation with an authority often attributed to the post-war communist era:

- *"If nobody reports, it will not turn into a problem."*

Instead Poles prefer to sort things out amongst themselves.

Apart from full-blown fights, alcohol causes tension and stress ('toxic relations' as one group member put it) in MOH. Sometimes different work patterns are the problem:

- *"One for example had finished one's working day and was relaxing, and another one was just preparing themselves for work, and this was the difference [that caused frictions]."*
- *"We have moveable days off, so one is having a party and you have to get up [early] to go to work."*

As well as personal differences:

- *"[MOH living] may be a pain as some may drink or smoke, and one may not like it."*
- *"These are the troubles: one smokes, another one doesn't, one drinks, somebody doesn't..."*

The pressure to be a 'team player' could lead to forced departures:

- *"Usually those who are drinking, they get together and no one is disturbing anyone. The one who does not drink, is not looking for trouble, is moving out somewhere and is looking for the people with whom they can live normally without any parties."*
- *"So if someone behaves differently, and isn't interested in some wide socialising including the kitties, they must fall out of such a group [in MOH]"*
- *"There were conversations. There weren't quarrels, there weren't fights, there wasn't any damage making, nothing like this. I would call it normal drinking: long and noisy because the people are talking ... And this malice that I'm not drinking, that I'm not buying the alcohol, not contributing to the alcohol kitty. They didn't like it, so I moved out pretty quickly. I landed up even worse, because I moved out [from the new place] because of alcohol too."*
- *"I'm the example of the similar situation: picked on because of not drinking, not taking part in parties, hunted down, and I literally ran away as a rat, really."*

As a result, the drinking of MOH co-residents was regularly cited as one of the reasons for moving out.

6.9.2 Fighting in public areas

Poles do fight, usually at weekends:

- *"Nothing is happening during the week"*

One fight a week, on average, was suggested as a norm for Carmarthen. Poles, when out drinking, are more likely to end up fighting other Poles than the Welsh – particularly Poles from other towns. There may be two reasons for this. One is that the Poles are seen as good street fighters – the Poles are proud that the Welsh will rarely take them on in a one-on-one situation. The second reason, as the Poles acknowledge, may be that the Welsh are better at

defusing a dangerous situation. The Poles may turn a serious verbal argument into a fight; the Welsh will turn it into a joke.

- *“we know what the Poles are like, the Poles will not let it go”*

Nevertheless Welsh-Polish fights do occur. Language is one of the reasons. With Poles in a group talking Polish, it is easy for a look or a gesture to be misinterpreted as a challenge, or as laughing at people. Alcohol is always a contributory factor:

- *“Sometimes out of stupidity some situation happens, when one is too much drunk, or one pushes one another, and an action starts, because they have had too much alcohol.”*

The worst place for this is nightclubs; several groups reported random attacks in nightclubs. In contrast pubs have been relatively safe – more open, less chaotic – but there have been recent incidents in Carmarthen blamed on the deteriorating economic situation. Some Poles have been banned from pubs for fighting; and there are pubs where the Welsh are rumoured to pick fights with Poles to keep them away. Finally, one group commented on young Polish women contributing the problem by being cheeky and aggressive after alcohol – not fighting themselves, but leaving their menfolk to get the beating.

The older Welsh drinkers are more tolerant, but there are some problems with the young Welsh. There are reports of gangs of up to 15 youths in Carmarthen lying in wait for Poles coming out of the clubs (in 2006-7, there was an equivalent group of Polish troublemakers in Llanelli looking for a fight). The Poles take a hard line on the ones who go out looking to cause trouble:

- *“If we see the whole action, and we know [the beating] is deserved, so we don't react. If we know it's not deserved, than we intervene.”*

Poles are more likely to receive help from the Welsh in many cases.

When fights occur, the Poles feel that they are more likely to get the blame – they can't explain to the police, they can't justify themselves, and they often are the only ones arrested, if for no other reason than language barrier (but see the following section for the police perspective on this). However, police are more concerned with calming the situation than arresting anyone. Similarly, club security guards are mainly interested in avoiding trouble being reported to the police, and so are looking more to calming the situation without involving the police.

Poles generally seem to be safe from casual violence – muggings, theft etc. This may be due to the reputation of Poles for fighting, but there have also been rumours that Poles regularly carry knives. Whether this is true or not, Poles seem to be relatively immune to opportunistic crimes.

6.9.3 Public order

Poles like to sing when drunk, particular when out in a group and late at night. This does not endear them to the community. The Poles have the impression that the Welsh, in contrast, make their way quietly home after the pub. However this impression may be misleading, at least in Llanybydder, where the dominant population is elderly/retired.

There are other local differences. For example, in Llanybydder, Poles are regularly seen drinking but not seen drunk in public; in bigger places, public drunkenness is quite visible, at least when out partying.

Poles commit trespass offences regularly enough for this to come up in the focus groups. However, this seems to stem from a misconception of what is public and private property, arising from the Polish property laws. What surprises the Poles is that landowners tend to try to explain the misdemeanour, rather than calling the police.

Other public order offences arise from cultural differences. Poles drinking in playgrounds and public areas caused some concern, leading to notices being put up asking Poles not to drink in those places. However, the Poles are still baffled by what offence has actually been committed.

Similarly, Poles often drink in their front gardens/yards. This is less common among the Welsh, and leads to some complaints (not necessarily to the police) about intimidating behaviour. Again, this is confusing to the Poles, who see themselves as just having a drink in their own homes. One group noted that it was a good thing that most Poles don't speak English, as some would be rude to their neighbours who complained.

If Poles are arrested for public order offences, language difficulties may make for more problems. Poles feel they are unfairly arrested: for example, they are aware that they tend to gesticulate when talking, which could be interpreted as aggression. The difficulty of communicating may also generate real frustration amongst the Polish arrestee, exacerbating the problem.

Whilst the Poles generally felt that the Welsh showed an impressive standard of manners and tolerance, some did express concern that the police saw them as second-class citizens. On the other hand, others were impressed with the police's low-key approach – for example, the typical reaction of police finding Poles drunk and wandering the streets is to take them home.

6.9.4 Dealing with the after-effects

The Poles are aware that drinking brings additional problems: groups cited cases of workers turning up to work still being drunk, and sent home. There is also concern about the legal consequences:

- *“Here we are behaving like in Poland but here we are more afraid as [drinking is more prosecuted]. We are afraid of deportation because of alcohol problems [‘the neighbour can come.’] ... It is known that the Poles as a nation like entertainment and when a Pole gets drunk, he likes to mess around, and one cannot do it here. Here one has to shut up and be quiet. Otherwise [he] can be quickly done for this by the judge. It is true about house drinking, and in the pubs too. At least, [the Poles] restrain themselves because they are afraid. In Poland they are not afraid and we have what we have, and here they are afraid... the sanctions are that the employers finds out and one gets sacked, and they are afraid then”*

Some Poles also felt that they were being given an undeserved reputation as troublemakers who drink excessively, because the small number of occasional cases were referred to repeatedly.

One group discussed in detail employer attitudes to drunkenness. There was some resentment that the Welsh appeared to be treated more leniently; and that employers seemed more interested in protecting their legal positions than their staff. However, the group also thought that only 5% of Poles would be likely to turn up to work with a hangover, and that the problem had been declining since 2006 with the change in the migrant population.

A major issue is drink-driving. Some focus groups suggested Poles would drive home after discos and nightclub, but most argued that Poles would either walk home or take a taxi (which is more affordable in the UK than in Poland):

- *“it would be stupid from where I live to park a car, have 10 beers and get into a car to go home. It's pointless when a taxi costs £2, isn't it? Even with my mate we'll have a walk, it's only 15 minute on foot”*

Despite the general denials, the groups agreed that Poles do sometimes drink and drive (in fact, one directly contradicted his own denials during the focus group); but that this is largely due to misunderstanding the amount of alcohol they are allowed to consume. The Poles do

know that the blood-alcohol limit is higher in the UK but not how much. Some groups thought that one beer was okay to drive on, another that it was two beers, another that it was okay to drive two hours after a beer.

- *“it can happen any single day sometimes! For example, one out of stupidity can have one beer, and it seems to him he is OK, but he has been tired, got into [a car], done driving, and the end!”*

Those who claimed never to drink and drive argued that they had no need to learn about alcohol limits.

While most focus groups deny that drink-driving on the day of drinking is a problem, they readily indicated that Poles will get in their cars the morning after, oblivious to the alcohol still in their system. It is claimed that this is what is responsible for the reputation of Poles for drink-driving:

- *“No way he will get completely sober next morning!” “Of course, if he has drunk up lots!” “It stays for 48 hours in blood, and the end! And this 0,8 they have, that is a big tolerance, still it will show up.”*
- *“It can happen any day, not only on Monday; On Sunday one should drink from 10 am to 1pm. Then one goes to bed, and then one can go to work!”*

This impression of ‘accidental’ drink driving was flatly contradicted by another group, who reported that Poles regularly drove after drinking; in fact, some only used their cars at weekends to go to parties. It is notable that this comment came from one of the female focus groups: if drink-driving is an exclusively male problem (as it seems to be in this community), then it is may not be surprising for the male-dominated focus groups to downplay this outcome. It was noticeable in the focus groups that one person claiming not to drink and drive quickly tended to end the conversation on this subject and on alcohol limits.

Finally, one group did suggest that, when drink-driving of an evening did occur, a surprise for some of the Poles was that the police officer was unwilling to come to an ‘arrangement’...

- *“Old habits die hard. In Poland, nobody can drive after alcohol ... [But] when the police stop you, and you are over the limit, in Poland we can strike a deal with a policeman; here it will not happen.”*

6.9.5 Relations with the police

Poles are unlikely to report minor offences to the police, even if they are the victim. They would report a situation where someone's life was in danger, but not smaller incidents like one house mate pushing another one, or one stealing small things like somebody's shopping. The main reason given for this are:

- Language difficulties
- Fear of recriminations
- Negative images associated with being a witness

A particular source of the latter two is the impact upon work:

- *“He does not want to have problems” “It is immediately reported to his work place ... even when he is a victim, and the employer, obviously, does what they want: ‘wrong place, wrong time, why did you go there?’”*

On the language problem, Poles were concerned that their habit of gesticulation while talking could lead to them being unfairly handcuffed or restrained. They also quoted tales of having to wait for up to two days in the cells for a translator to be found. Although this incident took place some years ago, suggesting the problem is now resolved, this story is still circulating in the community as current.

One group also suggested distrust of the police as a reason for not reporting:

- *“The Pole is treated as dirt!” “He is afraid of the Police officer”*

One or two poor experiences of reporting problems to the police were discussed – typically, the complainant had heard nothing since the original complaint and saw no point in contacting the police again. As with many situations, negative reports tend to be remembered and talked about more than positive experiences, reinforced by Poles’ culture of complaining freely in conversation. As a result, some negative experiences may have a disproportionate effect on Poles’ willingness to report.

6.10 Poles and drug use

Three of the eight focus groups discussed drugs. Throughout, there was limited willingness to commit in this open discussion; Poles said that people were afraid to talk about other Poles using drugs.

In one, the Poles agreed that there was cannabis and amphetamine use amongst Poles; that this was more relevant for the younger generation, the under 30s; but that this was not part of the mainstream Polish community practice.

Another focus group mentioned briefly that ‘young’ Poles smoked cannabis, estimating that 50% of the 16-18 year olds were trying it. Some learnt in Poland but most were picking it up from Welsh peers.

A third group, slightly less cagey, suggested that drug-taking was going on, using locally sourced drugs; and that these drugs were both cheaper and easier to obtain here:

- *“I don’t believe that somebody will bring it over from [Poland]”*
- *“Considering the local wages, it is much cheaper... and it is everywhere available.”*
- *“Here, drugs are much more easily available [‘always have been!’] ... In Poland, for example, I am [age], nobody ever offered me anything. Here yes, not only once.”*

Cannabis was typically offered from friend to friend on a ‘take and try’ basis; up to 50% will try, with about 10% being regular smokers. Cannabis would also be taken with alcohol; the group were not aware of any other drugs being used by Poles. The biggest users were thought to be the temporary or seasonal workers, the ‘quick money’ groups. However, all the users took pains to ensure that they were not jeopardising their work.

Everyone who commented noted that smoking usually took place at home; hence, it was not surprising that no-one noticed drug use.

7 Interviews with Poles on drinking behaviour

The description in this section is based upon the responses given by Poles in one-to-one interviews as follows:

- Llanelli: 5 interviews
- Carmarthen: 5 interviews
- Llanybydder: 4 interviews

Plus comments from some of the offender interviews.

The interviews were intended to follow up from the focus groups and elicit more corroborative information from independent sources. Only four of the interviewees also took part in the focus groups. In general, the information they gave merely confirmed the conclusions of the focus groups, albeit with more detail. However, some inconsistencies did start to appear, possibly because the Poles were more confident talking on their own.

To avoid repeating the detail of the focus groups, this section summarises the focus group findings, before going on to consider the additional information from the interviews.

7.1 Which Poles drink?

The focus group findings were:

- Most Poles drink significant amounts, with more drinking during the week than the Welsh
- Younger Poles are drinking more in the 'British' style, concentrating on weekends

The interviews suggested that the economic crisis was having an effect:

- *"There are many [people with alcohol problems], especially now when lots of people have lost jobs and they're starting to drink."*

This interviewee estimated a 70-30 male-female split for problem drinkers. The female proportion seems overly high compared with other reports of female drinking, but the nature of 'problem' drinking was not identified. The Polish Centre in Llanelli estimated that 10% of Polish clients might be 'problematic' drinkers, although this is not a clinical definition. Amongst women, the 'problem drinkers' seemed to be older than average.

It was suggested that the Poles who come from big towns in Poland tend to be more active and outgoing; they have more interests outside Playstation and drinking. This might tie in with reports of trouble in 2004-6: in some areas, numbers from small towns were brought in by agencies, and at the same time there were problems with Poles. Recently, troublemaking appears to have subsided, and this has been associated with the increase in families and partners joining Poles in Carmarthenshire. However, it is interesting to note this period also coincides with an increase in the number of Poles coming from large towns.

Finally, two interviewees noted that MOH puts a very strong pressure on inhabitants to adjust to the drinking habits of dominant residents:

- *"I remember when I came here, [inability to come to terms with one's house mates] was one of the main reasons why I moved out, because I lived here, obviously like everyone at the beginning, renting a tiny room in a house with other 10 people. Everyday I used to return home after work, tired, obviously wanting to go to sleep, and downstairs they were partying, drinking and so on."*

The women in MOH generally are single and do not drink.

7.2 When do Poles drink?

The focus groups found

- Drinking is driven by 'beer fun' during the week and heavy drinking at weekends and days off
- Poles also like to drink for special occasions
- Sobering up for Monday morning is important
- House parties are the main focus for drinking events
- Payday affects drinking days

Interviews clarified the role of MOH. In much MOH, shift working means that there is always someone having a day off. Working housemates tend to come home around five or six o'clock, expecting to spend time in the shared area. The working groups in MOH tended to socialise with alcohol in the same way, and so it seems that in MOH the multiple working patterns contribute to a general pattern of drinking on any evening. There are also enough people to generate 2-3 'house parties' every month.

In MOH, cider is also drunk during the week as well as beer. This may reflect the fact that those still living in MOH are those with less money to spend.

The mid-week drinking sessions can also happen between workmates: if one has a day off and another does not, they may still drink together. This may be one of the causes of the mid-week peak in spirit sales identified in the Llanybydder sales figures.

One interviewee gave a very specific pattern for those following the stereotypical week-weekend drinking pattern. Friday drinking usually starts straight after work and goes on until guests go home (or the Poles might go out to a night club later). In any event, Friday tends to be a late night. Saturday drinking starts with beer mid-afternoon and progresses to spirits, unless the group decamps to a nightclub. Drinking may go on until the early hours of Sunday; some thought the Saturday night sessions were less extended than the Friday drinking. Sunday drinking may take place, but usually finishes by early evening, so that everyone has time to sober up for the following day.

Poles are more likely to drink after payday; for those who are paid fortnightly, there is a big difference in numbers in that 'middle' weekend:

- *"but if they want to drink it doesn't matter where and when."*

7.3 Where do they drink?

The focus groups showed that

- Home is still the key, for both social and cost reasons
- Open spaces are also popular when convenient
- Pubs are generally avoided: the cost, the need for basic language skills, and concern over the reception from locals; but younger Poles might go out, especially in Carmarthen
- Nightclubs are more popular, with some pre-loading before going out; price seems to be an important factor

The interviews confirmed the general impression but suggested that, in Carmarthen at least, the no-pub argument is less valid; and that nightclubs do play an important role in group socialising (with pre-meetings in houses).

7.3.1 Home drinking

In terms of Poles' preference for staying home, most interviewees supported the focus groups:

- *“They prefer [partying] at home rather than going to some pub, they prefer to start at home, and a bit tipsy they will go to a disco, and there they will finish [a day]”*
- *“I think that majority of the Poles here, because they don't like spending money, they drink at home, or they meet up somewhere on a bench and drink in public places.”*
- *“Some small percentage [go to pubs]. But mainly, I think, there are house parties.”*
- *“I don't know whether there is any reason [that the Poles drink at home]. I know that the Poles do go to pubs and clubs. [Nearby] there is some pub where the Poles used to go, but probably more because of the disco there. Maybe they've stopped now. But certainly, the Poles tend to spend more time with beer at home.”*

The weather plays some role too: in Summer one drinks more outside in gardens, often barbecuing. Men in particular sit outside to drink beer if the weather is clement. They also like the convenience of drinking at home:

- *“Like me [for example], I have to go home uphill. I don't bother ... If I had to go uphill drunk - I don't think so!”*

Home drinking is also increasing because the number of children born in the UK or brought over from Poland is going up. As these young families enter a new phase in their lives, they are more likely arrange to meet at home, possibly over a beer.

Parties at home often last until the late hours, even if the party doesn't relocate to the nightclub:

- *“Till midnight, two in the morning, depends. Sometimes we don't go anywhere”.*

7.3.2 Open spaces

There are differences in opinion here. One interviewee, from Llanelli, stated that Poles 'rarely' drink in public areas; and if they do, it is no different from the Welsh. Another commented:

- *“I, for example, haven't noticed any drunk Poles on streets. If it happens, they are very rare cases. I've happened to see the Welsh in such a state, but not the Poles.”*

Another noted that the Poles tend to be more noticeable as they talk or shout loudly in Polish when they get excited, drawing the attention of the locals. This happens 'at least once a month'. Overall, it was felt that drunk Poles in the streets were much more common in Poland than in Wales.

In Llanybydder, where drinking in public areas seems to be a problem, the current group of Poles are now aware that they are not allowed to drink in public places like parks, public benches, and bus stops. However, many of them cannot drink at home 'for many reasons' and so they still drink around town; however, they have become more adept at hiding bottles and cans – otherwise they know from experience that the locals call the police. They do this because they have no alternative for meeting up with colleagues:

- *“I think if there was a garden, parasols etc, they would go there to sit down ... or like me, for example, you know, I cannot receive anybody because I have currently a room the size of two beds ... and the sitting room is a shared space.”*

It is not known if this interviewee is in MOH; if so, this would imply that the need to conform to the group view works both for and against consumption at home.

7.3.3 Pubs

Interviewees confirmed the general principle that 'Poles do not go to pubs', although as one interviewee said, most have tried it at least once. However there is not a Polish 'tradition'.

- *“Yes, they go, they go, but definitely less often, they prefer staying home. They prefer to go to a shop, they buy what they are to buy, and be at home with their own social circle.”*
- *“Few, few [Poles], not many, and because of the prices, and majority of the Poles simply tend to drink at home ... because it's cheaper ... Well, it is such our Polish tradition that we drink vodka at home’.”*

Interestingly, the Poles make a sharp distinction between pubs and nightclubs:

- *“The Poles do not go to pubs. They meet up at home, drink alcohol and go to a disco. The discos are open here about 10pm.”*

Cost plays a role, but so does age: the young are most likely to go to pubs, although they remain price-sensitive.

More senior workers such as team leaders in the big companies go to the pub more often; partly they can afford it, but also they usually have better English language skills.

If Poles do go to the pub (and Carmarthen was again much the most likely place for this to happen), it is as an alternative to meeting at home. They go in groups, at least two people, mainly to have a chat and drink (in comparison to the locals, seen as going to the pub to have a drink, watch TV and chat up the bar staff):

- *“I personally, for example, wouldn't go on my own [to a pub] simply to have a beer, although I know many people here. I would feel awkward to go there on my own. Because, for example, the pub is empty, and I'm sitting over this beer. What to do there? And when one goes there with a friend, firstly one feels more self-confident, and secondly, the time is flying by quicker, we can have a chat, or something. Simply, it's different.”*
- *“And more likely in groups, not individually ... because in my social group, and in those from Poland, and those who I've met here, that before one goes somewhere, to some pub, or a disco, or wherever, there is a party at home first, usually a barbecue, or something ... There is simply a party, and the whole group go out somewhere.”*

Poles like to go to popular places:

- *“If there are more people, it must be better there; better fun”*

Some Poles have developed a taste for draught beer, and will seek out promotions or times when the beer is cheaper eg during the afternoon.

In Carmarthen, one interviewee commented that the longer Poles have been in the UK, the more likely they are to go to the pub (even if this is only an occasional visit), indicating a degree of integration. However, another commented that those who have been here some time tend to go to the pub less: they have their own circle of friends whom they meet at home; and they often also have young families.

7.3.4 Nightclubs

Poles tend to go to the disco in small groups or couples; and there is no restriction on age groups, although it is more popular amongst the young. In Poland the over-30s would be the 'old ones' but in the UK they all dance together.

- *“If I want to go to dance, I call a friend who is in her late 50s, and she is coming together with her daughter ... we're meeting up with the twenty-something years olds and we are dancing together, having fun dancing ... men are dancing with women.”*

The Poles may even be getting a positive reputation for themselves:

- *Men are dancing with women. The Welsh are learning this from Poles. I've come across the view that some [Welsh] women have started going to [clubs popular with Poles] because [Polish] men enjoy themselves; the Polish men can dance well, whereas the Welsh men... They keep their distance.*

In Llanelli, an interviewee commented that the agency pay scheme concentrated the Poles' partying: on agency paydays, the interviewee estimated that up to 50% of the nightclub clients could be Polish (another suggested it was nearer 20%).

One interviewee described the key characteristics of a good nightclub for Poles are: good music, lots of toilets, lots of space to dance, somewhere to sit down, and active security, with taxis coming to pick people up. Cost was not mentioned by this interviewee. The reputation of the place was also unimportant:

- *"[The preferred nightclub] is a low category place, has a very bad reputation among the locals; I don't mind, because I know I am safe there."*

In this place, women also go in groups of their own. The knowledge of having other Poles about is important: if something happens there are other Poles to count on. But generally security reacts to calls for intervention and sorts out any potential problem.

Poles find the 'ladette' behaviour of some of the local women astonishing:

- *"[The Welsh] women fight between themselves. I saw four women in their forties pulling each other's hair. Men were trying to separate them, also the security, and we were looking at them like at monkeys."*

One of the interviewees admitted that Poles (including women) do get drunk, but much less so than the locals:

- *"90% of Poles will leave discos being drunk to some extent, but less drunk than the Welsh."*

7.4 How much do they drink?

The focus groups found that

- Poles see the within-week 'beer fun' as not really drinking
- Weekend is a time for spirits; the Poles are disdainful of 'weak' British drinks
- There was an element of machismo in the drinking culture, although out-and-out problem drinkers were rare

Some interviewees are aware of their reputation for being heavy drinkers, and noted that locals are only likely to come into contact with a limited set of drinking behaviours. Another noted that the types of Poles coming might be a problem:

- *"As for the alcohol problem, I think it depends on a person; if someone has come with a problem from Poland, so obviously, they will have this problem here. But it's not so obviously noticeable here. As for a normal drinking, there is more social drinking, and rather at home."*

One interviewee estimated that up to a third of Poles in his/her workplace were either abusing alcohol or drinking 'heavily'. The interviewee also thought that most of those problem drinkers had some criminal past. Another suggested that 20% of Poles will not drink at all, 10% will be problem drinkers and the rest will be 'social' drinkers.

The interviewees admit that they drink, and some drink more than they would do in Poland, but think they drink less than the locals – or at least can hold their drink better:

- *“if we drink we drink more strong alcohol, I would say that a Pole can drink up lots of strong alcohol and will behave properly. A British will drink up lots of weak drinks and will behave like a small pig. Women lying in the street regardless of their age.”*
- *“There are discussions between [Poles and Welsh] who can drink more ... the Welsh claim they can drink more and then the surprise comes: Yes, simply two guys go out together, one from Poland, another one from Wales, and later this one from Wales loses, and says: “And you [Poles] have strong heads ... There is simply a different drinking culture. [The Welsh] drink lots of beer”*
- *“Poles drink the same alcohol here like in Poland, but too much.”*

Some Poles do drink heavily (a few beers, a few shots, plus ‘something’ on top of it) after work: one admitted to drinking 2 bottles of spirits and up to 30 beers a week. However they will be there, ready to work, at 6am without any visible hangover. This ability to work after such a heavy drinking meets with admiration of their Welsh work colleagues – which may explain some of the ‘macho’ drinking behaviours identified in the focus groups.

One interviewee agreed that there were so-called ‘problem drinkers’; these were easily identified as they drank every day:

- *“There are also some alcoholics: the men who drink non-stop”*

The interviewee in question did not make the connection between this ‘problem drinking’ and the norm of having a beer every day and spirits at the weekend. As noted earlier, the Poles’ perceptions of what counts as ‘drinking’ can be quite restrictive.

The interviewees reinforced the focus groups perception that the absence of women was the source for a lack of inhibitions. Women, partners or girlfriends, have a moderating effect on amount of alcohol consumed by their men; although some men will conceal the amount they are drinking.

- *“There is more drinking as there is not family around; there are more men; not enough women to moderate men’s behaviour: the Polish women, the single ones who are interested [in a relationship], one can count on the fingers of one hand.”*

One interviewee suggested that problems were partly due to the size of bottles. In short, 0.5l of spirits is not for sale, and so Poles have to buy in 0.7l bottles. This is too much for three men, and so of course the Poles are likely to get too drunk. This could be a self-justification, given that all the large supermarkets do sell spirit, in some form, in 0.5l bottles; but not all Poles have easy access to the large supermarkets. Moreover, there is clearly no requirement to finish the bottle, but none of the interviewees mentioned this. As noted earlier, Poles tend to shop for alcohol for immediate consumption, not to stock up; and this extends to not leaving a half-empty bottle of spirits.

On the other hand, others seemed perfectly happy:

- *“For us we buy one [0.7l] bottle, yes - one, and we sit together and drink. We drink it in a drink, slowly. For a party we buy two bottles of 0.7; others come and add their ‘equipment’ to the fridge.”*
- *“We would drink beer during a week, and at weekends we would watch a film. Not to drink beer, only something more interesting, for a change, so one 0.7 for 3 people ... so we would sit together, sometimes watch a film, till we finished the vodka.”*

Another suggested 0.7l was the right amount for two men on a day off; another that 0.7l would keep him and two mates going for a party. In other words, most of the interviewees would see a standard bottle of spirits as fair measure for two or three men for a session.

In respect of beer one MOH mentioned two beers, sometimes four, as a normal night’s consumption for the occupants. One non-MOH suggested a similar amount

- *“If we are drinking beer we buy eight beers, me four and him four. Generally we do it this way: I buy eight one day, another one he buys eight, and we always have four [beers] each.”*

Beer also has a role in starting the house parties gently:

- *“We always start [a party] with beer.”*

Particular problem groups were defined. Because the early groups of Poles arrived in groups brought by the agencies, there was an opportunity for a negative group dynamic to occur. In particular, one group was notorious for drinking and bad behaviour; the Poles are aware that this might be the source of their reputation. However, they also agree that there are always going to be problem cases in each batch.

A second problematic group is the seasonal workers. These are seen as having little long-term attachment to the area (although many will be repeat workers), and so are more likely to drink heavily, to drink in antisocial ways, and to observe local customs.

7.5 Why do they drink?

The focus groups found that

- Poles drank for a variety of reasons
- Some were positive, associated with having fun and celebrating
- Many were negative, associated with loneliness, hard work, isolation and boredom

Interviewees reinforced the reasons with more personal detail, but generally reinforced the negative aspects of drinking:

- *“[Poles] feel alienated here. They can't watch TV, they can't go to the cinema. They are not necessarily interested in reading, so they meet up after work and drink. It's their way for relaxation. To some extent I sympathise with them; they don't have many interesting things to do [here].”*
- *“There is, you know, speaking of truth, nothing else to do ... Here the drinking is based simply on consuming alcohols in big amounts. It's not, you know, meeting up. I'm talking about the group of people I have met. {it is not} meeting up at supper, having a meal, a conversation ... It is mainly based on consumption of alcohol ... The one will drink, whether he will be away from a family, or he will be with his family, whether or not it's OK at work; I think, as they say, any reason is good [to drink] ... Out of boredom, there is nothing else on offer to spend one's time on.”*
- *“They say they drink out of boredom. When they meet up, they play Playstation, because they are young people ... so they won't play, as they say 'with a dry gob'. It starts with a beer, later ... the loser goes, say [to the shops to buy more alcohol].”*
- *“Without occasion: time off, out of boredom, a birthday. Any reason is good to drink.”*
- *“I usually finish work [at the weekend] at 5pm, I come home, and boredom: there is nothing to do, silence, some TV programme on ... And what to do? Saturday, and boredom, so how can one fill in the time, when really there is nothing to do.”*

The interviewees also explained about the dynamics of spontaneous house parties:

- *“It looks like this: me and my house mate are back from work, I sit down in front of my computer, he in front of his, or we watch TV, we drink a beer, 2, 3 beers, 4, and there is nothing to do. It is horrible boring in this country. We call for neighbours, and someone else ... We call them and they come to us. There is simply space in our place. They are living in smaller houses, often with complete strangers, so it's awkward.”*

7.6 Who do they drink with?

The focus groups found that the current group of Poles

- Drink with family and friends, often in groups
- Drink occasionally with the Welsh in one-to-one situations

Interviews confirmed that Poles and the Welsh mingle but do not mix. One interviewee suggested the Poles were embarrassed by not being able to speak English; and if approached by a local in a pub were quite likely to leave the pub to avoid a conversation.

At nightclubs, the Poles sit apart, but they all mingle on the dancefloor; the younger men with some language skills may, after sufficient alcohol, try to chat up the Welsh girls. Afterwards, Welsh and Poles leave together but make their own ways home – the Poles tend to go in groups, and to walk, whereas the Welsh are more likely to take taxis. One interviewee commented that there is little conflict on these occasions, which does not quite square with the focus groups; it may be that the focus groups are reinforcing stories of Welsh-Polish fights in the past.

One might meet other Poles in a pub, but it is usually pre-arranged, or one group meeting another – not singles turning up on the off-chance, as would be the case for locals. Poles and Welsh who work together might go out for a drink.

When drinking in the evenings, neighbours might be invited in. One set of couples living next door to each other would join each other's parties a couple of times a month. They would not necessarily join in the 'beer fun', reinforcing the idea of periodic bingeing.

In MOH, visiting friends and girlfriends/boyfriends will meet in their rooms as 'private guests', as opposed to drinking in the communal area – which would be the norm if, for example, two housemates wanted to have a drink together. Once people move out, some will maintain contact with ex-housemates and continue to drink with them.

7.7 What do they drink?

The focus groups found Poles tend to drink

- Polish beer, sometimes British beer if cheap enough
- Cider when funds were low
- Polish or branded UK vodkas (sometimes whisky) when hard spirits were called for; the quality of the spirit was directly related to the importance of the drinking event
- Little wine, except amongst some women

The interview picture is slightly different, possibly because the interviewees felt less inhibited in a one-to-one setting.

First, cider may be a low status drink:

- *"We didn't like [cider], and now one has earned a bit more money [I can stop] ... The beginning is poor.. I, for example, had some money from Poland, so I didn't worry. Some didn't have [money], so one goes and looks for the cheapest one [alcohol]."*

but it is widely drunk, particularly amongst the lower earners; for example, regular employees may enjoy whisky but agency workers at the same factory are more likely to stick with cider. One neighbourhood shop was selling sufficient cider to offer a 6-for-5 discount to its regular customers. Cider was mentioned as a drink for days off, especially amongst MOH residents.

Second, the preference for Polish beer is less marked in the interviews. One interviewee suggested that there are no 'national preferences' only personal ones. This was reinforced by others:

- *"If somebody drank cheap wine in Poland, here they will drink cheaply too."*

- *“I, for example, have already integrated with this community and I start with a beer and land up on the top shelf. I mean, I used to drink only lager -simply in Poland we have ... 30 brands but only lager. And here there are also bitter, cider ... When I came here, for 2 years I drunk only lager, and now I can't touch lager at all, and drink only either bitter, or Guinness.”*

One was drinking cans of Carling; another came to the UK drinking Polish beers and now drinks Stella and Carlsberg Export.

Third, there was evidence to support occasional wine use:

- *“Some don't drink alcohol at all, and some like ... some good wine with a dinner, or we'll make a drink after supper.”*

Finally, some of the interviewees admitted to mixing spirits with soft drinks: vodka and Red Bull or coke was mentioned without the disdain shown in the focus groups. However, old habits die hard:

- *“If I'm with the Welsh I don't drink vodka ... I don't like drinking vodka with some additions. When I drink vodka, it is in a shot and the way we drink it ... [in a pub] if I take and start drinking shots ... I'll get drunk very quickly, and [the Welsh] will be sipping a drink for a half an hour ... or for 3 hours, and I'll have 20 shots in this time.”*

7.8 Where does the alcohol come from?

The focus groups reported that Poles

- Buy from the big supermarkets on the basis of price, and corner shops on convenience
- Buy alcohol to drink: they don't stockpiling or do a 'big shop' for alcohol

Several interviewees confirmed the importance of the convenience store:

- *“Sometimes we take the easiest option – the closest shop, because we can't be bothered, really sometimes one can't be bothered, especially when it's raining.”*

Polish shops in all three sites were interviewed as part of the project. They threw some light onto buying habits:

- *“[beer sale] is not so big comparing to other products [sales]. If someone wants to drink lots of alcohol, to feel the effects, they will not come to us. He'll buy the cheapest beer in a supermarket, in a pack, and this way he'll spend much less. Or, he'll buy a strong alcohol, some vodka, or something and that's it. Those who come to us are those who want to have a Polish beer, because of its taste, not because they want to get drunk ... 4 beers is not such a big amount. It happens often. But one coming and buying the whole pack [24 beers], no.”*
- *“[Beer sale varies] but obviously we sell more at weekends because people do bigger shopping ... But generally it will be Saturday, as anywhere else ... In some companies they have their pay day every fortnight, and it is noticeable. The differences are not that big, but they are visible.”*

In other words, Polish buying is constrained by income; but also by a wish to only buy alcohol when they need it rather than in advance.

Poles will target the supermarkets in the evenings to pick up remaindered food; this is also a convenient time to pick up the evening's alcohol. For the heavier drinkers, beer from supermarkets tends to be bought in four- and eight-packs.

7.9 What trouble do Poles get into?

According to the focus groups, Poles

- Will fight freely, if not regularly, usually amongst themselves
- May be more boisterous than the Welsh after drinking
- May have difficulties making themselves understood to the locals and to the police
- Are concerned to make sure their work is not affected
- May drink and drive but generally it's just the 'morning after' effect
- Are concerned that the police do not understand them and are unduly harsh

One interviewee noted that public order offences are partly down to the naivety of the Polish.

- *“The Welsh, if they drink, they hide themselves in pubs: he gets drunk, takes a taxi and goes home, and one can't see it. The Polish drunk: he's sitting at 10am, they're are sitting on a bench in the centre of the town with a beer in hand at 10am, shouting in Polish, so it's obvious. Two Poles are walking drunk from a kerb to kerb, so one can see them. It's noticeable with the Poles, one can see it instantly, that a Pole is walking drunk. The Welsh man when drunk takes a taxi and goes home, or sits in a pub.”*

In terms of integration with the Welsh, problems do occur:

- *“There are lots of situations like this, for example, we're walking back from a disco and what we hear is: 'something Poles! Poles! Poles!'. There are lots of situations like this.”*

One interviewee cited a case of discrimination against Poles: one went to the supermarket for his third round of beer in an evening and presented his ID:

- *“They didn't sell him the beer, of course earlier [the same day] he bought it twice without a problem. Third time round when he want to buy beer he showed his Polish ID card, and it's why they didn't sell him the beer ... It turned out that if it had been a British ID they would have sold him the alcohol.”*

Of course, it could also be the case that the man was too drunk for the shop to sell him any further alcohol, but the interpretation of the Poles involved is important.

On drink-driving, there was some support for the focus group view:

- *“We'll have this drink together, of course apart from those who are driving, because I have to say that the Poles who drive here they don't drink alcohol. They are awfully scared of the British police ... It was definitely different in Poland, but here, on the Islands, they don't dare to get into a car, behind the wheel, after drinking alcohol. They prefer to call a taxi, go by bus, with a friend, with their acquaintances. No, they won't get into a car.”*

However:

- *“Completely drunk we drove to [town] to 'conquer' the local clubs ... six of us in five-person car ... completely drunk ... and we returned even more drunk in the same car, and we'd left behind one of the guys.”*

This interviewee was unfazed by drink-driving:

- *“We do, the majority don't. For example for [friend's name] it's impossible to have a beer and drive; for me it's completely natural.”*

He described evenings drinking after work: multiple trips would be made to the supermarket in an evening to restock – presumably with a drunk (and sometimes unlicensed) driver at the wheel. This could happen two or three times a week.

This interviewee could be unrepresentative (and may also be boasting without substance), but he might also just be unusually honest. Before this project started the stereotypical view of Poles was that drinking and driving was one of the main problems – a fact with some support from the crime figures. Throughout the interviews and focus groups, Poles have played down this possibility – drink-driving arrests are, at worst, unfortunate ‘morning after’ accidents. This interviewee conformed remarkably closely to the stereotype.

Note also that the Pole refused service in the supermarket (above), presumably had also been drinking, if he was on his third visit of the evening. If so, this is further evidence that the Poles do not view these short trips as drink-driving.

One final point on drink-driving. It is noticeable that the strongest denials of drink-driving came from Llanybydder. This may be because in Carmarthen and Llanelli Poles do not have to drive for nightclubs, and so is not an issue. It may also be because the Poles in Llanybydder are well aware of the reputation they have for drinking and driving, justified or not.

The interviewees agreed that Poles do turn up for work being ‘yesterday ones’ (ie not yet fully sober from the previous day’s drinking), but thought that this was a rare occurrence – except on the days after festivals. The Poles thought this was a problem for the Welsh as well – but the Poles have a lot more festivals.

One interviewee confirmed that Poles prefer to sort out problem for themselves. During a fight between Poles there was a minor injury:

- *“He went to a doctor. There was no point to go to the police, things happen, don't they?”*

Poles can bring problems on themselves: some can take a confrontational attitude once disputes with the Welsh start, especially if they read something as a racial slur.

Finally, the focus groups did suggest that Pole-on-Pole fighting was largely in the heat of the moment and fuelled by alcohol. However, some of the interviewees gave examples of more sustained cases of violence and intimidation, often at work, among groups of Poles. As these are not directly related to alcohol consumption, these were not followed up.

8 Interviews with Poles on drugs

8.1 Introduction

This section describes the results of 18 interviews with Poles who either took drugs themselves or who had some inside knowledge of the Polish drug scene in Carmarthenshire (including service providers, charities etc). Interviews took place in Carmarthen, Llanelli and Llanybydder. Some of the interviewees were re-interviewed following analysis of their comments.

Some of the interviewees talked about the drugs scene in different areas; some of the comments refer to behaviour of Poles outside Carmarthenshire, for example in Swansea, and indicated that there were similar experiences of drug use outside the county.

To put interviewees at ease, it was explained that the purpose of the interview was to identify group rather than individual behaviour. When the interviewees could not comment on group behaviour, they were asked to talk from their own experience. However many were happy to use their own experience as exemplars for the group. Hence comments below relate to both subgroup behaviour and individual experience.

Each interview lasted around an hour and generated some 15-20 pages of transcribed comments. When translated and summarised, the interviews produced some 20,000 words on drugs use in Carmarthenshire. This section is a summary of those findings, partly to protect confidentiality but mainly because much of any interview is a repetition of comments presented by other interviewees.

The interviewees presented a generally consistent view of Polish drug use in Carmarthenshire. This does not mean that drug use is uniform. Drug-using Poles seem to exist in well-defined subgroups. There are differences in practice between subgroups, even in the same area; but there is also much agreement and the comments below are generally supported by multiple comments from different sources.

The only area where there are irreconcilable comments are the prevalence of drug use. It must be remembered that these interviewees are mostly active drug users, and so their perception about what is 'normal' or how 'most' Poles behave is likely to be coloured by their own experience. There is also likely to be a need to justify one's own illegal actions by normalising them. Hence, statements about what 'everyone' does should be read with caution.

No chaotic drug users were interviewed; however, there was some confusion over terms. For example, one interviewee had to be re-interviewed twice because the answers given were either internally inconsistent, contradicted other evidence, or were inconsistent with known practice; the difficulty arose because the interviewee was not a user but came into contact with users regularly. Three interviewees refused to be interviewed directly by the principal researcher. Instead, trusted intermediaries were used to ask questions and transcribe the responses. So, although the results as presented below have been reviewed for accuracy as far as possible, it is possible that misinterpretations by the interviewer or interviewee still exist.

8.2 Who uses which drugs

Estimates of drug use vary considerably:

Table 8.1 Poles' estimates of drug use

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 80% of Poles | 30% of all Poles |
| 80% of Poles (and 80% of Welsh) | 10% of co-workers |
| 70% of Poles | 10% of Poles (amphetamines) |
| 10 out of 15 Polish friends | 15% of Poles (cannabis) |
| 50% of Poles under 35 | 10% of Poles (all drugs) |
| 50% of Poles | 2% of families |
| 35% of Poles (all drugs), of which 2/3 take other drugs, of which 1/2 will be problematic | 2% of Poles (cocaine) |

One way to reconcile this might be that some interviewees are talking about prevalence in their circle of friends/workmates, whereas others are describing the whole population.

A second reason is that those interviewed were mostly taking drugs. They will be projecting the norms of their subculture onto the wider population, and their estimates may reflect this.

There is also the question of what counts as a drug-taking:

- *"10% of [a group] will smoke marijuana, mainly young Poles up to 35; one third of them will be regular smokers [i.e. 3%]"*
- *"I know two people who hate [smoking marijuana] and never would try to do so, and even don't want to talk about it. Anybody else probably smokes one from time to time."*

There is agreement that

- Poles smoke socially ie with other Poles
- Drug-taking extends across the age range but is concentrated amongst the under-35s
- Cannabis is the most widely-used, and its age group is widest
- During the week, cannabis is smoked; at weekends and parties, other drugs may be used as well
- Drug-taking increases on weekends and days off
- Drugs are sourced from the Welsh
- Drug users are more likely to be males
- Female drug users are more likely to be in their early 20s
- Drug taking in family groups with young children is rare

Cannabis is by far the most popular drug, taken in a wide variety of situations. 'Party drugs' (amphetamines, ecstasy) are in circulation but less common; poppers are taken by young girls at discos. Cocaine is available but less common because of the expense. In Carmarthen, there are suggestions that Poles take Valium and magic mushrooms (often smoked in a 'mushroom' joint). There is no record of crack use and only one reference to a Polish heroin user, subsequently withdrawn (it may have been a mistaken reference to a non-Polish heroin user).

Most respondents believed that a drug habit is imported from Poland – most users experiment with drugs back home or in other countries. This may make sense as the language barrier would militate against developing an illegal habit in the UK, but one observer not directly involved in the drugs scene reported that most users actually picked up the habit in the UK. There are also reports of smokers actively encouraging their non-smoking housemates or friends to join them. Welsh dealers are also reported as trying to expand the range of substance bought by their clients.

There are reports of problematic users or addicts but these are not widely substantiated. There were suggestions that problems users don't last long in the UK and return to Poland.

Geography is important. The smaller the town, the more likely it is that cannabis will be the only drug available, if any. The bigger the community, the more likely it is that Poles will

become involved with other groups of cannabis smokers. Where Poles need to travel long distances to work, there is less likelihood of meeting up for a joint after work. Finally, if there are also long distances to travel to meet other Poles, the prospect of meeting up for long smoking sessions is reduced. As it also tends to be the families who spread out, coffee is most likely to be on offer when these Poles go visiting.

- *“[In Carmarthen] meeting up with friends is about having a cup of coffee, having a chat, or watching TV together, exchange of one's experience, or exchange of information where one can buy something cheaper ... One lives here, another one somewhere there, so if it's too far, I'll not go there, and one needs to get up earlier to get to work with a friend or an acquaintance. One has a different life style in Carmarthen. [In Llanybydder] you leave the gate... You pass by the security, one goes outside and it's like: 'So what guys? To Spar? - Of course!'... Those who have their families there, or they are [older] so they think a bit differently, so they go home to cook dinner, and so on.”*

Hence, Carmarthen is sometimes cited as having lower drug use because of the twin effects of a more dispersed community and a relatively high number of families. Those who did smoke in Carmarthen saw this as a 'lifestyle' model, and they socialised and supported each other, for example in buying supplies.

Use of cannabis seems widespread across all groups, but some professions (builders, hospitality staff) are seen as more likely to smoke. The Poles believe that the unemployed don't smoke – they don't have the money.

Finally, some users claimed that Poles of all ages smoke together, and that this distinguishes them from the Welsh. However, others argue that they only smoke within their age group; for example, that older Poles smoke in the privacy of their homes, while younger Poles are more likely to smoke in gardens, parks and discos. This may be evidence of sub-communities developing, with their own rules. One thing that is agreed is that Poles rarely discuss drugs outside a relatively small and safe social circle. When talking about their own drugs history, they will prefer to refer to working in other countries rather than discuss experience in the UK. This was seen in the focus groups, where there was a strong reluctance to acknowledge drug use in the community.

8.3 Work, leisure and drug use patterns

The Poles in Carmarthenshire are very focused on work, and avoid situations that might risk it. Cannabis may be taken throughout the week but not in such a way as to jeopardise work:

- *“There is a difference, they will restrain themselves a little bit knowing they have to go to work: they won't smoke so much, and they won't maybe drink so much... If they have 2 days off, then they 'ida na calosc' ('go wild') ... it will be immediately a party “*
- *“[Taking alcohol or drugs at work?] No, none, as for alcohol they may; as for marijuana, I haven't come across anybody specially going out during a break, before work, or after, absolutely not.”*

However, the latter interviewee also noted that this behaviour is not universal:

- *“It depends what they have come here for. You know, the one who has come here to earn money, he will not allow himself for any messing up, smoking marijuana or drinking alcohol, he is focused on work. There is a group of people who have come [for no specific purpose]. There is work, they don't have to send money home, they live here day in day out.”*

Although the interviewee thinks this latter group is small, it nevertheless is identified by several of the respondents in different occupations, where it is seen as the Poles copying the behaviour of the Welsh:

- *“[An employee] smokes 2-3 joints...and returns to work...Those who smoke regular cigarettes [stand in the middle of the group], and those who are smoking hash they all are standing on the edge, on one side, for no one to smell what they are smoking.”*

Where Poles and Welsh do smoke together, this was identified as having a positive bonding effect. Overall, the feeling is that a small number of Poles would smoke at work, although fewer than the Welsh and with more care – the cost of losing work is much higher.

Even if Poles do not generally smoke at work, it can be a convenient place to order drugs:

- *“In my workplace, if I only wanted [cannabis], I know that I tell 2-3 people, and probably I will have it before leaving [for] home”*

although others dispute that delivery takes place at the work place.

There is a different story for amphetamines. Amphetamine use is much easier to conceal than smoking cannabis:

- *“Even in a firm, at work, because nobody checks it, and he's dependent on it ... It won't be found out. There are two things one can tell that one ... has taken amphetamine: one has 'metne' [dull] eyes ... and if one cuts his hand, one can't stop the bleeding... [On taking the drug] No one can see this because he's got a small plastic bag on him, he dips a roll from a cigarette or similar, tears off the filter, snorts, and that's it!”*

Taking can be concealed as stomach pills:

- *“A supervisor doesn't know what he's taking. And he's taking a 'dopalacz' ['after-burner']”*

And is generally seen as widespread amongst both Poles and Welsh

- *“[Who takes amphetamines?] All! There is no ampha, there is no work.”*

The use of amphetamines in certain work environments has been relatively common in Polish industries, and some of that may transfer here. There are reports of Poles using amphetamines at work; industries particularly cited are butchery, construction and maintenance, and hospitality. However, some Poles cite the use of untrained labour in difficult conditions for creating a dependence upon stimulants. For example, a trained butcher will, in the high season, be making 18,000 cuts with a knife every day. Fresh recruits from the 'Playstation generation' may have severe problems with their arms after a fortnight, and some may turn to amphetamines to keep going.

- *“It is not problem with work, but a problem with hard work, and a body can't cope”*

Those taking amphetamines for work may take them before, during and after work. Ecstasy may also be consumed, and there was one report of cocaine being taken.

Reports of stimulants taken at work need to be interpreted with care. Most of the above quotes come from one source; another interviewee suggested that only 10% of Poles took amphetamines, and this was before work; a third thought that there was some amphetamine use at work, but that the interviewee personally did not see any on a daily basis.

Moving beyond habitual use, it was noted several times that stimulants may be used on an occasional basis to ward off the effects of a hangover. Again, the importance of work to the Poles is relevant here: the relatively low likelihood of being checked for drug use is outweighed by the need to show up for work, fit and alert.

Outside of work, it has been noted that cannabis is often taken in the evenings. This 'cigarette fun' complements the 'beer fun' mentioned by the focus groups. This may be sporadic

- *“The same person will talk that he met up with friends, they had beer, had a joint. And in a week time or two or in three weeks, a joint will not be mentioned, because it hadn't been smoked”*

However, most interviewees seemed to think that smoking was a fairly regular occurrence:

- *“It depends on finances, I think, that 3 times a week, for sure, they smoke 2 joints.”*

And the most-often quoted comment was that smokers might take 1-2 joints a night after work.

Drug-taking is dominated by finances as well as work. In Poland wages are typically paid monthly, which makes for difficulties in managing funds. In the UK, in contrast, weekly payments allows for regular fixes:

- *“It is easy for one because one has his wages every week ... Today I throw away £40 or £50, next week I'll have a pay day again, pay a rent once a month, I'll be OK. It's a rule. [Next week] I'll have a cash again and I'll buy a few grams, won't I?... If you buy a 'dice' during a week, for £50, together with your mate, so it will be enough for a week to smoke up. And on Friday a pay day comes, so you know you have got money, and you don't have to pay your rent, because you pay once a month, you don't pay your bills, only once every three months. So, 'Ahh, let's spend £100 for the stuff. Ahh, we'll feel better'. They will buy a bottle [of spirit], they will spend £100 for hash, and then they are fooling around.”*

A couple of friends will buy drugs, taking in turns depending upon current finances:

- *“this time me, next time you.”*

Cocaine is particularly affected by this. Its cost makes it, generally, prohibitively expensive for regular use, but Poles will save up for a weekend fix.

8.4 Why are drugs taken?

Briefly, some of the reasons mentioned are

- as a relaxant
- to dance at parties
- to offset depressing jobs
- to while the time away
- to show off that they can
- an inherited lifestyle from Poland
- drugs are more easily available
- to get through long working day
- for stimulants, to offset the effects of alcohol at discos and parties
- to improved socialising
- to chat up girls more easily
- to put oneself in good mood

Of these, the first is most often cited as the key reason for smoking cannabis.

Younger Poles tend to treat drugs as fun substances, replacing meeting for coffee as a social lubricant. They treat smoking as a kind of entertainment, when they meet socially to go out; or they meet at a friend's, they have a joint together, have a chat and return. Drugs are used to get into the party spirit:

- *“I prefer to socialise with, to be in a company of, those who smoke [marijuana] than in a company of those who drink alcohol! ... After marijuana everyone is happy, even*

when the people who don't know each other are offensive to one another, they will be laughing at it. After alcohol even friends fight with each other."

When out partying, drugs can give the Poles the bravado to interact with the Welsh. They can also be used to show off; this is particularly true for expensive cocaine.

In contrast, the older ones have more negative reasons; work is physically demanding and demoralizing, families are left behind, and individuals are isolated:

- *"Simply because there are few attractions in this area, one simply has nothing to do. You are back from work, or during a weekend, so you stay home, have a joint, and slowly you while time away."*
- *"to leave the world behind, somewhere far away."*

Families have a wider range of interests and so are unlikely to take drugs; if they do, it will be an occasional joint once the children have gone to bed.

Stimulants are taken at parties and discos in conjunction with alcohol, to stave off the sedative effects of alcohol and allow them to party longer. They may also be used to keep people going at work.

There is an element of peer pressure, both from Poland and in Wales:

- *"In the environment they come from in Poland, they are mainly people from small villages - there are really not many people from bigger towns. Well, instead of studying I'll go to have a drink, instead of going to school, I'll have a fix - at the beginning to try [something], and later to show what I can do, and the circle completes ... Maybe not all of them tried it in Poland, but here not to stand out in a group, they will take drugs."*

Even if they started in Poland, there is a feeling that moving to the UK gives more scope for experimentation:

- *"They leave Poland, and their family, parents, and no one supervises them here. They are doing what they want ... There is no control."*

The relationship between the cost of drugs and income is complex. Drugs may be no cheaper in the UK than in Poland; for example, 4g of hash costs 120zł in Poland (£24 in the UK at current exchange rates), compared to £25 in the UK⁸. However, wages in the UK are higher, and so the opportunity to live comfortably and fund a small amount of drug use, even on a minimum wage, is much higher in the UK.

Finally, one reason cited for smoking cannabis was this it was much healthier than smoking tobacco or drinking, a reason echoed amongst the Welsh. One interviewee described a Welsh colleague who neither smoked cigarettes or drink, but who had a joint a day.

8.5 Parties, pubs and discos

8.5.1 Discos and nightclubs

Poles don't go to pubs much, but like to visit the discos and nightclubs in the larger towns at the weekend. Poles from all areas travel to Llanelli and Carmarthen, occasionally Swansea and Aberystwyth. For the Poles in Llanybydder, Lampeter counts as a large town; when travelling further afield they travel in organised groups.

As noted in earlier sections, Poles tend to go to places where alcohol is cheap. When partying, drug-taking appears to be widespread, if not necessarily common.

⁸ The Polish prices were given by a respondent. They have not been checked independently.

Poles do not seem to smoke cannabis at discos. It is deemed too risky, and so although they may have a joint before setting off, they rarely smoke at a venue:

- *"It'll be only hash, because they ... firstly can't afford 'harder drugs', and secondly, despite playing the big macho, they are scared to [take them at a disco]."*

If they do, they are as likely to share joints with the Welsh as bring their own; and they are likely to disappear 'round the corner' rather than in the smoking areas.

Amphetamines are more widely taken; at discos, they don't appear to be mixed with other drugs. The ability to secrete them easily may be why they are more popular than cannabis:

- *"[In discos] they will take amphetamine everywhere and at every moment. They have it in a pocket like you carry your lighter or a mobile. He takes out a plastic bag, goes to a toilet, usually he takes a [straw], he cuts it short and put inside to the bag, and snorts it."*

Ecstasy is mentioned several times as a disco drug. It is reported by some to be bought beforehand because it is too risky to buy at the venue. It may also be taken at home, and two respondents mentioned mixing it with marijuana.

One interviewee referred to an ecstasy-alcohol combination as popular, although as this was not mentioned by other interviewees, this may be specific for that group. It may also be possible that this particular respondent was confusing ecstasy with amphetamines. Generally, one interviewee reckoned that 3-4% of Poles were mixing drugs.

- *"They mix everything ... Say, for example, they are smoking a joint- hash. It's not enough, they go there to a dealer, buy a mushroom, they are smoking. It's not enough, they buy 'white', they buy amphetamine. So they load up amphetamine. And ecstasy tablets, they load up too. Everything! Everything to have a high, to make the world spin."*

Polish men see poppers as primarily for gay men, but they are taken by younger girls at the discos, mentioning enhanced libido as one reason. Ecstasy is taken by both sexes for the same reason.

Friends will shield others while taking a line of powders, both cocaine and amphetamines:

- *"I've often seen people taking [cocaine] at a disco, in toilets ... The Poles and the Welsh."*

Drugs are relatively easy to acquire at the big venues:

- *"Lots of drugs, lots, really. It's the only place where one can buy everything and anything what one wants"*
- *"If the police go [to the nightclub], 75% of the people there are locked up for drugs, if they take a blood sample from everybody!"*

8.5.2 Parties

Several interviewees mentioned the importance of 'parties' – gatherings in friends' houses. These are of two broad types. The first could be described as a 'nasiadowka' - a get-together to smoke a few joints, possibly watch a film or sport and have a chat. In these parties, cannabis is playing much the same role as alcohol, which may also be present.

The second type of party is much more of a general social gathering. The key feature of these events is that, amongst the drug-using community, attendees are expected to make a contribution to the drug supply.

- *“if one person buys something then the person takes what they have, for example, and shares with a person who doesn't have it. This one has got marijuana, and that one has got cocaine, so say, you know, that one will have a joint, and give this one a line.”*
- *“everyone comes with their own [drugs]; there may be a kitty for the alcohol.”*
- *“Sorry, I don't have weed, but I've got tapsy, I've got tablets, I've got ecstasy, if anyone wants.”- ‘Ok, give me one, I'll try.’”*

Partygoers may cycle through drugs, almost on a random basis. The only rule is that there is no rule – other than that partygoers should take what they have.

Sometimes party-goers will also contribute to a kitty for the drugs as well. The costs of this vary: one interviewee estimates £30 for a party contribution for a mix of drugs, another £50 for a contribution for weed only; another proposes £250 for weed for a ‘big party’ but it is not clear how this is shared out.

Joints are circulated freely, using long papers or ‘fifkas’ (glass cigarette-holders) in the Polish way, and sometimes bongos. Those unable to contribute this time will be allowed to join in in the expectation that their turn will come. The relatively low cost of cannabis allows the social conventions to be observed. If the papers run out and fifkas are not available they will smoke from empty cans.

Powders will be put on the table and snorted together; those who do not like snorting will mix powder with soft drinks.

There is an exception to the sharing rule in the case of cocaine. Because cocaine is expensive (a ‘party portion’ of cocaine may cost £100), there may be a separate kitty for cocaine. Alternatively, one may bring cocaine and ask for a contribution from others. Normally, only those who contribute get a share.

However, one interviewee included cocaine as just one of the general party drugs to be contributed by those who had it. It is interesting that this group had the lower estimate of a the cost of a ‘party contribution’; it might be that this group gets its drugs at a significantly lower price and so can afford to be magnanimous with cocaine.

Unlike Welsh parties, all alcohol will not necessarily be bought in advance; kitties will be run up on the fly, and the hosts may make several trips to the off-licence during the course of a party. Spirits are very definitely for neat drinking:

- *“I won't quote what they call those who dilute vodkas. They pour [Smirnoff] into shots, and washed it down with water, cola, Fanta, Sprite, or what one likes”*

Youngsters tend not to have food at their parties. This is a departure from Polish tradition, where food is an essential part of being a host:

- *“The vodka is washed down with, say, cola, accompanied with a drug or a regular cigarette. There isn't anything like putting food on a table, no food at all.”*

There is a wish to involve other Poles, perhaps to apply peer pressure. For example:

- *“Even they knew I was against smoking, they would knock on my door and invite me to their rooms upstairs ... saying for example: ‘come along. I've brought a good weed. Let's have a joint.’*

Smokers will often go outside to smoke, even when in the majority and in their own houses. Poles will try to maintain the pretence for other partygoers that no illicit activity is going on:

- *“The smokers will want to stay natural and simply will go out for a so-called ‘cigarette’, and will have a joint. You know, smoking marijuana is still a taboo and the person who smokes marijuana is regarded as a ‘cpun’ (‘junkie’), that such a person ‘daje*

sobie w zyle'. ('takes it in the veins') don't they? And it is not true. And there may be a situation, that a smoker, you know, winks 'are you going out for a cigarette?' and they will have a joint, prepared in advance."

One interviewee commented that the young men haven't yet got the knack of ending a party:

- *"[They drink until they] all get sick and fall over, or the host gets angry and says, 'politely', 'fuck off, I've had enough of you!'. Or they all stay up and sleep together in the same room till the next day."*

If they have a day off the following day, the party resumes:

- *"One needs to get up and drink something for a hangover. One will not necessarily smoke weed again, because from what they would say, it dehydrates one awfully. But they'll resume drinking and maybe about 10pm, when they all again fall over, they will come to their senses that there is work next day"*

At parties, mixing stimulants and alcohol is common. Some also mix cannabis and alcohol:

- *"Yes, yes, after a joint immediately one needs to drink up a beer, or so called a drink with whisky, to get a bigger 'kick'."*

But others disputed the value of this, so it might be a rule in a particular subgroup.

Most respondents thought that learning to mix substances was learnt in Poland; most of the experimenting was carried out there, although there was some learning from the Welsh.

One respondent argued that mixing drugs was an effective way of avoiding an overdose; any other health effects could be worried about later. While this is an innovative approach to drug safety, this was also the only respondent who mentioned overdoses or any adverse health effects. On the contrary, one interviewee reported talking drunk friends into testing new substances (such as magic mushrooms) before trying it themselves:

- *"They find one stupid one: 'you are smoking this today, and tell us what you are feeling like'... So they say, he's enjoying it, so we must feel good as well."*

Finally, Poles mentioned that, on the rare occasions when they do party with the Welsh, there was little difference between the two groups in their approach to drugs.

8.6 Specific drugs

8.6.1 Cannabis

Poles smoke in small groups, close circles of friends, mainly in the privacy of their own homes.

Generally, Poles call cannabis resin 'hashish' and leaf 'marijuana'. They do not seem to acknowledge them as variants of the same drug, although there is clearly substitution in smoking; and in conversation it is not clear that the distinction is being retained. Marijuana leaf is most popular, and most respondents cited it as the main drug of choice. However, one respondent claimed that hashish was the main drug in his/her area.

This may be evidence of Poles operating in quite distinct subgroups. However, it may also be because of a positive recall bias. Poles prefer leaf to resin: one interviewee claimed that the local group didn't use resin at all, and another commented

- *"I personally don't tolerate hash, simply it smells plastic and it is. I've tried once and will never try again. I prefer, if I wanted to buy, I prefer to pay 10 times more for marijuana, for the weed, than buy, even cheaply, this plastic. It's horrible!"*

Leaf is viewed as longer-lasting, more flavoursome, and with a better kick. But leaf is harder to come by: supply is more variable. Hashish travels and stores better and so is readily available across Carmarthenshire; it is also cheaper. One interviewee noted that mixing resin and leaf in a joint was relatively common - possibly trying to balance quality and value?

In summary, resin is seen as a poor alternative to leaf. It may be that Poles do smoke more resin (either on its own, or mixed with leaf), but that they report on leaf consumption; possibly they remember the leaf experiences more favourably; or possibly they don't want to admit to taking the cheapest drug. As noted in the section on drinking, Poles are a brand-conscious group. However, they will tend to buy whatever is available as choice is rarely an option.

For the rest of this section, we will refer to resin and leaf as the interviewees did; however, it should be taken into account that substances may not be distinguished in use.

Two interviewees noted that leaf is not mixed with tobacco when smoked; this is in contrast to the Welsh who like to hide the cannabis smell in tobacco smoke. However another claimed that this may be the preferred way but in practice cannabis and tobacco leaves are mixed as the latter does not burn well on its own; and this also concentrates the flavour. Where tobacco is used, Polish tobacco is preferred; rolling tobacco in the UK is seen as too sweet and moist.

All did agree that Poles prefer to smoke longer, slower joints and, at least at parties, would often use a 'fifka' to improve the experience. There are reports that the Poles have introduced Welsh colleagues to the fifka, and how to extract the most benefit through 'opalanie fifki' ('singeing the fifka'):

- *"after smoking say about 5-6 grammes fifka is all covered in smoke. One takes a lighter, keeps the lighter in one's fingers and turns the fifka [over the flame] and the smoke comes out"*

If a fifka was not available, then Poles would just use papers, but they achieve some of the same effect by using longer papers than the Welsh. Rolling paper bought in Poland, longer than the usual Rizla, was the preferred transport as being less fuss – the Welsh are seen to smoke more, but weaker joints.

One interviewee suggested that hashish was often smoked with magic mushrooms, the whole combination being known as a 'mushroom'. This was not corroborated by any other interviewee, and again may be the practice of a particular subgroup.

In contrast to drinking and dancing, a strict generational segregation may be occurring. One interviewee was surprised that the Welsh took drugs (and mixed) in their fifties and beyond:

- *"For me it's strange, people in this age [smoking]...I'd associate [smoking marijuana] with, from my experience, the age group of 16-25."*

While all agreed that Polish drug-taking is concentrated amongst the under-35s, there was relatively little discussion of the involvement of different generations. An implication of the 'house-party' approach to living in rented accommodation is that all generations mix together; however, this may be a misconception. It may be that only the same age groups mix for purely smoking events.

This may be related to the different approach to drugs noted earlier. The young seem more likely to take drugs in a positive way, to have fun. The older generation may be taking drugs to avoid negative feelings such as loneliness and pain. However, on the information in these interviews, it is not possible to come to any conclusions.

In terms of usage, the association with 'relaxing after work' tends to imply short regular fixes. One user, implying a 'typical' usage, claimed to take one or two joints after work but not more; 1-1.5 'bags' (of unknown size) a week. At the weekend the interviewee would take more. However, another user claimed to take up to ten joints in an evening; usage was only limited

by the interviewee's current supply. On the limited interview sample, and allowing for both boastfulness and caution, it is difficult to say what normal consumption amounts to for regular users; the only common factor is that all interviewees saw the 'evening come-down' as a key factor in smoking.

Note that one interviewee argued that cannabis usage was a way to spice up tobacco smoking – without the latter, the interviewee thought he wouldn't use cannabis.

When smoking amongst friends or at parties, a 'bong' (water pipe) may be used. This is relatively common in Poland, where specialist equipment can be bought legally. In the absence of dedicated equipment, the Poles are practised and inventive improvisers – home-made bongs from plastic bottles are common, but interviewees also mention making setups from light bulbs and an apple, although it was not explained exactly how the latter was used.

Bongs seem less popular than in Poland. This may be due to the uncomfortable associations. Bongs are seen as an efficient way of distributing joints at parties. In the UK, however, joints are relatively more affordable; a bong might therefore indicate that the host is less affluent than his or her co-smokers. One interviewee denied that bongs were used amongst his/her compatriots. On the other hand, other groups seemed to consider them a standard part of smoking equipment. Again, the sense that Poles are operating in distinct sub-groups is strong – in this case, income may be a dividing factor.

Finally, Poles will often smoke outside, even in their own homes. When on their own, smokers will often smoke indoors by through an open window. It seems that this is to disperse the smoke, avoiding the house smelling of cannabis; this is important as most Poles live in rented accommodation.

8.6.2 Amphetamines

Amphetamines are sold in both tablet and powder form in Carmarthenshire. It is seen as a young person's drug, with 5%-10% of Poles (15% of drug takers according to one source) using it. Polish amphetamine is seen of a better quality – Poland is a major European producer, and might be the source; if so, it is usually brought in via land transport. A habit for amphetamines is thought to be largely Polish in origin:

- *"If someone did take amphetamine in Poland, likes taking amphetamine, when he comes here, he will meet his dealer, won't he? He will ask for amphetamine, whether the dealer can organise it for him and so on. He will try to get hold of it."*

Three interviewees mentioned amphetamines in tablets. However, powder is mentioned more often, particularly in the context of surreptitious use of variable amounts. It can be mixed with soft drinks at the nightclub; it can be held in a bag and dabbed on the finger and the tongue at work and at the disco; it can be snorted through anything available:

- *"They take [amphetamines] at discos even when they are standing. They make a roll out of a piece of paper, only to be on a high. He needs to take a line as they say to one another, because alcohol is not enough."*

Some interviewees also mentioned taking amphetamines in public places such as parks.

At home, snorting through a glass pipe is seen to give a better fix. One person commented that Poles might inject amphetamines, but it was not entirely clear the source was talking about only amphetamines. As the only other person to mention injecting denied strongly that it took place, it seems likely that injecting amphetamines is rare or non-existent amongst the Polish community.

Overall, part of the appeal of amphetamine is the ease of consumption.

Amphetamines are seen as more common than cocaine on evenings out, possibly because of high prices - although one interviewee noted that even the relatively low cost was a problem for low-earning Poles:

- *“From time to time they will take amphetamine, but very rarely. They can’t afford it.”*

The extent of mixing amphetamines with other drugs is disputed, although at least one person mentioned mixing amphetamines with cannabis in a joint. As with cannabis, this may reflect different subgroups; however, for amphetamines the subgroup argument may be less compelling as the drugs are often taken in nightclubs and discos where Poles from various areas are likely to mix. In this case, differences in usage may just reflect personal preference – and differences in income.

8.6.3 Cocaine

Cocaine is too expensive for most Poles. Compared to other drugs, consumption is much more strongly tied to paydays. Estimates put users at less than 5%, seen as a much lower level than Welsh usage; and use is concentrated amongst those in their twenties. For the young, part of its appeal may be its reputation for improving libido and removing inhibitions.

Surprisingly, cocaine is thought to be more popular in Poland, where up to 40% of smokers may take it occasionally. Given that the zloty price is similar to UK prices, the relative price there is much higher – users can spend up to a third of monthly wages in an evening. Cocaine is recognised as a high dependency drug and it is claimed that Polish habits are transferred to the UK – although this does not square with the 5% estimated use.

The cost of cocaine may contribute to its appeal - it is seen as a status symbol. The high cost may allow those who can afford it to distribute favours: cocaine is not normally shared out at mixing parties except between those who have contributed to the cost, but granting a share to outsiders can demonstrate power or influence.

Although cocaine may not be shared, taking it in groups seems to be important – only one interviewee mentioned taking cocaine on their own, and the reason given was that the interviewee was going through a particularly bad patch. This again may be related to the cost and the need to consume conspicuously. However, there also seems to be a need, as for cannabis, to have a trusted circle of friends sharing the same habit.

Cocaine is often smoked in a banknote - in theory because the evidence can then easily be disposed of, but possibly also as a way of flaunting wealth. It was also suggested that pressed cubes may be swallowed. There was no report of injection – quite the opposite:

- *“only addicts inject the stuff”*

Methods are imported from Poland, as are skills for mixing – knowing what is safe, and what isn’t. There did not seem to be any development of cocaine habits in the UK.

Unlike cannabis and amphetamines, cocaine was not mentioned in the context of work (with one exception, who included cocaine in a list of drugs that worker might take before going to work). Given the cost, the longevity of the hit, and the availability of other cheaper stimulants, it seems unlikely that the Poles in Carmarthenshire take cocaine at work.

8.6.4 Ecstasy

Ecstasy is generally seen as a party drug, and use is largely limited to going out – some mentioned taking it with alcohol to offset the effect of the drink. It is a young person’s drug, again linked to sexual activity (or the promise thereof...), and is thought to be more popular amongst women. Estimates of users vary from 1% to 5%, and most interviewees thought the habit had been picked up in Poland. One respondent highlighted that ecstasy is only taken in

mixed-gender dance parties – not in male-only groups. This may be related to its perception as a sex drug.

A Pole might take 2-4 tablets per night, but Welsh ecstasy is seen as lower quality. Tablets are often bought before going out, as it is too risky to buy it at the venue.

Poles do seem to be used as middlemen by Welsh suppliers – one possibility is that the limited language skills of many of the Poles makes them an effective firewall for the dealers. This may also be true for amphetamines where the suppliers may change frequently.

8.6.5 Other

There is no real evidence of heroin or crack use by Poles in Carmarthenshire.

Poppers may be used, by young women, and possibly young heterosexual men; but these are primarily seen as a ‘gay man’s drug’. The limited use of poppers may be reflected in the fact that there are no street names for them.

Magic mushrooms were discussed within one particular group, but no others. This may reflect conscious differentiation between subgroups, or it may simply be that one group has access to a source of supply. One other respondent had taken magic mushrooms in Poland and expressed a wish to buy them here, but knew of no contact for them.

There are reports of Valium use, but this is a new thing and only second-hand accounts were available.

Overall, there is no evidence that Poles make significant use of anything other than cannabis, amphetamines, and, to a lesser extent, ecstasy and cocaine.

8.7 Drugs on the street

8.7.1 Street names

The following names are used in Carmarthenshire:

Table 8.2 Polish street names for drugs

| <i>Drug</i> | <i>Street name</i> |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hashish | bolek (in a joint), hash, glupi jas (in a joint), kosc, plastelina kostka |
| Cannabis (leaf) | bolek (in a joint), czekolada, dragi, ganja, hash, madziona, marijuana, marycha, maryska, samara ziola, staf (corruption of ‘stuff’), trawa, zborniak, zielone, zielsko, ziolo |
| Amphetamines | amfa, biale, bialko, feta, fete, puder, speed |
| Cocaine | koka, koks, samarka, samara koksu |
| Ecstasy | dropsy, kapsy, kolka, sztaboly, tapsy, tablety |

No interviewee in any region had any other street name for poppers.

One interviewer also identified:

- Fifka (glass cigarette holder): dura, lufa, lusnia – all Polish regional names
- Joint: bolek, blunt, gibbon, lolek, skret

8.7.2 Street prices

The following street prices were quoted during the investigation as the price paid by Poles. Estimates of current street prices from DrugScope are included for comparison.

Table 8.3 Polish street prices for drugs

| | G | £ | Mean price | Median price | DrugScope |
|-------------------------|-----|-----|------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|
| Hashish | 28 | 200 | £15.50 | £18.80 | £80/28g £16/3g |
| | 3 | 25 | 3g | 3g | |
| | 9 | 30 | | | |
| | 9 | 25 | | | |
| | 7 | 20 | | | |
| | 4 | 25 | | | |
| | 3 | 20 | | | |
| Marijuana leaf | 3 | 25 | £21.90 | £25 | £70-£120/28g (implies £14-£24/3g?) |
| | 3 | 25 | 3g | 3g | |
| | 4 | 25 | | | |
| | 3.5 | 25 | | | |
| | 3 | 25 | | | |
| | 5.5 | 30 | | | |
| Cocaine | 1 | 40 | £46 | £50 | £40/g |
| | 1 | 50 | 1g | 1g | |
| | 1 | 50 | | | |
| | 1 | 40 | | | |
| | 1 | 50 | | | |
| Amphetamines | 1 | 10 | £14 | £15 | £8-£12/g £15/g (base) |
| | 1 | 15 | 1g | 1g | |
| | 2 | 20 | | | |
| | 3 | 45 | | | |
| | 1 | 15 | | | |
| Ecstasy (per tablet) | | 3 | £2.88 | £3 | £1-£5 |
| | | 2.5 | | | |
| | | 3 | | | |
| | | 3 | | | |

Drugscope prices: www.drugscope.org.uk accessed July 2009

It can be seen that prices charged to Poles are in a similar range to national prices, if at the top end – partly because they mostly buy in small batches eg 3g. However, some of the Poles report two or three people getting together to buy larger quantities - either for sharing out or for parties.

With the exception of hashish, prices are fairly consistent. However it is argued that dealers make their margin on weight rather than price. As most Polish buyers would not have the equipment to weigh small amounts of drugs, this seems plausible.

The variation in hashish prices may be because it is seen as a 'default' drug – bought when no others are available – and so buyers might be constrained in their options. However, note that Poles seem to be able to buy hashish relatively cheaply compared to national averages. This may be because Poles have limited income and so prices generally reflect the low buying power of the Poles.

For amphetamines and cocaine, where consumption is likely to be a luxury, Poles appear to be paying above average prices.

The affordability is also important. One interviewee suggested that Polish smokers would be spending about £25 per week on cannabis. This would imply making the minimum purchase once a week, which seems unlikely for a regular user, even if sharing (unless the users grew their own – there was only one unconfirmed report of this). Another interviewee suggested

£70 a week for a regular smoker; the interviewee actually spent £100-£130 per week on drugs. A third suggested a couple could get by on £50 (7g) of cannabis a week. In the previous section, a regular user stated that he/she needed 1-1.5 'bags' of cannabis for a week; assuming this equates to 3-4g per bag, this implies weekly expenditure of £35-£40.

Finally, one user claimed to spend £100 during the week and £300 at weekends; however this was a regular cocaine user. Another suggested £300 per week is necessary to feed a cocaine habit.

Note that, in these discussions, what counted as 'regular' varied between respondents. For some, it meant every day; for others, it could mean every Saturday night, for example.

Overall then, for daily cannabis users, it seems that about £40-£50 per week is a reasonable estimate of expenditure. For cocaine users it is considerably more. For amphetamine users, this is likely to be very person-specific.

8.7.3 Supply of drugs

Poles coming to the UK with an active drug habit – the bulk of drug users - will tend to actively seek out a range of suppliers upon arrival, and will continue develop their supplier links. The Polish network is important for helping them find out this information.

Opinions on the availability of drugs to Poles vary from very low to very high.

- *"It's difficult. Generally here it's very difficult to get anything... Generally in the UK...[Poles] do ask about [marijuana]. Some ask whether I know where they can get it from ... I've asked a few people I know, they weren't Poles, they were Welsh. I've asked [in various part of South Wales] and in the whole area there was nothing. And there were people who know the subject, and smoke all the time."*

Generally, it seems that the smaller the town the harder it is to source drugs, and the higher the likelihood that suppliers will be Welsh rather than Poles. In smaller places, sources of supply are closely guarded; in larger towns, sources seem to be more well-known – at least the Welsh ones.

For the regular smokers, it was mentioned that interruptions in supply may lead to bingeing sessions when supply is restored – irrespective of whether this is a working day or not.

Poles have mixed feelings about buying from other Poles. In some places Poles seem to be involved in genuinely buying in bulk for friends, distributing only amongst their own circle at no profit, and do not see this as supply:

- *"A smoker will go to a friend: 'Listen, can you organise some stuff for me?' And [the friend] will go to a Welsh man."*
- *"Those who had lived there longer in [...] they simply were organising [amphetamine] for other Poles. But it is a small percentage [of the Poles] and very rarely as there are not much of it [amphetamine] there."*

Others are seen as real dealers, although there is no real evidence of Poles supplying on a commercial scale. Poles dealers have a worse reputation than Welsh dealers for profiteering.

- *"[End user] didn't trust them and [he] will not."*
- *"They are not competent and they cheat."*

However, this may be due to the fact that the Poles are an extra link in the profit chain:

- *"It [cannabis] sometimes [goes] through several hands. Say I am a smoker, I go to a friend, say X-inski, this X-inski goes to somebody else, say a Welsh man, and this Welsh man goes then to his dealer."*

It seems likely that Poles buy from Polish dealers because of language difficulties (possibly also because they have limited contact with the Welsh). They put little faith in the dealers, but prices do seem to be fairly constant across the chain. The implication is that profits are being made by skimming off quantities. Polish end-users tend to buy in small quantities and so are unlikely to be able to measure accurately these low weights.

For cocaine, the decision to buy from the Welsh is a positive one – they are seen as having higher-quality stock.

Poles will buy from other nationalities as well. An antipathy between nations was not seen as a barrier to acquiring drugs.

As noted above, the prices Poles quote are not too far from UK prices. Poles have little market power, and so, again, a natural inference is that quantities may be providing the profit for dealers.

For major supply operations, routines are well-organised. ‘Powders’ (amphetamines and ecstasy) are brought back from Poland, for personal use and sharing with one’s circle. Cannabis resin is imported vacuum packed and hidden in smelly substances. Little cannabis leaf is imported in this way – the flavour deteriorates quickly. Poles were of the impression that a noticeable quantity was locally grown.

- *“..hash can be transported from any country ... Weed is difficult to smuggle, that's why it's difficult to get it [locally]. Because weed is not in a cube, it isn't pressed. You can't vacuum-pack it because you'll lose what's the best in it.”*

The supply pattern has an effect on usage: difficulties in smuggling leaf means that Poles tend to buy it when it’s offered.

- *“If they can't get hold of marijuana [leaf] they smoke hash because hash is always available.”*

Finally, some interviewees suggested that drugs were easier to acquire in multi-occupancy housing, where contacts could be made more easily.

8.8 The drug-taking environment

8.8.1 Legal awareness

Interviewees seemed know which drugs are illegal, but beyond that their knowledge is limited.

- *“I think, [the Poles] don't have an access to [the info on the drugs law], or they don't know where to look for the access to the info.”*

One Pole expressed an active wish to avoid knowing the law, and would prefer finding out what’s being risked in court. One interviewee reported that colleagues who smoked had said that smoking cannabis was legal in the UK.

Making information available does not seem relevant – the main concern of Poles is to not be caught. In particular, concern over employment is paramount. This concern may be or may not be real. One interviewee reported employers who had fired staff who were taking drugs at work or who arrived stoned or high; but the same interviewee also knew of employees being offered second chances. The interviewee also reported that both types of decision were taken without reference to the police; the matter was seen as an employer/employee affair. Note that in both cases, the employees were Welsh; Poles would not infer that they would be treated the same.

One interviewee noted that illegality adds a frisson of excitement:

- *“Yes, [marijuana] is popular everywhere... and I think that it only because it is illegal, and simply people are attracted to something that is not fully legal.”*

This may be one of the attractions for the young taking drugs for fun, although it may not be appropriate for the older Poles who seem to take drugs for more negative reasons. Generally, however, cannabis (if not other drugs) is seen as a relatively harmless vice, possibly even preferable to legal drugs:

- *“I think, it would be much easier if [smoking marijuana] was legal, because, after it, simply, people are laughing, people have fun, and don't become aggressive like after alcohol ... The majority of the people think it should be legal ... One guy on the radio said that he preferred to see someone after a joint ... looking for food rather than people who are looking for trouble after alcohol, looking for problems.”*

One interviewee also mentioned ignorance of the rules on patient confidentiality. As a result, one Pole who was taken to A&E refused to tell the nursing staff about his drugs consumed, despite the fact that this could have seriously jeopardised his treatment.

8.8.2 The Poles in Britain

Generally, the Poles are comfortable in the UK. They are relatively better off, and if taking drugs, they can afford it.

- *“For one who has tried this kind of life [as a work migrant], it is difficult to return to the Polish reality. I'm not taking about drugs and so on. Generally speaking, even if it is hard work here, the life is much more easier ... Working here literally as a 'parobek' [‘basic labourer’], I can afford more than having my own business in Poland ... even now when I'm working 3 days a week.”*

Few interviewees mentioned problematic drugs users. Some were highlighted who had brought their drugs problems over from Poland, and still could not cope in the UK. There was also some suggestion that the new experience of working abroad may generate problems. This was particularly difficult for groups coming over in the early years:

- *“Colleagues who worked with me, decent chaps, family and children in Poland, average men, they came here, and a mate says: ‘Have a try.’ And in a week's time he spends half of his wages, then spends all his wages, and then he sells a TV set from a room because he needs to smoke ... within 6 months some 15 men ‘wylamalo sie’ [dropped out] ... They had no money left. A wife was calling [from Poland] she needed money for the children, and he didn't have money to buy any bread because he had spent all on amphetamine.”*

The same interviewee estimated that one in seven of the Poles taking drugs were ‘problematic’; that is, they are more likely to turn violent if money runs out. Borrowing between Poles can take place, but the limited incomes means this can run away quickly:

- *‘They do not have a chance, they'll have to borrow the money, from a debt to a debt ... There is a telephone call: ‘I need to borrow a hundred. I'll pay you back next week.’ The next week: ‘I need to borrow a fifty’. Then: ‘I'm short of money. I'll pay you back next week’. And then another fifty, and it mounts up to £500, and there's no one to pay you back...’*

...for example, because the borrower absconds to Poland – or maybe just to other towns in the UK. As a result of stories like this, Poles may be more wary about lending to others than they might have been.

Overall, however, the Poles currently in Carmarthenshire view the situation in the UK as much more favourable than that of Poland (or the other countries that they have passed through).

8.9 Drugs and children

There are reports of secondary schoolchildren drinking alcohol and smoking marijuana, mostly supplied by older Welsh children, or by young Polish and Welsh adults. These groups appear to be easily identified within the Polish school child community – there is an element of bravado in taking drugs, in spite of (or perhaps because of) lessons in substance abuse. It was reported that knowledge of the smoking and drinking was restricted to the Polish community; however, it was also reported that smoking (tobacco or marijuana) was widespread in school. In other words, it is not clear whether Polish children at school are picking up habits from Welsh children, or whether they are forming distinct subcommunities.

As substance misuse by children is outside the remit of the report, these issues were not pursued further.

9 Poles, criminal justice and support services

The responses in this section are taken from the interviews with CJS staff and service providers, including beat police, arrest referral workers (ARWs), custody officers, translators, and various support services in the area. The responses from the last section are taken from 10 interviews with Polish offenders.

9.1 Poles and crime

The main areas where Poles are likely to fall foul of the law are car crime, fighting, theft and general drunkenness – but not necessarily in that order. In terms of relative importance, interviewees had a variety of perspectives:

- Drink-driving, then stealing, then drunk and disorderly
- Violence, then drunkenness, then drink-driving, then public order; for males only. For women, stealing was the only offence.
- Polish women do not appear to fight, although they do steal.
- Not having a car insurance, or MOT; drink driving; assaults, public order; domestic violence
- Shoplifting, domestic violence and car crime (car crime used to be top)

The Polish Centre in Llanelli gave an estimated breakdown on the proportion of clients:

Table 9.1 Crimes reported by Polish Centre clients

| Problem | Cases per year |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Domestic violence against women | 5-10 |
| Other violence at home | 30-35 |
| Fighting in public | 60-70 |
| | |
| Drink-driving | 40-50 |
| Driving whilst banned | 10-20 |
| | |
| Alcohol at work | 10-15 |

While these figures are only for those who present themselves to the Polish Centre, they compare with the problems identified by others.

What is agreed is that the relative importance of the different crimes has changed – and it might be about to change again:

- *“I wouldn’t say drink driving any longer, I would certainly say a few years ago that was a very common offence that Poles would fall foul of. Generally if alcohol related, no, it’s sort of minor public order, drinking disorderly, disorderly conduct, maybe minor assaults; but that is what a lot of local people fall foul of as well.”*
- *“...wasn’t always like that but just late recently, say the past six months seems like ... it’s shoplifting or domestic assault between a partner; now there is problems, there is anger, stress related to economic difficulties ... often the guy says, you know, I lost my job or it’s hard to get work and I am battling against alcoholism. “*

Moreover, there is an awareness that the Poles are not necessarily that different:

- *“I have had experiences of Polish drink-drivers, but again not proportionally higher than anybody else.”*
- *“[The police] speak quite well of the Polish because often it’s just – I have heard they said that it’s the locals ... that are causing far more problems than the Polish and generally the Polish sort of keep themselves to themselves, they sort of stay at home*

and drink Vodka, they don't really cause much trouble. It's the local people that cause more trouble and the police sort of - they often say, you know, all they are hard workers, which they are, they have got pretty good opinion of Polish people as hardworking people that don't really cause too much trouble."

9.1.1 Car crime

Drinking and driving is regularly identified as one of the main offences committed by Poles. It seems to occur mainly at two times during drinking sessions: when changing the drinking venue, or when replenishing stocks.

Drink-driving in Poland is common, perhaps not surprisingly given the low blood-alcohol level (0.2mg/100ml) allowed. However, Polish police appear to be more relaxed in prosecuting drink-driving, particularly if the arrestee is only slightly over the limit.

One interviewee identified as a problem of heavy drinkers, not just being slightly over the limit.

- *"These are isolated incidents but generally in terms of Polish community or Polish people are drinking that's how I find they tend to drink, and same as I said earlier with driving cars they will drink and they will have no qualms about jumping into a car and driving off and bang into a few cars on the way and then when they come to a halt they will disappear, you know, they are taking the chance."*

The crime statistics suggest that 2007 is the high (or low) point, and there is a sense that this is a problem of the past; but the reputation of the Poles is persistent:

- *"I have never been involved in an incident where a Polish person has been caught drink driving. Again, it's people saying things in the community that they have seen drunk people, Polish people getting into the car and driving off, but again it's nothing, I can't give you a definite answer."*

Several interviewees felt that lack of knowledge (and unwillingness to find out) was a key factor

- *"To begin with, they did fall foul of English law, but I think it was an ignorance of what that English law was, for example, motoring offences whatever the rules are in Poland regarding insurance, driving licence and another thing. You will say they have been in the country for so long whether the Polish license doesn't cover them; I think that's more of an ignorance to the law as opposed to...going out wanting to break the law. And I don't know what the attitude towards drink driving is in Poland whether it's just that you get caught, you get locked up for a short span; but over here it's quite a serious offence. You know, you can lose your license for up to three years, but you can go to jail if you are a repeat offender. A lot of the Poles had reported to custody in the beginning were falling foul of that, but again I seem to think it's something that they brought over."*
- *"I don't know what Polish law says about drink driving, but we seem to have a high percentage of the Polish people we deal with are for drink driving offence which would suggest that perhaps their knowledge or understanding of the law is different to what it is."*
- *"Polish people with cars, my experience they have, I wouldn't say all of them, but a fair majority has very little regard for the law in terms of driving and so on. There has been a number of incidents where they were involved in collisions, driven off without stopping, but they have been usually well over the drink drive limit. I don't think they have got a lot of tolerance for the law in terms of drinking and driving, in terms of maintaining their cars and everything else. So I think, taxing the cars and so on to comply with the British law if you like. So I think they are quite blasé about that, you know, quite cavalier in their attitude in terms of drinking and driving and so generally in terms of what we call construction and news regulations in terms of lights and brakes and all, tyres and all rest of it."*

- *“[Do Poles have less respect for the law?] I wouldn’t say less respectful, I wouldn’t say it is anything more than a lack of understanding.”*

Some Poles argued that they were caught unfairly because they were just sitting in cars drinking, to get out of the house; engines were switched on to stay warm in cold weather.

In another example, Poles claimed that they were confused by the difference between the 35mg/100ml breath alcohol level, and the 80mg/100ml blood alcohol level.

However, one (police) interviewee was very suspicious of these claims, and thought it was almost certainly an attempt to appear ‘guilty but ignorant’. Other interviewees made similar points in respect of not having UK driving licences, and of taking breathalyser tests:

- *“The problem was that the person didn’t breathe for long enough or hard enough into the machine and that happens quite often, I don’t know if it’s something from Poland but often you get, it happens a few times now where the Polish guy has sort of breathe into the machine up until the last moment and then stopped for whether – you get the impression that it is deliberate because they are afraid of the reading.”*

In general, it was felt that Poles were less naïve than they presented themselves, the exception being attempts to ‘come to an arrangement’ with arresting officers.

One police interviewee suggested that the presence of a family might increase the chances of unlawful behaviour:

- *“I suspect that they may will find it difficult particularly if they have got families at home and they are sending money home, for example, you know, they would find it difficult, financial hardship in owning and running a car themselves. For the ones that do have them I suspect that’s why they perhaps skimp a bit on insurance, for example, and tax in the car.”*

Some hypothesised that a greater awareness of the penalties might be bringing about a change in attitude.

- *“A few people have been caught driving and the whole world is collapsed around them, they can’t drive, they can’t go to work, they owed 300- 400 pounds in fines - they must go back.”*

However, for those who are convicted and stay in the UK, the sentence may not be observed very well. The police can check offenders’ records at the roadside, but someone still has to be stopped first. The impression of the Poles is that the likelihood of being stopped is quite high, but the chances of personal details being checked is very low; and what roadside checks there were did not seem to pick up those driving whilst banned. Moreover, for those awaiting trial, licences are not withdrawn before judgement. As a result, no police officers mentioned driving while banned as a common occurrence, whilst the view of the Poles was quite different.

9.1.2 Fighting and physical nuisance

Some suggested that violence in the streets is an issue of the past:

- *“I wouldn’t say they are much more violent than other people, not now”*
- *“I can’t think of one incident that I have been called to in the public house involving a Polish national.”*

One had no experience of arresting Poles fighting; but suspected the latter happened simply because of the demographics:

- *“I have no doubt there have been [incidents] because it would happen I think with any society where any sort of group of males is drunk like that.”*

The Poles have a reputation for fighting, for being ‘a bit hot’ as one interviewee put it. The result is that locals seem to avoid tangling with them:

- *“I can’t recall either having [fighting with locals] except two Poles in custody and they had been fighting amongst each other.”*
- *“I don’t think [Polish and Welsh] socialise together...I suspect the language barrier has got a lot to do with that. All in all, I don’t think they actually take it as sort of racist incident or such that have been that I can think of.”*

However, the latter comment is disputed by the Polish interviewees, who felt that even those with limited language were aware of racist slurs; and this is often a cause of fights.

As noted in Section 5.2.5, service providers associated Poles with carrying knives and using them in fights. However, the Poles themselves did not support this idea. A small number of incidents involving knives were reported, but these all happened at home or work where knives were readily available. Poles did not mention knives being used in public places, although this line of investigation was not followed up directly.

One interviewee reported Poles fighting a lot amongst themselves, but not willing to take the matter any further once they’d sobered up; ‘probably 50%’ of complaints were withdrawn.

- *“Often the Polish people seem to argue among themselves.”*
- *“Very rarely [the police] will take it on unless it’s a really serious matter, very rare they would take it on, particularly if it’s Pole against Poles which sometimes – well, often it’s the case in terms of violence.”*

If the Police get involved, it is usually to break up the situation rather than arrest:

- *“The police do not punish them, or anything. They take them away [to the station] to sober up, to open their eyes, and off you go home! A kick in an ass and off you go home!”*

Another thought that fighting in houses, particularly MOH, was ‘common’ and a consequence of Poles drinking, but that it would only be reported if there was some serious injury. However, the interviewee noted that Welsh people living next door to fighting Poles would report them to the police.

The most striking difference of opinion was on domestic violence. Most interviewees had not come across it at all in the Polish community, but some disputed this. One noted:

- *“The most often [we see a woman] is when she has made a complaint against her partner.”*

And estimated that there was roughly one allegation of domestic assault a month. One interviewee from the Polish Centre in Llanelli thought that domestic violence was one of the main ‘alcohol-fed’ crimes amongst Llanelli Poles.

- *“[Is there unreported domestic violence (for Poles?)] Yes, the women’s refuge in Llanelli has appointed part-time a woman to deal with domestic abuse and violence within the community. I would say it is unreported because it is down to lack of trust, lack of awareness. Feeling of isolation, and they are probably prepared to put up with certain incidents, because of those reasons.”*
- *“There have been incidents of domestic violence, but I wouldn’t say there has been a significant proportion reported. But then you have to look at the bigger picture again, there must be incidents out there which are not being reported, because you have your Polish families that don’t understand what we do, they have no trust in what we do, they go through a mechanism of the wife doesn’t speak English, she doesn’t*

know where to go to report it so she has to tolerate a life of violence by a partner when he is drunk. So again it is all about service provision, right across the board really. Not just for the police, but for domestic violence groups so minority groups can report such things. I am aware that the Women's Aid has appointed a Polish lady, certainly in the last twelve months, to facilitate their business there. She will only deal with the people who know she is there. There must be a lot of people out there who may wish to report something but don't have the faith, trust or the confidence to come to us"

One commented that the Poles believe that the violence within a family is a private matter, it is acceptable, it is no one's business; it is only on arrival here that they have realised it a criminal offence and prosecuted.

One interviewee noted that women are as likely to turn up at the police station as victims of domestic violence as perpetrators of shoplifting (which is the other main reason for women being there). Again, domestic violence seems strongly associated with alcohol consumption.

9.1.3 Theft

Some service providers, particularly bobbies on the beat, identified shoplifting as the main offence or possibly the second most important offence. One saw this as alcohol related:

- *"I think, you may have certain Polish people with alcohol issues and I think they steal to fund their habit and it will be alcohol, they tend to be stealing rather than – So maybe the alcoholics, I don't know whether perhaps they don't have enough money to buy the alcohols so they go stealing alcohol."*

However, this was disputed by others, who thought it was mainly a poverty issue; that is, alcohol was stolen to supplement a basic standard of living, rather than supporting an addictive habit.

- *"Some have been arrested in the past for shoplifting, they steal a bottle of vodka or something. It's not uncommon, plenty of local people do the same, if the money is tight they will go and steal it."*

However, while women do steal food, they also steal perfume. Men invariably steal alcohol. There seemed to be no stealing from private houses, only from stores. Some of this may be due to store workers misinterpreting contractual perks, but it is impossible to tell if this is genuine or a post-factum rationalisation by the offender.

9.1.4 Drunkenness and public order

Public order seems to be common, but at a minor level:

- *"Nothing more generally than a public order offence, a drunkenness offence...In terms of prevalence, anything from drunk and disorderly to threatening and abusive behaviour, this is low level stuff – this is low level stuff, yes it is anti-social, but in the terms of the criminal justice process, it is all low level."*

One interviewee noted that 'breach of the peace' was often a useful way to remove someone from a trouble spot, actual or potential. This is in contrast to Poland, where drunks may be taken to a 'izba wytrzeźwien' ('sobering-up chamber'). Although part of the Polish CJS, this is more of a medical facility than a judicial establishment, and there is no criminal offence; but the inmates are presented with a bill when they are released.

9.1.5 Other offences

There is the possibility that attacks on Poles could be seen as 'racist' incidents

- *“There is in Llanelli some prejudice towards Polish people and if you saw like people will write on the Polish home and the wall and sort of things... I speak to people and I pick up the vibe of what they think about local Poles and I think there is a small element of idiots, narrow-minded and they just don't like anyone who is different ... Llanelli is a small town and some people are narrow-minded.”*

As noted, Poles do identify racist attacks and may respond physically. However, the Poles appear either not bothered or unaware that a ‘race-hate’ crime exists on the UK statute books; or may just be that they want to avoid contact with the police:

- *Polish, they keep themselves to themselves quite a bit and ... I think they are a bit wary of the police, they are a bit wary of institutions, they are quite closed as a community and often they prefer to resolve things among themselves and not get the police involved.”*

Drug crime is practically non-existent:

- *“I can't recall ever having a Pole in for drug related crime.”*

One interviewee was aware of two cases (but not arrests) of amphetamine usage, which, given the perception of amphetamine availability, was felt to be negligible. The same interviewee also knew of no cannabis arrests.

9.2 Arrest

Estimates of the numbers of Poles being arrested were fairly consistent – perhaps two Poles a week at each station, five or six a month, accounting for 1%-2% of the total arrestees. They were mostly young adults (20-40), and overwhelmingly male. The weekend was the high point for arrests.

Section 4 gave statistics from police sources of how many Poles have been arrested, and how many for alcohol-related offences. The latter account for 15%-23% of arrests, a higher proportion than for UK arrestees (13%-20%). However, the perception from many service providers is that alcohol is a much more important factor:

- *“Yeah, I would say the majority of people we deal within the sort of custody area are Polish people, tend to commit under the influence of alcohol which is not very often especially [indistinct word], it's not done by appointment on the first arrest, since it's only sort of alcohol induced offences. And the perception is that they do seem to drink a lot and they do a lot of stuff, you know, after work they like a drink.”*

Others estimated that alcohol was a key factor in 70%-90% of cases. A reason for the difference between perceptions and records may be the lack of a formal definition of ‘alcohol-related’. An interviewee quoting 70-80% of crimes as alcohol-related gave an example of shoplifting while drunk. This is not ‘alcohol-related’ in the lexicon of formal definitions, but the interviewees felt that alcohol was clearly an important characteristic of the arrest. However, this a value judgement which may not be recorded:

- *“Those figures which have been data captured from the custody computer don't reflect accurately what is going on in this custody unit, or any other one in Carmarthenshire.”*
- *“[Marking crimes as ‘alcohol-related’] is a subjective test, to determine whether such a crime is alcohol related or is not. It is all about the interpretation. Generally, the figures [made available to the researchers] were lower than the actual figures.”*
- *“[Domestic violence is] always related to alcohol, I never had a call where a sober Polish guy allegedly hit his –”*
- *“A lot of drinkers don't get charged; a lot of drinkers will be given a conditional discharge, which is ‘Yeah, you go away’, without any record ... Some people would be cautioned or fined but I don't know whether that would show on your statistics.”*

Apart from alcohol, interviewees who had experience of custody operations felt that there were too few Poles coming through to make generalisations.

Some thought that the arrest rate was improving:

- *“I think that they have become aware over time as you know people have come out of the police station saying don’t do this, you need to get this. They are learning and I think that that’s why - perhaps that’s why they are not being arrested so often...[Who do they learn from?] Well, you know, it’s a Polish community, word spreads I think, they just get out and they say, they talk to each other.”*

There may be a bias in arrest because of language difficulties

- *“Something had happened inside [the nightclub] between him and a few local lads, they had all been thrown out of the premises. However, when police got there the local boys went but the Polish, he started to be abusive towards the police officers, so he was arrested then.”*
- *“I wouldn’t have thought, it’s not often because it’s more a case of gathering evidence, I mean, if any one person say one thing and perhaps somebody, you know, well, if he couldn’t say anything, these are the sort of evidence we make a decisions to arrest... It’s very rarely that one people saying one thing or one person say the other thing and also it’s often like what injuries that both person got, you know, who is saying what, what is consistent, and what is inconsistent... But it would be difficult. It is difficult to make a decision when somebody obviously can’t speak in their language.”*
- *“When Polish people are fighting with the Welsh, Polish people tend to be - don’t know who started, but they tend to be the ones who are going to be arrested because the less he’s able - they are going to be the suspect unless able to explain what happened and that’s the difficulty, isn’t it?... There is really a disadvantage. If you got two people fighting, one speaks English, one doesn’t; the one who speaks English will know this and say, he did this and he did that and in a couple minutes and the other person has not a chance to explain until they sit in an interview.”*

The latter interviewee noted that in practice Welsh bystanders are fairly happy to confirm or deny stories on the spot.

Language is not seen as an insurmountable problem:

- *“We have the facility to speak to Language Line, out in the street via your police radio, and I would suggest that if it were for a minor motoring process, that if you exercise a little bit of courtesy and common sense, that you could quite easily deal with a Polish national or anybody who doesn’t speak English at the road side through Language Line. Providing of course that certain criteria are met, and you are satisfied that the person is who they are. And also they have a satisfactory address, where you could serve a summons on them in the event of them being prosecuted.”*

Poles are often not willing to provide info, but this is no different from the Welsh; and while they may not actively provide false information, they often will not correct mistakes in spelling of names, for example.

Poles can be checked instantly against the Police National computer for crimes committed in England and Wales. Their records cannot be checked against other countries’ records; typically a request for information from Interpol will take up to ten weeks. This means that reports of Poles coming to the UK to avoiding sentences in Poland (see Section 2) cannot be substantiated.

9.3 Custody

9.3.1 Poles and the custody process

Poles brought into custody face the same procedures as other arrestees. However, the need to work through an interpreter can complicate the processes:

- *“We have to make sure that the person- the foreign national has to understand the same questions, so we are under obligation to contact an interpreter if we have any doubts about it. Dyfed Powys Police have a contract with Language Line, and we would use Language Line to facilitate any communication with a foreign national, that couldn’t speak any English or fully comprehend, and that would be from very initial stage of booking the person to the custody, giving them their rights, going through the medical process, any other consent issues. Beyond that, if there would be an interview, we would then be looking to contact an interpreter, of a relevant language to facilitate the interview process ... We would give them a copy of leaflet [on rights and entitlements] and give them their rights via Language Line as well. And again when the interpreter gets here, they would need to sign for their rights. Just to be doubly sure that they understand fully of their legal position. Because if we do something wrong at this end, it could compromise the whole investigation.”*
- *“So normally when they come here, it’s not too long before we get somebody who can speak Polish and just sort of tell them what the procedures are is going to be, what’s going to happen with them and how long they are going to be in custody; and we also ask them if they have any issues in relation to the medical history, you know we have covered all them.”*
- *“I would try and do when they are brought in drunk to try and get some information from them, for example, have they taken drugs as well, ask the reason why they are intoxicated, are they ill in anyway, is of the reason why they are behaving like that, behaving, do they have any mental health issues or any suicidal, have they got any injuries, I mean is their behaviour due to having a head injury. Okay, so I would try and get as much of that as possible and then put what we call a care package together for them including the risk assessment and probably be put in a cell with a CCTV monitoring. They would be checked every half an hour, and if they sleep woke them and response taken; because I should be noting then, whether they are improving or whether they are deteriorating. After four hours in police custody if their condition hasn’t improved at all then we should be calling a doctor, also considering taking them to hospital ... Just because somebody doesn’t understand English, it doesn’t mean that we can just lock them up for the night and forget about them. We have to make attempts possible then to try and expedite this investigation.”*

As well as explaining rights, the Language Line is used to help with breath samples – this has the additional advantage for police in that the whole conversation is recorded. Some things can be left until morning – English skills tend to improve with sobriety. However, it was noted that strip search can be very difficult if no translator is present.

There are leaflets on rights in Polish (at least in Carmarthen) as these were mentioned by Polish ex-offenders. These do not seem to be well publicised or circulated as the first interviewee above was the only CJS person to mention this.

9.3.2 Polish attitudes in custody

The police view of Polish arrestees is generally very positive:

- *“I can’t remember a Pole been brought into custody where we got to physically remove his clothing and he is fighting with us, whereas that does happen with the local people. It’s possible they are being aggressive but a lot of people are aggressive, especially when drink is a factor. I wouldn’t say there is any great issue with Polish being aggressive.”*

- *“They aren’t often obstructive, you know, occasionally you get one or two and will say they wouldn’t speak English when you know they can speak a little bit of English that’s often the case. When I say often the case, this isn’t the often the case but that has happened but - and remain courteous and quite respectful.”*
- *“I think they don’t understand a lot of our rules, but they respect, are respectful when they come through our system.”*
- *“They are like surprised that has happened, but more often they are surprised at how leniently they are treated, often they will say, God, it’s a whole different kettle of fish in Poland.”*
- *“It’s quite often that men have cried, you know, they had a lot of build up, I feel that their lives they had a lot tension and it’s culminated in this argument, this led to them slapping their girlfriend or whatever and often during the interview it’s happened, it happens quite often that they sort of they will break down, you know ... But I don’t know if that’s something they do to get treated more leniently or if it’s like some cultural thing.”*

However, there is learning going on by the Poles:

- *“Police officers were saying recently that initially Polish people ended up they have been arrested quite fearful because of their experience in Poland - the police being quite brutal, they are very scared. But after a time ... they have learned that they get treated very leniently; and the police were commenting that now they’re starting to be a bit more cunning in making up excuses as to how, you know, ‘it was just an accident that this bottle of vodka ended up been stolen. I was talking to my girlfriend, I have an argument’, like. And the police were commenting, they are sort of being a bit more inventive with excuses as to why, you know, they are losing their fear, becoming a bit more like the local Welsh people.”*

9.3.3 The language difficulty

Language is felt to be a much bigger barrier at first contact than at the police station:

- *“[In custody suite] we have the control measure where we can speak to somebody on the phone, who will interpret for us straightaway or we call interpreters in ... So I think the difficulty is when they are outside.”*
- *“It slows things down because the police can’t communicate – it’s just the communication, so they are glad when an interpreter comes out, especially an interpreter that can get the job done efficiently and quickly so they can process the person and get them as early as possible.”*

However, even the existence of the Language Line or interpreters does not resolve all problems:

- *“[Most time-consuming part] is the interpreter. The actual physical attendance of the interpreter. You can deal with these preliminary issues about your rights, and about your risk assessment through Language Line which is available 24/7. But unfortunately, having a three-way conversation here, when you want to find out the complexity of somebody’s medical well being, there always may be some information lost which again could be critical... There needs to be an interpreter at the police station throughout the process, to give everybody the right information.”*

One potential difficulty is that legal procedures do not all happen at a convenient time when interpreters are available:

- *“We explain that they need to attend on a particular time and date but obviously sometime if they go to court and get rescheduled, the letter comes out to them in English... That’s from the court.”*

Some Poles do speak English

- *“Often they don’t – they have got really limited English that older people often don’t - you know, you can’t even have a basic conversation with them. But like, you know, people between 20 and 40 often they have got like some English, they are able to sort of communicate in a basic way.”*

But this may be a problem as well:

- *“There have been Polish people and they go,” I understand, I understand” and thus have the interview, I was talking English but then I can see that they don’t understand everything.”*

Finally, it was noted that, when Poles have a translator available, they tend to ask a lot of questions. It may be that the informality of the chat with the translator, in their own language, safe in the knowledge that they can’t be overheard, serves to relax the arrestees.

9.4 Substance abuse and the arrest referral process

The arrest referral process is described in Appendix 2, but, briefly, arrestees are quizzed on arrival about substance misuse (unless there is already substantive evidence of it). If substance abuse (including excessive use of alcohol) appears to be a problem then an Arrest Referral Worker (ARW) from DIP will be asked to have an initial interview. The ARW is independent of the police service, and discussions with offenders are confidential.

This may be accompanied by a conditional caution:

- *“We have a conditional caution in process [which means] that they don’t get a conviction in the court. Providing they have a referral to a service like DIP or Prism...If they didn’t maintain their engagement with Prism, Prism could come back to us... The service provider comes back to the police and says that the person has only been twice, you put this person for a conditional caution, we don’t think they should, will you deal with the matter? We would then summons that person to court, and take away the opportunity for them to get a caution.”*

Conditional cautions are available for drug users; they were also used for alcohol in the second half of 2008, but stopped when alcohol referral was taken out of DIP.

- *“By the time we’d just gotten used to it and [police] were actually making referrals [it stopped], which was a shame because it was a way of getting clients [to Prism].”*

Detainees are given a document with details of the help and information available, although it is not clear whether this was given to all detainees or just those coming in with alcohol-related problems.

In practice, a number of practical difficulties were highlighted.

9.4.1 Identifying substance abuse

Arrestees arriving in the cells are asked a variety of questions about possible substance abuse; however, the main focus of police questioning is on ensuring no medical emergencies:

- *“[So the only question is whether drugs/alcohol problem exists?] Yes, ‘have you ever tried to harm yourself?’ There is a list ... They always ask these questions ... They are just very brief. ‘Are you addicted to drugs and alcohol?’ Most often, it’s a yes or no answer, really, I will say as far a discussion of their dependencies on drugs and alcohol is concerned; or ‘are you taking any medication?’ [Are the questions to find crime?] They are more generally oriented about the well being of a person: ‘Is there something we should know that will affect your well being once you are here? Do you have any mental health problems? Have you ever tried to harm yourself? Are you*

addicted? Do you take any medication?’ It’s about something not going wrong while they there because they haven’t taken any medication, it’s not really those questions are already oriented towards helping that person overcome an alcohol addiction, that’s just one of the questions.”

Interviewees expressed concern about the value of such questions:

- *“I would be mistrustful...People who take drugs tend to be secretive and not so open about drug habits, as we could get a warrant if further intelligence applies. For a number of reasons, either they don’t want to get caught, or because of the social stigma attached to it, and it is difficult to sell it to people – to say ‘look here guys, the referral process is nothing at all to do with the police, it is independent and it could stop you from being in this situation again’...I don’t think it has been as successful as it could be. Because of the environment in which they are asking for the referral process, because there is always suspicion around it.”*

When there is no ARW, the police officer may simply ask whether they think they have an alcohol problem, which does not seem to have a high success rate.

Whilst mandatory drug-testing on arrest (as opposed to the current system of testing on charge) is being introduced in parts of Wales, some interviewees expressed concern about the resources available to test and to deal with the likely increase in referrals to DIP.

Finally, where alcohol is not essential to the prosecution of the offence, the offender might not be identified at the starting gate:

- *“In my experiences [of breathalysing] it’s only been when they were suspected of drink driving. If they come to the police station drunk and the allegation is that they have stolen something or ... hit their girlfriend then they’re just left in the cell to sober up until they are able to come over, you know, be interviewed.”*

9.4.2 The referral process and police-ARW relations

There was some concern that offenders would not even know that the ARWs exist

- *“Well, the first question, they always ask ‘are you addicted to drugs or alcohol’, that’s part of the standard questions that they will ask, but they never say ‘would you like to speak to [an ARW]?’ They’re never mentioned in the police station.”*

One interviewee pointed out that offenders are not in the best frame of mind to determine whether they have been informed or not:

- *“It is a part of checking out procedure at the police station, and people are asked whether they want to see a solicitor or [ARW]. Whether people do take this information with them is another thing, they are upset at that point. If you asked police officers whether they inform about our referrals, they would say, they yes, they do ... I think at the point of arrest that people have got so many things going on for them and they are in crisis, to be truthful, and it really is not the time to think about doing a piece of work on the way you are living, really.”*

As such, measures of referrals at the police station may not be a useful measure of success:

- *“Depends what you are looking for – lots of referrals, or whether you are looking for people to engage to the point where it makes a difference to their lives in the long term.”*
- *“The email depends on the custody sergeant, so we can see somebody in the morning who wants service from us but never receive an email in the afternoon, or we can see people in the morning who have said ‘No’ but we still get the email, so we’re not really sure. It’s something we are looking at, we’re sort of monitoring: are the*

people who have been referred to on the email, do they really want service from us or the sergeant just...puts them automatically through."

Although the police do have specific guidelines on, for example, the circumstances under which a conditional caution can be issued, there appears to be no equivalent for drug and alcohol referrals.

Where the offenders do know about the ARWs, there are problems of trust:

- *"[How do you describe ARWs?] I would say that he or she is independent of the police service and the offer is there for you... That is a key message really – that they are nothing to do with us. Because they think; drug arrest, drug arrest referral - what are they telling the police when they visit the cell? And you often get that suspicion... It is the environment, and the perception of the individual, and if you could change the environment, we would change the perception."*
- *"[Police trained in approaching clients helpful?] Yes, probably it would. But this is not going to happen, we have to keep it divided between criminal justice and [support services]."*
- *"They see you as part of the police system, rather than somebody from outside."*

One way to make contact with the ARW is to be in the cells when ARWs visit. However, the times of the visit are limited (in Carmarthenshire, to weekday mornings).

- *"Often [ARWs] will come and they will just say is there anyone here? We invite them in and then they go down, we don't tell them what to say, they go down to the cell and they will ask the person in the cell whether they want any sort of counselling for any alcohol or drug problems they may have... They catch a very small amount by coming to the police station"*
- *"If a Pole is in on ... a Saturday or a Sunday, well, they are not going to get the [ARW] calling here then. And if they miss them in the morning, well they are not going to get it done, so there is a very small window of opportunity to actually get the [ARW] in to speak to somebody face to face, so it's very few of our prisoners that actually get to speak to a DIP worker face to face, more time are just given the option yes or no and sign here if you do or if you don't."*
- *"6-7 o'clock at night would be a great time to catch the cells... Probably Saturday mornings and even Sunday mornings would be fantastic ... Someone based in the station to build a good rapport with the policemen ... Popping into the station for half an hour every day is not enough."*

The ARWs are generally not available outside their morning sweep to come into the police station at short notice, even if the police contact them.

An additional problem is that drunks may need time to sober up before they can be introduced to the ARW:

- *"If you have a busy custody office – say on a Monday morning, and you have eight or nine prisoners in custody, some maybe sleeping, and some people have to have periods of uninterrupted rest before interview. They may have been screaming and shouting in the cells for four hours, I wouldn't be inclined to wake that person up, to offer them the opportunity to see a drug or alcohol worker. That isn't done. Of course they miss the capture, and if they are not dealt with until the afternoon, they then miss the opportunity. They could then still see the alcohol worker, but we would have to email the alcohol worker; to a DIP or Prism or whoever it were."*

Face-to-face engagement with detainees is acknowledged to be the most successful way of getting referrals. Sending a letter is less efficient than face-to-face in station:

- *'Very few of our prisoners actually get to speak to a [service provider] face to face; most of the time they are just given the option 'Yes or No', and 'sign here if you do or if you don't'"*

- *“If the police referred them from seeing them in the station they just wouldn’t come normally. I’m not saying that all of them didn’t, but a lot didn’t, For people that you actually saw in the station the take-up rate would have been a little bit higher because I think you can engage that person a little bit more: they’ve seen a face, they’ve come to know you, you can actually explain some of the benefits ... Our clients are not that good really to respond to letters, to be truthful. If they were people who were great worriers about their health and things they wouldn’t be doing this to themselves.”*

This also seems to be true from cross referrals between Prism and DIP workers, not just between police and services.

But getting face-to-face interviews can cause tension between police and ARWs:

- *“We can’t keep people here just for the arrest referral officers to come; or we could bring someone if we think it’s quite an urgent case or someone is need of an urgent help. We can bring them and if they are available they can come up; but again it’s just justifying the time that they spend in here because our rules and regulations don’t really justify holding people here until somebody from the arrest referral scheme can get to the police station ... It’s not easy to have them in the places, they can slow up - especially if you are in a busy morning - it can slow up our processes.”*
- *“If you have a case where the person [can be released] do you then keep them in custody until the referral worker comes, or do you release them? I know there is an email system [to contact ARWs] but that isn’t your primary concern.”*

The custody process does provide a mechanism for police officers to set up the contacts but the incentive structure may not be effective. The ARW is not part of the structured police procedures for custody, and so can be seen as delaying regular police business:

- *[Custody form] will ask for arrest referral worker, yes or no? How each officer sells it to the detainee is up to them. Again it is down to time, it is down to capacity, it is down to the perception of the individual... They are there for ten, twenty minutes, and you are quite often governed by what is happening in real time, with the detainees in custody. The arrest referral is pretty much low down on your list when you are looking to risk manage and looking at the safety of potential prisoners.”*
- *[Potential for tension?] You may have to interview somebody, ‘well I want to speak to the drug worker first’, then you have to wait for the drug worker, and it is not harmonious, put it that way.”*
- *“We have difficulties in running the project because the police aren’t overly keen on us coming in the mornings, and see people. They do let us in, and that’s getting better. We’ve been working at that. But they are not over-keen to have us staying there, because we’re just civilians in the way.”*
- *“I think that there are other priorities at the police stations, we are pretty low down on these priorities. And also, if they see somebody 5th or 6th time and they had referred them previously, they are fed up with referring them.”*

As the last interviewee points out, arrest referral is increasingly resented if it does not appear to have an effect. Of course, this suggests that the most problematic offenders (repeat offenders who refuse to acknowledge substance abuse issues) are increasingly likely to be ignored, rather than identified and targeted. However, others commented that repeat offenders are more likely to be pushed towards referral by the police. The difference seems to be that alcohol users are treated as random nuisances until they become a regular problem; drug users are referred quickly but this means that a lack of progress from referrals or treatment can also be visible quickly, discouraging police from referring.

- *“Somebody younger has to come in a lot of times [for alcohol offences] before [the police] start really worrying about that person. A little bit because of our culture, because we accept that getting drunk and being a bit unruly ... is part of what we do.”*

Funding is regularly recognised as an issue: that because funding comes from different sources, incentives might not be compatible across the police and ARWs:

- *“Also the funding doesn’t come from the same place. But yes I think, police officers do need training, and they need to understand the benefits of the referrals, that it is not just about helping people around but it is actually also about stopping people from re-offending.”*
- *[Would a 9-5 ARW in the station be useful?] That is another option, making them more accessible. [Ignoring financial and capacity issues] it would certainly be worth a pilot with the number of referrals in police station.”*
- *“Ideally, if you have somebody available there throughout the day. The ones who actually make a contact a person to person, and that person would be dedicated to this work... I don’t know how we would fund this.”*

Related to this is concern about the appropriateness of Prism, a provider of universal voluntary services, becoming involved with the CJS:

- *“If [a referee’s] offending is very connected to their alcohol use ... is [Prism] the right place to be seeing them? If their drinking is hugely affecting society in that way there maybe there should be some kind of mandatory requirement for this person to be seen [rather than voluntary services]”*

9.4.3 Motivation

Custody officers point out that willingness to engage with rehabilitation services can be put forward as mitigating circumstances during sentencing. The uncertainty of a court case can concentrate the mind:

- *“When people are coming back to answer bail, it’s the deciding time, isn’t it? I think it’s probably a very good time when they would be quite motivated to see the people. If you’re offered the opportunity before you go in to the office, ‘the officer thinks you might benefit from seeing the alcohol office’, they’d probably say yes at that point.”*

However, meaningful compliance is an issue for all offenders:

- *“Some people treat [alcohol referral] with a little bit of contempt, ‘oh I have only been arrested for a drunkenness offence, I don’t really need any counselling or help, I haven’t got a drug problem’. Particularly with the binge drinking culture, people just want to be dealt with as quickly as they can and get on with it and hope they don’t get caught next time.”*
- *“People feel quite disempowered in those situations that they will say yes to almost anything. If we say it is a good idea to see the alcohol worker – then they are going to say yes.”*
- *“If that charge doesn’t appear, if when they turn up for bail they say ‘oh, we’re not going to prosecute’, quite often their motivation to engage is gone.”*

DIP only receives clients from the CJS, and so motivation cannot be assessed; but Prism takes in referrals from a range of places, and engagement appears significantly better for the non-CJS referrals.

Conditional cautions may be a way of improving motivation, particularly for certain groups:

- *“Alcohol conditional cautions work very well for people who are lowly paid, who care about the fines; if they want to avoid the fines, if they want to avoid going to court. And obviously for the Polish community they have that worry about their visas ... Conditional caution would be very good for [low-key offenders]”*

However, some may just see it as an easy way out:

- *“I don’t think I’ve ever known anyone refuse a conditional caution, because it is given as an option.”*

- *"[Conditional caution] is almost a way out for some people: 'you have offered me a conditional caution, which means I don't go to court providing that I engage with Prism, or DIP or SUDS or whatever'. So they then go into that process, to avoid going to court. [In that case] you get someone who has done it for the wrong reason, they don't really want help, and they just want to get out of court and getting a conviction."*

For some individuals in particular need, the issue might be the opposite:

- *"[Referral in custody] can be seen as a quick entry in to the system, if it is a referral from a Police station. Quite often I heard it said there is difficulty – it can take quite a long time for somebody to see a drug worker. Which is why some people have committed certain offences to go back into prison where they are automatically seen by a drug worker and the intervention program. Because of capacity issues, and service provision, it could take some time for that person to engage the services of the drug intervention program. You get your harder core of people who say 'look I have done this, that to go back into prison, I need to dry out – I need to get back into the program again'"*

Note that Kreft et al (2008) found the same reports of behaviour (using arrest as a fast-track to a rehabilitation programme) in Cardiff.

9.5 Poles and arrest referral

9.5.1 Identifying substance abuse

For Poles, getting valid answers on their alcohol or drug consumption is made more difficult by suspicion of the purpose:

- *"They deny being alcoholics and they deny ... Well, they will admit to smoking cigarettes, sort of thing ... I don't think I've ever had anyone say, 'yes, I am an alcoholic' ... I've never had a Polish person sort of describe as something that's a problem ... I think they sort of think that it is not really any business of the police, you know."*

One interviewee reported that only two Poles took up the information documents about ARWs. The other Poles denied they needed any help; and some took as a personal insult the suggestion that the information might be useful.

9.5.2 Making contact with the ARWs

There was a suggestion that Poles were not being introduced to ARWs at the station because it was thought to be pointless. ARWs might not have been told about Polish nationals in the cells:

- *"If there is anybody who was Polish in the cells, they say 'you can't see them'. No, because if they did not have English which was suitable for conversation, they say 'you can't see them'. And we don't have the ability, or did not have the ability at the time to have an interpreter, so they would automatically not get seen ... I know there been times some times when we had been told we wouldn't be able to see so and so because they are Polish. For me it is automatically a block to the entrance to the service because at our point of contact we are not able to speak to them and give them information they may need."*

As noted above, ARWs do not visit cells at weekend, which is far and away the most likely time for Poles to be arrested; and police have limited time and incentives to 'sell' substance abuse services. This becomes even more difficult with no Polish language skills.

A service provider commented that, although Prism might be mentioned in relation to the drink-driving rehabilitation course (DDRC), DIP was not mentioned at all. However, this is understandable given that there were no drug-related arrests of Poles in this period.

If the Pole does not speak English, the Language Line can be used for basic procedures but this doesn't work when in the cells; instead, an interpreter is necessary. Although the interpreter is organised by the police, questions of trust do not seem to arise; Poles seem to understand the concept of translator's impartiality – or may even see them as 'on their side'.

Finally, if contact is made outside the police station, with no Language Line, the cost of translating and interpretation becomes important:

- *“What normally happens is someone is drunk and we offer them the arrest referral scheme. We click a button and then that emails the arrest referrals and then they contact them outside of police time and they will write them a letter and arrange an appointment. Well, difficulty in that to say in Polish is what the correspondence obviously. We pay for the interpreters when they are here, I don't know we would be paying for the interpreters if it went to the arrest referral scheme or not.”*
- *“It could just obviously not being written in Polish, that could be the main thing or they just think 'I don't have to do that if I am not forced to do it, then I have got more important things, I have got a family to support in Poland et cetera and I haven't got time to go on a course, you know, I am okay' sort of things ... They are not going to pay too much attention to it if it's in English.”*

In discussing translation, the interviewee was quoted a minimum four-hour call-out charge for an interpreter. This was felt to be too expensive given past experience: once, it had been explained to a Polish client that the attendance at the meeting was voluntary, and he didn't turn up again. An arrangement is now in place with the Polish Centre in Llanelli to provide interpreting services for a lower charge, subject to advance notice. This would slow down the process by about a week or so and there are concerns about confidentiality; nevertheless, this is an innovative alternative, even if so far there have been no opportunities to try it out.

This cost of translation has implications further up the chain. Prism has translated its template letter of appointment into Polish; DIP is looking into it. This is to encourage attendance by non-English speakers. However, it is recognised that this would lead to problems if the Polish national turned up with insufficient English to make the appointment meaningful.

9.5.3 Ensuring compliance with conditions

Poles view DIP/Prism as a way of getting out of the cell quickly:

- *“I just think they just want to get on with their life, they haven't got time to go on a course to help them, you know. I get that impression that they are very work-orientated, they wanted to go 'I don't have time for such things.’”*
- *“I would suggest that someone who doesn't have a strong grip on the criminal justice system; will do anything to get out of this environment. They may say yes they would like to speak to the arrest drug and alcohol referral worker, you could send that request electronically, and that gets swallowed up in the ether and they never get seen again. Because they have no desire to speak to the drug and alcohol referral worker, and they have just done it to acquiesce to our wish and expedite their release from custody”*
- *“It's never the case that they've got an in-depth knowledge of the procedures... They are not really knowledgeable of how it all works. They get an opportunity to read the codes of practice as one of their three rights but I don't think anyone has ever said 'yeah, give me a read of that'. More often they just want to get it over with quickly and get out and go back to work; that's often their main concern... They are very keen to get back to work ... Often they regret what has happened but pretty often they are keen to... get back to work because they got to send money home et cetera. Finally, it's money to them.”*

and there is concern that, even if Poles would be interested, they do not really follow what they are agreeing to:

- *“There is a million and one questions they ask anyway ... A Polish person in the police station is probably asked to sign, has to give about 15, 20 signatures: sign this, sign that, sign it four times, tons of follow up.”*

In short, Poles are presented with much information which they do not absorb, but to which they will agree to if it seems to get them out of the cells more quickly.

9.6 Court and sentencing

For migrants, there is the possibility that those released on bail could return to Poland. This possibility is not unique to the Polish – skipping bail happens to the Welsh as well – and police take a similar approach to all cases when considering bail recommendations:

- *“If someone wants to jump bail for what ever reason, and go back to Poland...and we don't think they are going to turn up in court we don't even go. [The custody sergeant has to] make a decision: yes I don't know who this person is, he doesn't have a permanent address in Llanelli, if I release him they are not going to turn up in court. I have the legal power to keep them in custody to put them into the next available court...It is a judgement call, when you have to look at the seriousness of the offence, the circumstances of the individual. Have they got ties? Could you impose conditional bail on them?”*

There are reports of a small number trying to escape court

- *“He got the second court case and returned [to Poland, before the case came up].”*

but these cases are thought to be few and usually re-arrested.

Courts appoint their own interpreters, unless there is no time, in which case police-appointed interpreters may be used. However, formal information on the initial judgement is only provided in English:

- *“They get a print out in English ... They do get a copy of their rights in Polish but the printout, yeah, it's in English but the date and time is circled and ... I emphasize it 'You cannot not turn up, it's important because if you don't then this is a further offence. You have to turn up, you know where the court is', and I might explain it to them or whatever it is, you know, you are going to be captive, your detention is being extended because of whatever reason. They know what's happening because [the translator is] there to explain everything ... They don't read the letter.”*

There is an opportunity to explore the offender's substance abuse problems before sentencing:

- *“There might be discussion of dependency on alcohol or drugs few times with the probation service ... because part of their punishment is unpaid work and then they have to also report, often a pre-sentence report like if they are drink driven and often the magistrate will ask for like pre-sentence report to be drawn up and this will involve an interview with a probation officer who will ask, go into the background, you know, even like their childhood and whether they had a happy childhood and ... and analyse their character.”*

Modern sentencing offers a large number of options, tailored to both the specific offence and the characteristics of the offender. However, there are concerns that the offenders (including Poles) see these as away to reduce sentences rather than a key part of rehabilitation:

- *“Some people do turn [drink-driving rehabilitation course] down at the first hurdle, which is a shame, because then they can’t go back and be referred. So if they say no in court on the day, then that is it for them – they can’t come on the scheme. ‘Cos they have to be offered the referral ... There has been an increase in the number of referrals not sadly an increase in attendees.”*
- *“Prism is mentioned in court, the sentences is read out and then, oh, by the way, you can reduce your ban by attending a course if you be interested and often they say yeah, yeah because they want to be banned for less time ... ‘The only thing I remember Polish people agreeing to is to attend this Prism course ... They are quite keen to go on that often because they want to be banned for less time.”*

The Poles see the 25% cut in the driving ban as worthwhile for the £170 cost of the course. However, if the Pole does not speak English well enough, the court will not offer it. A Pole may be able to get onto the course if they bring along someone who can commit to translating on the DDRC; but there is no example of Poles bringing along a translator to the DDRC. This may be because a ‘high’ standard of English is required for the course, and the translator has to undergo a short language test. This is likely to rule out friends or family with a small amount of English, so that Poles wanting to take the course would need to employ a professional interpreter – beyond the finances of most of the interviewees.

Note that, if the court does not offer DDRC as a way of reducing the length of the ban (or the Pole’s solicitor does not ask) there is no option to get the ban reduced by signing up for the course later. However, it does seem that courts generally do want to offer this course to Poles: they seem to account for 5% or so of referrals (source: DDRC), although the rate of Polish offending is lower.

In summary, although the DDRC is available for Poles, it seems that few Poles from the current generation of migrants have been able to attend, largely because of language skills.

9.7 The ex-offenders’ perspective

The information and comments are taken from interviews with ten Polish ex-offenders arrested between 2005 and 2009. The offences included drinking and driving, driving while banned, fighting, and general drunkenness. Poles were taken to Llanelli, Carmarthen and Aberystwyth police stations, not always the most local one. The interviewees were also quite willing to discuss the experiences of their friends and colleagues.

Note that all the interviewees were arrested at the weekends or on holidays. All had been drinking.

9.7.1 Circumstances of arrest

Of the arrests due to fighting or aggressive behaviour, one involved a party at home which became a fight involving knives; the alarm was raised by (Polish) neighbours when one wounded party ran out of the house. The other disturbances all involved Welsh co-respondents, sometimes the police. Some were started by locals, some by Poles. In all cases the participants had been drinking.

Drink-driving generally fell into two categories, occurring during drinking sessions: sitting in a car with the engine running, having a cigarette; and making a ‘short’ trip to top up the alcohol, visit friends, or move to another venue. For the latter the shortness of the trip was seen as a justification.

- *“[Of the colleague who had actually been driving] He only had been driving. He’d had few drinks and straight away such a big fuss! ... They arrested him like a real murderer!”*
- *“[The shop] wasn’t far, so off I went, but it was raining, so I thought it’s only a short distance, I’ll get in [a car], and nothing should happen, because I felt OK, and it’s only a stone’s throw.”*

Driving under a ban was seen simply as an acceptable risk. One offender claimed that he had been stopped and had his documents checked up to four times before it was noticed.

All those who had been arrested for drinking and driving were breathalysed. None of the others were, including the one arrested for driving while banned. Half were handcuffed, with no difference between the fighters and the others.

In all the arrests, no use was made of the Language Line. Either the Poles had sufficient English to understand basic instructions, or they managed by 'gesticulation'.

9.7.2 In custody

Interviewees had a number of different experiences in the cells. Some arrested at night were left until the morning to sober up and get an interpreter in. Others had an interpreter brought in; one went through the arrest process via the Language Line; other got by on basic English. Common procedures (searching, signing for belongings etc) were done on arrest. In Carmarthen police station there was a leaflet in Polish explaining basic rights and procedures.

Of the ten interviewees,

- Three were interviewed/advised of their rights using Language Line
- Five had an interpreter brought in
- Two managed with their own English

Where interpretation was available, some were told this was not available at night and had to wait until morning, others had to wait from one to five hours. There did not seem to be any particular pattern to the initial treatment at the station. There seemed to be no relationship between the use of language services and the offence.

On release from the station, those who were going to court should have got letters in English. One guessed the meaning and asked the Polish Centre to translate the rest. One denied getting any information at all about the case. In one case, the court had not been informed that a translator was needed; the court date was repeatedly changed, but the offender was kept informed via the Language Line.

Some of the interviewees did have a chance to see solicitors with translators before the court case. These were court-appointed translators.

9.7.3 Alcohol services

Most were not offered information about alcohol services (although one interviewee confessed that he was too stressed to remember anything about what he was asked). Two were asked, one of whom took offence at the question:

- *"No, I didn't agree to anything, because they were asking me whether I drink much. I told them, that I work, that sometimes I have a drink at weekends, don't I? I don't drink because I work hard, don't I? And whether I need any help, some, whether I'm an alcoholic? I say I don't need any help because I can control myself."*

One interviewee received a letter from Prism, based on a referral from the police (station unidentified), but only in English:

- *"My wife says you've got a letter as if you were an alcoholic, that you need to go somewhere. I say "put it into a drawer, and let them kiss my nose" [Is there any problem with reading in English?] "Yes, there's a problem because I can't read well [in English], my wife can, and I can't, can I? I can speak well but I can't read."*

Four of the interviewees were offered the chance to go on the DDRC by the court. However, three of those same four also denied being offered any alcohol services by the court. This confusion about services comes up several times. At least two of the interviewees confused the DDRC with other services such as AA meetings:

- *“They said something like that ... me to go to this, as we call it AA ... I don't know, I call it as we say AA.”*

One turned down the course because of his English:

- *“They would shorten my ban by 6 months, but I say, what's the point of me to go there as I don't speak English, so why would I go? Who would I talk there to? Whatever I say, would I take an interpreter everywhere?”*

Another was just very confused about what was on offer:

- *“Now I can see that there are lots of problems with [the course], because I don't know how good an interpreter one has to take, because all here who have been taking with this lady are not good enough. ... As far as I know, because a girl from the Polish Centre has called them, there are courses in Polish but they wouldn't tell you when ... [When] we called [them] it turned out that the course had already started, and I couldn't join it.”*

In fact the course has never been offered in Polish, and interpreters (including friends, family members) are welcome as long as their English is good enough to understand the course. But only Poles with good language skills have taken up the course so far.

9.7.4 Polish attitudes to the CJS

The Poles accepted that ignorance of the law was a major problem:

- *“Obviously, it happens like this – a driver is needed, he's got the right qualifications, experience and so on, and he gets behind the wheel. And he doesn't get anything ... [He needs] the Highway Code in the first place – in Polish and [it] says about everything.”*
- *“Yes, they told me, but I told them that I'd never heard of anything like that ... I've been here so long, no one had told me. I have a [Polish] driving licence, we are in the EU, I work, don't I? I work and I drive.”*
- *“Because when I was [abroad] I did know that it was 0.8, and I had a beer and could without worries get behind the wheel. Even if I smelled beer, when I was breathalysed, I knew it was 0.8. And here [the UK] I was also convinced [it was 0.8] ... [the employer] didn't say, no one was interested. It was like, when I asked: ‘So how much is it here?’ – ‘0.8- they say – that you can have two beers and drive.’*

But some are quite aware of the law and still breach it:

- *“They caught him a day after his [court] case, because he still was driving.”*
- *“I knew it was my fault, I'd started the car ... I knew that there is such a law, that if a car has the engine on and you're drunk, that you're ready to drive.”*
- *“My fault – one must face the music. I understand the other side. My ignorance, my stupidity, is to be blamed.”*

There is also a problem regarding the seriousness of the offences, comparing to experiences in Poland:

- *“In Poland, if being over the limit, you would only pay a fine ... The fine they gave me, it's very high fine, and not only the fine is very high they've also suspended my driving licence ... It doesn't make sense.”*

- *“In Poland, it varies, say from 6 months to 2 years, and here they obviously follow a fixed rule.”*
- *“The judge, when the case started, he said that it simply happens with the Poles, and the sentence [for drink driving] is more strict now, and unfortunately, but I had 2 year [driving ban].”*

The latter seems to be misinterpreting sentencing policy, but the general impression from the Poles is that sentences are unduly harsh in the UK.

The Polish network may be one channel to raise awareness:

- *“I found out about [consequences of breaching a driving ban] post factum - somewhere in some news paper we bought, and copied. And I gave it as a warning to everybody, that if one has a ban, that if one was caught, stopped, driving on the ban etc. that one can even go for a year to prison.”*

One felt that the language problems made for an overly heavy-handed approach:

- *“There is one minus, that [the police] arrest you for any small thing, for example, they arrest you for a night and then release you in the morning. It doesn't make sense, that they arrest one for a petty thing, it doesn't make sense – there should be more serious reasons [for one to be arrested]. They should sort out one straight away instead of waiting [with it] till the morning ... They say they can't bring an interpreter now because it's 8 or 9pm, and we have to wait till next day.”*

And some were frightened in custody, mainly because they had difficulties understanding what was happening or going to happen to them:

- *“[My colleague] said he didn't understand, he was very scared.”*
- *“One was horribly nervous, you know ... I was scared that maybe they would put me to jail here, or something, because I didn't know what it was like in this country.”*

But overall the Poles were pleased with the treatment they received and responded in kind:

- *“They treated me very well. I remember that a policewoman came up if I wanted a cup of coffee, tea, some doughnuts, ‘maybe you'll have some breakfast because the finger prints must be still taken, maybe coffee?’ All the time they kept asking whether I wanted anything. I told them that really I didn't want to put them into any trouble, and wanted to go home.”*
- *“They treated me very good; they treated me like a normal man. They offered everything, coffee, tea, that's sort of things. Really, they were very nice.”*
- *“No, no, the policemen were really polite... The policeman said that I was courteous, polite”*
- *“[Of contact with police:] I'm sure better than in Poland. They look better after a victim, and give more support, when they can, [more] than in Poland, certainly. [The police] are somehow more tolerant ... They simply do not abuse the fact that they are policemen and that they can do lots, only try to help.”*
- *“No, neither they treated me aggressively, nor I was aggressive towards them. Generally speaking the conversation with those policemen, and later at the police station, was so normal.”*
- *“[Of police procedures:] Of course, comparing to us – to Poland - it's really OK, elegant, if one can call it elegant under these circumstances.”*
- *“Eee, I don't have anything against them ... Polish police is worse, I think.”*
- *“The worst thing for me was the fact that they had handcuffed me, as if I were some big criminal, really something like that – the handcuffs, and the rest I think was good. They treated me ... good, you know, polite, calmly, no one was shouting, or anything like this.”*

As a result, when asked about improvements to the CJS, most of the Poles were broadly content with the treatment they received. The only identified requests were more basic information in Polish – and lighter sentences.

9.8 Other support services

The only significant support services to have dealing with Poles alcohol problems was the Polish Centre in Llanelli. However, this is primarily for the purposes of translation or finding appropriate contacts. The Polish Centre was unaware of any drug-taking in their client base, although they heard rumours of cannabis smoking amongst young Poles.

Two women have contacted the Women's Aid centre in the last four years. Other than that, no other agencies reported having Polish clients; if they did, they caused no particular problems and so the interviewee was unaware of them. Carmarthenshire A&E have no formal record of alcohol-related Polish cases in the first six months of 2009, but appears to be based on an analysis of surnames; nationality is not recorded.

10 Discussion

The original research questions posed by this project were:

- Is there a substance misuse problem in the Polish migrant community?
 - If so, does it come within DIP's scope (ie are crimes being committed)?
 - And if so, why is it not being recognised?

One of the solutions proposed was that Poles tend to drink rather than take drugs; because abuse of alcohol is harder to detect than drug use, it was likely that there was substance abuse, but well hidden.

This report qualifies that initial hypothesis in a number of ways:

- Poles do drink, but not necessarily more than the Welsh – they drink differently
- There is drug use amongst the Polish community, not completely dissimilar to the Welsh
- Alcohol abuse seems to be leading to crimes, although the nature of those crimes is changing
- There are reasons why substance abuse amongst the Poles is not picked up –but there are also systemic issues which, often, the Polish situation makes worse
- The 'first wave' of migrants in 2004-2006 seemed to behave in a significantly different way to the current wave, who tend to be more settled with families, integrate more, and get into trouble less.

This discussion will focus on the three original questions. Where the discussion leads to recommendations, these are highlighted in the text and detailed in the next section. The discussion will also review the role of other service providers.

10.1 Is there substance misuse amongst the Poles?

10.1.1 Do Poles drink?

The Poles do drink: they drink throughout the week (the so-called 'beer fun' after work), and they often binge at weekends or on days off. Some Poles do not drink, and some drink heavily and continuously. But overall there is little evidence that they drink more than the Welsh – in total. The difference is in the way the Poles drink.

They drink in different places: home is the most important place, and then public places and discos. Poles do not on the whole drink in pubs because they are very price-sensitive – hence the popularity of all-you-can-drink-for-a-tenner discos. Where they do go to pubs (for example in Carmarthen), they tend to go to pubs with other Poles rather than mixing.

Discos are popular among young, or single, Poles. In 2004-2006, more Poles used to go to discos, and in big groups of 8-10+ men; they would go mainly as a group of colleagues from work, regardless of age. They were regular, weekly, events that could start in a pub and progress to a disco, with no home drinking beforehand. Since 2006, things have changed. Most of the first wave have either gone back or brought their families over and moved on from a bachelor lifestyle to a more settled family life. Poles still go in groups, but smaller, and it is more age group orientated. Most importantly, the new groups tend to 'pre-load' at home before going out. This is more similar to the typical Welsh pattern of home drinking, then pub, then nightclub, except that Poles skip the middle phase.

Unlike the Welsh, the price-sensitive Poles drink mainly at home; the cost of going to pub is one of the major issues for the Poles. Drinking at home also removes the barriers found in a pub: one can chat intimately with friends, speak one's own language, smoke; there is no time limitation, no need to go out anywhere after a long day at work and to drive home when drunk, at least for the host.

The Poles tend to drink around their working hours – 1-2 beers after work in front of the TV – and binge on their days off and weekends. Drinking often starts in the afternoon preceding a day off, and housemates and colleagues may join in even if they are working the following day. The Poles also drink on an occasion like name days, birthdays, promotions, getting a new job, family/friends arrival, even meeting a friend ... There is a Polish saying that 'every occasion is good enough'.

In the first wave male group drinking between randomly allocated housemates in multiple-occupancy housing (MOH) dominated, with peer-pressure to join in a constant feature. As the current group of the Poles moved out from agency accommodation to privately rented houses/flats, house drinking is more a matter of choice, allowing one to socialise with one's own social circles.

Cultural differences show up in several ways. In good weather, Poles are likely to drink outside – in public places, in their front gardens, or in front of the house. They are also likely, throughout the year, to buy a beer on the way home from work and drink it there and then with their mates. On the other hand, Polish women drink much less than their Welsh counterparts – there is still a very strong taboo against drunk women.

Many of the Poles work in businesses with large Polish workforces, particularly in Llanelli and Llanybydder. The combination of shift working and the desire to drink with workmates may be one reason for the impression that Poles are heavy mid-week drinkers, not just weekend bingers. Weekly pay will also tend to concentrate bingeing sessions.

Many Poles seem to drink for more negative reasons, like stress, loneliness, isolation, lack of alternatives; because of this, some of them are believed to drink more than they would have done in Poland. This can give the impression that a gathering of Polish drinkers is a more serious experience. In contrast, the Welsh (and some young Poles) drink more for positive reasons: to have fun, to party.

The net combination of these factors is that Poles drinking are often a highly visible minority; and while they may not actually drink more than the Welsh, that visibility reinforces the stereotype of Poles as heavy constant drinkers.

Note that there is also a sense that the dynamics are changing. Younger Poles, and those who have settled down, are becoming more like their Welsh counterparts. For example, groups of Polish women getting together over a bottle of wine may be a developing phenomenon.

10.1.2 Why is the rate of alcohol-related offences so low?

The official proportion of alcohol-related arrests (about 25%; see Section 4) is too low; police, service providers and Poles agree on this. Most Poles arrested (70%-90%, according to interviewees) appear to have taken significant quantities of alcohol.

The disparity appears to be caused by the difficulty in recording alcohol as a contributing factor to a crime. There are 'alcohol-specific' crimes which are recorded but for others, there appears to be some confusion over what should be recorded. Should a theft be recorded as alcohol-related if the perpetrator is drunk? Does it matter if he is stealing more alcohol?

Finney and Simmonds (2003) proposed a definition of 'alcohol-related crime' as

- *instances of crime and disorder that occurred, and/or occurred at that level of seriousness, because alcohol consumption was a contributory factor.*

One ARW suggested a working definition for referral of

- *Crime related to alcohol or committed under the influence of alcohol*

Other definitions could be suggested. However, there is a clear need for an agreed definition so that the scale of alcohol-related crime can be properly identified.

⇒ **Rec 1.1 (define 'alcohol-related')**

Recording the offence comes down to the judgement of the custody sergeant, and custody officers felt that the fact that an arrestee was under influence of alcohol did not automatically make the case 'alcohol-related'. For the police, the main concern is recording the offence correctly; contributory factors are of lesser importance. To ensure compliance with wider recording of offences it is therefore important that custody officers can put an 'alcohol-related' tag onto any offence with a minimum of disruption to core arrest recording activities.

⇒ **Rec 1.2 (facilitate reporting)**

10.1.3 Do Poles take drugs?

Almost all British service providers denied any knowledge of Poles taking drugs, although some suspected that, given the demographic profile, there must be some drug taking in this group⁹.

In fact, drug-taking in the Polish community is widespread. It is difficult to say exactly how much: Poles tend to exist in discrete sub-groups, and those interviewed about drug use tended to extrapolate from their own (drug-using) community to the whole population. Nevertheless, some evidence from a variety of sources amongst the Polish community is widely substantiated:

- the main drug takers are in their twenties and early thirties, although some drug use does occur in all ages
- cannabis is the most widely used drug, mainly smoked at home; having a couple of joints might complement or take the place of the post-work beer
- amphetamines are often taken at discos and house parties
- ecstasy is largely taken at discos; it may be taken at home
- cocaine seems to be taken during parties at home; occasionally at nightclubs
- there is no suggestion of Poles using heroin

The cannabis users all see themselves and others as occasional or recreational users; this is very much an 'unwinding' drug. Like alcohol, consumption is strongly related to paydays. Most agree that the drug habits are brought over from Poland – and in some cases new habits (such as the use of cigarette holders) are being taught to the Welsh.

Interestingly, there seems a little bit more interaction between the Welsh and Poles when taking drugs compared to taking alcohol – possibly because of sense of shared illegality. But one difference is that Poles seem much more cautious about risking their employment.

There was some evidence of drug-taking at schools by Polish and Welsh children. This was outside the remit of this report and so was not pursued, but may be an issue for other agencies to follow up.

10.2 What crimes are committed?

In general, Poles are perceived to be a much bigger problem than they are. Poles seem to commit no more crimes, and probably fewer, than the locals in relation to the size of their population. However, their crimes tend to be public-order offences and alcohol plays a larger part than it does for locals.

⁹ In June 2009, after the interviews had been completed, police provided updates on new intelligence of drug-taking in some areas, although no arrests have been made at the time of writing.

10.2.1 Public drinking

Although not itself a crime, Poles drinking in public is a source of tension and may lead to criminal outcomes.

Buying a beer and drinking it immediately outside is a habit brought over from Poland, where the local 'kiosk with beer' helped to establish social acceptance of street drinking. Although in Poland it is being replaced by a growing pub culture, it is still present in some areas, especially in small towns. As in Poland, outside drinking often is a social event, a Polish equivalent of the pub, with Poles congregating in smaller or bigger groups to enjoy their after-work beer – and sometimes a before-work beer. It may also be a convenience: a handy stop for a 'quick beer' on the way home. Some of it is due to a lack of space at home to drink with friends, or to hide it from partners; and during the summer it occurs simply because Poles enjoy good weather and fresh air while drinking.

Groups of Polish men drinking in public can have an intimidating effect on locals unused to such behaviour. While there have been few actual incidents, there is often an aftermath in the form of litter left behind.

Education helps; some Poles have already learnt that being seen in public with a beer will make the locals complain, and will try avoid friction by drinking at home. Other Poles may hide the bottle or can, rather than stop at all. But cultural habits die hard, and without places outside where the Poles can enjoy their beer cheaply (or more cheaper than the pub), the problem always will be present to some extent on the park bench, bus stop or back lane.

In some areas, like in Llanybydder, the problem has been addressed by issuing a 'code of behaviour' distributed in the Poles' work place and the local Polish shop. Unfortunately the problem recurs with the arrival of new groups of workers. As Llanybydder shows, work places are good places to start this education, as majority of the Poles are work migrants; but this is a continuing education project because much of the workforce is transient.

⇒ Recs 6.1-6.3 (outreach worker)

10.2.2 Drink-driving

Drink driving is reported by both the police and the Poles, although the Polish focus groups described it as rare and service providers thought it was declining. While most denied it, some young Poles do admit drink driving to a disco and back; bravado plays a part in their responses. Although the majority of the disco fans living in Llanelli or Carmarthen reported walking to their local night clubs, Swansea is popular as a night out too, and Lampeter amongst the Llanybydder group. But taxis are used by Poles despite the cost, and Poles do arrange 'designated drivers', even if there is a feeling that all-nighters put too much strain on them and they will also end up drinking as well.

Drink-driving seems to be decreasing for three main reasons. First, the driving ban hits Poles hard. Second, fines have a massive impact on the low-earning Poles. Third, effective social networking helps disseminate the right message, about both the law and fines.

However, areas that are still causes for concern are short trips – typically to re-stock alcohol during a party – and morning-after driving. Poles admit that this goes on and rely upon the shortness of the trip to protect them. For example, a house-party might lead to several, increasingly drunken, trips to the supermarket, but the overall chance of being caught is small. The risk of apprehension is thought to be low, and so driving whilst banned is acknowledged to be common – some respondents made a show of the number of times they were stopped by police without their bans surfacing.

Both focus groups and offenders proved that the Poles do not know the legal limits for drink driving. Some claimed there was no need to know the limits because they did not drink and drive (despite evidence to the contrary). Some news does circulate about the blood-alcohol limit of 80mg/litre and the breath-alcohol limit of 35mg. This is important for Poles, who are

conditioned to think of alcohol limits in milligrams rather than tangible limits such as 'units', pints or glasses of wine. Some Poles claimed that confusion over allowable limits led them to drinking and driving, but this is difficult to sustain¹⁰, and they do not seem to try to resolve their confusion. It is more likely that offenders invent such an argument to justify their actions. However, there is no doubt that a lot of misinformation circulates in the community; many respondents were uninterested in finding out the facts; and most Poles learn the myths from their friends and the law only in the Police station.

⇒ **Rec. 5.3 (leaflets for Poles on safe drinking, alcohol law and penalties)**

10.2.3 Drunk and disorderly

Despite widespread perceptions, there is no hard evidence that the Poles are more likely to be drunk and disruptive than the locals; both nationals get drunk on their nights out and fights happen on both sides. The Poles do feature in Police statistics for drunk and disorderly or drunk and violent, predominantly at weekends, although probably proportionately less than would be expected given the size of the population.

However, unlike the Welsh - and admitted by the Poles themselves - the Poles often fight with each other within the group they drink and go out with. The majority of fights among friends are short-lived and the differences seem to disappear once they get sober. Interestingly, in relation to fights on a night out, the Poles mainly commented on the Polish-Welsh aspect of the problem. The service providers focused more on the Polish-Polish conflicts. There was agreement that the 'first-wave' Poles were generally involved in more trouble, although even in the current wave there is a problem with young Polish males.

One source of conflict may be the different drinking cultures: Poles drinking for negative reasons and in a serious way. The Welsh are seen as more likely to defuse any potential frictions among friends or strangers with a joke. Language may also play a part, especially when allied with Poles' habit of gesticulating while talking. It is easy to generate scenarios where friendly interactions can escalate into conflict, even without alcohol being involved (and it always is).

The perception of the prevalence of fights with the Poles' participation varies; the Polish community in general agree on a couple of fights a month, which supports police statistics and the views of service providers. However, young Poles and ex-offenders paint a more problematic picture, with fights on a weekly basis. The difference in opinions on prevalence between the Polish community and the young disco-goers seems to support the Poles functioning in social sub-groups.

The fact that higher numbers of fights are not reflected in the statistics may be attributed to four main factors.

First, there may not be a higher number of fights; this might just be bravado by younger males, or a misperception of one group extrapolating to the rest of the population.

Second, security staff at discos are effective at either defusing potential conflicts, or breaking up fights once they have started; on such occasions, police will not be called and fights go unreported.

Third, fights between Poles may not be recorded – the Poles do not like to involve the police unless strictly necessary.

Finally, not all fights attended by police end in arrest. According to the Polish disco goers, many factors can come into play, like the disappearance of the parties involved, the incident being classified as low harm, Poles acting in self-defence and not keen on reporting the other

¹⁰ To argue that misunderstanding is a cause for overestimating limits requires Poles to take 80mg as the breath-alcohol limit in the UK, convert this to an equivalent blood-alcohol limit of 180mg and then relate this to the Polish limit of 20mg – in other words, to believe that the UK drink-drive limits are nine times higher than in Poland.

side, or satisfactory explanations on the Polish part not contradicted by CCTV or the staff. Also, some Polish respondents reported being actively discouraged by the intervening police officers from reporting an incident as 'not worth a hassle'. The respondents stressed the additional time and cost the police need to spend on arresting Polish nationals, as a barrier in itself to a bigger number of Polish cases.

Poles see differential treatment as favouring the Welsh, and increases their impression of themselves as more victim than culprit. They report unjustified arrests due to the language barrier, and Polish use of gesticulations and rising voices when drunk and frustrated over the communication barrier. Some of the police officers also recognised this situation, and are wary of accusations of racism sometimes being made as a response to arrest.

Two further sources of worry are that Poles are regularly carrying knives, and that many of them are criminals on bail or suspended sentences in Poland.

There is little evidence to support or dismiss these beliefs. There have been incidents involving knives, and at least one widely-cited case of a serious crime committed by a Pole; but the reported knife incidents took place in private surroundings, and the crime was committed by an ex-offender, not someone evading justice in Poland. Overall, the perception of Poles as knife-wielding, fugitive criminals seems to be driven by a small number of spectacular cases – and the Polish community also circulates this information.

Women do not feature in Police statistics for drunk and disruptive behaviour. The difference can be attributed to a strong disapproval by the Polish community of females drinking heavily in public.

⇒ **Recs 6.1-6.3 (outreach worker)**

10.2.4 Domestic violence (fighting)

The weekend and day off drinking is more spirits orientated, and turns into long hours or all day socialising, often finishing after midnight. Polish socialising can have more serious overtones, as Poles like to express and discuss strong opinions during their social events, both with friends and families. Alcohol on such occasions can inflame the differences in opinions and lead to fights, especially among the men. In bigger gatherings or family-friends meetings, other participants will try to defuse conflicts. Generally, alcohol-fuelled fights are short-lived and the police are not called.

The police reported the Poles fighting among themselves one day and socialising the day after as a Polish-specific behaviour. The Poles themselves treat the fights as a typical alcohol related behaviour and 'alcohol fights' among friends/relatives are believed to be short lived animosity; they are not reported as offences, and the male focus groups tend to speak about fights among drinking friends or housemates with laughter.

However, there are police and victims' reports of the Poles' fights leading to serious assaults, including stabbing. The research showed that alcohol-fuelled fights occur both between close friends and acquaintances alike, but serious incidents with body damage or stabbing are more likely to occur among members of different social circles who happen to attend the same social event, share the same accommodation, or work together. This problem was therefore most common in MOH, and so the movement of Poles into private accommodation may be one reason for the reported decline in fighting in recent years.

The Poles identify the workplace as source of much conflict among working colleagues due to the high stress working environment and Poles' confrontational approach to disputes. Some of the conflicts spill outside their workplace. There is no indication how big a problem this is, but it might be expected to increase in coming months as rising unemployment increases tensions.

⇒ **Recs 6.1-6.3 (outreach worker)**

10.2.5 Domestic violence (family abuse)

There are indications that domestic abuse has become a problem since 2006, possibly because more Poles are now bringing their families over. Although police report low figures in general, their impression was that domestic assault and accusations thereof have been increasing since the end of 2008. Although the blame is placed on worsening economic conditions, alcohol is always a contributory factor.

The Polish Centre in Llanelli receives reports of domestic abuse and refers them to local women's aid organisations. Two Polish women have referred themselves to such organisations since 2004, and some cases have been reported to police by the abuser's family.

It seems that young Poles are more likely to report domestic abuse. This may be another consequence of Poles settling down and becoming more like the Welsh. Polish police are reluctant to involve themselves in domestic affairs as these are not seen as a strictly police problem; instead, it is a 'victim protection problem', and a Polish woman has nowhere to move if her family do not help.

Poles are now becoming aware that domestic abuse is within the remit of the UK police, and that the victim support organisations exist. However, Poles often do not understand the practice of confidentiality in the UK; and language is still a problem for the older generations. Also, in some families the abuser may be the only wage earner, and so complaints may be hidden not to have an impact on employment. This is more important for the Poles than the Welsh, as the former may not be eligible for benefit (on the other hand, employment rates for females are much higher than for the Welsh, and so the impact might be less).

Two features are important. First, the Polish information networks have been crucial in circulating information about support services, criminal law etc. Second, the recent increase in domestic abuse reports suggests that the dissemination of information is still continuing; and so a further rise in domestic abuse may be expected. However, this is starting from a very low base with less than five cases of domestic abuse over the last five years reported to the researchers.

⇒ Recs 6.1-6.3 (outreach worker)

10.3 Why do Poles not appear in the CJS records?

Poles appear on custody records; but only occasionally as alcohol-related and never on drug-related charges. This latter figure is statistically unlikely given the evidence for Poles' drug-taking, even allowing for the relatively small number of Poles (and the even smaller proportion that take drugs regularly). However, there is evidence of breaks in the chain of events which lead to arrest, referral and engagement; and some of these reduce still further the likelihood of Poles being arrested for substance-abuse related crimes.

10.3.1 Are arrest rates low for Poles?

As noted above, there are several reasons why crimes or disturbances involving Poles might go unreported. One function of the police force is to maintain public order, but public-order offences do not always end in arrest. Police officers defusing, for example, an alcohol-fuelled fight at a nightclub may take the view that the public benefit is best served by separating the participants and letting them cool off and sober up. This is true for locals as well as Poles, but for the latter the balance may be affected by the higher cost in time and translation fees in dealing with someone who doesn't speak English. As noted above, there are reports of cases where the police actively discouraged Poles from pressing post-fight charges.

If this is the case, then repeat offenders in the Polish community are less likely to be picked up. For example, there are groups of young disco-goers who binge drink at least once a week

for two days and have seen a number of fights. These are clearly within the scope of DIP/Prism but are not being identified at the arrest stage.

Nor are those picked up for low-key offences such as being drunk and incapable. Alcohol-related arrests of Poles are dominated by obvious offences like drink driving, motoring, domestics, or thefts of alcohol. Hence the focus may be on the unavoidable cases, as opposed to those low key alcohol related ones (that may be coupled with some drug use) that do not result in arrests and thus go unrecorded.

Against this, the Poles feel that they are more likely than the locals to be taken to the station. This is put down to a lack of understanding of Poles by police, and an unwillingness to deal with language problems on the spot.

Statistically, there is no strong support one way or the other; the number of Poles being arrested is too small.

Attempts to get a better feel for the arrest rate are confounded by the mobility of the Poles. One respondent reported that substance-abuse problems can appear (and disappear) overnight with the arrival of new groups of workers at the start of the season, for example. Arrests of temporary workers may lead to underestimate of repeat arrests of long-term migrants. There may be a discrepancy between arrests and conviction because some Poles may leave the country before sentencing. And the difficulty in checking international criminal records quickly may lead to a failure to identify (and arrest) repeat offenders who have committed crimes in other countries.

10.3.2 Why are there no drug-related arrests?

Poles tend to smoke cannabis at home, and in close circles of family and friends. It is also taken at private parties, along with amphetamines and cocaine. They are careful not to smoke in public places, and mostly unwilling to jeopardise their employment by smoking at work (there are some exceptions).

Within households, non-smoking Poles are often encouraged to 'have a go' with cannabis, as an adjunct to the evening beer. This would increase complicity and reduce the chance of being reported but generally non-smoking Poles within households are unlikely to report their flatmates; this would often mean reporting on someone's friend, and in the extended social networks practised by the Poles could lead to ostracism from the community. As Poles post-2006 are increasingly sharing houses with friends and family, the chance of housemates informing is likely to decrease further. Besides, Poles do not see cannabis as 'real' drug like heroin or cocaine. They are also unwilling to bring things to the attention of the police unless they really have to; co-operation with the police is not a cultural norm.

The Poles in Carmarthenshire do not seem to traffic drugs commercially, which would bring them to the attention of the police¹¹. Poles that deal are largely doing it on an ad hoc basis for friends or colleagues, not as a business. Even amphetamines and ecstasy brought from Poland are likely to be for personal use rather than redistribution. Police efforts are more likely to centre on major suppliers or cannabis growers, and none of the respondents identified these as Polish activities in Carmarthenshire.

One additional reason why Poles might not be arrested for drug offences is that drug use is hidden by alcohol. Poles take drugs at discos, but also mix them with alcohol. As noted, alcohol is identified as the direct cause of the offence in a vast majority of cases: it is observable without equipment, and stereotyping of Poles as heavy problem drinkers suggest there is no need to look any further for the cause of the offence. However, discussions with the Poles suggest that many of those arrested at night clubs will also have been taking drugs.

¹¹ One of the limitations of this research is that the researchers would be unlikely to make contact with commercial traffickers if they existed. However, users interviewed were relatively open about their sources of supply and did not contradict the notion that most supply by Poles was personal. There were unconfirmed reports of Polish attempts at commercial supply in major Welsh cities.

As result, custody officers may be missing drug use in favour of a more obvious cause of incoherent behaviour.

10.3.4 Do ARWs make contact with Poles?

For someone who is not actively looking for help at the police station, asking two short yes/no questions about their drug or alcohol use is not the best way to sell the service. Poles are suspicious of the police: they do not know the British criminal system in detail, and may be afraid that volunteering information on substance abuse, legal or otherwise, could jeopardise their legal situation.

The police custody environment is an issue. Poles do not understand British rules on confidentiality; and service providers agree that it is difficult for all nationalities to cope with the idea that the ARWs are not part of the police process.

This situation is made more difficult because, as both police and service providers acknowledge, the arrest referral process does not work as smoothly as it should.

First, ARWs are only available for a short period of time during the day – and not at all at the weekend, which is the key arrest time for alcohol-related offences. They are generally not available to come into the station at short notice at the request of the police.

Second, there is a certain contradiction in the role the Police and ARWs play at the Police station. The latter is obliged to work in strict confidentiality to the former, but at the same time the ARWs need police cooperation to secure access to and information on drug and alcohol cases. In short, the police are supposed to provide all support possible whereas the ARWs need to work in separation to the Police.

Third, the term ‘arrest referral’ itself may cause confusion in detainees’ minds. Kreft et al (2008) also noted this confusion amongst ethnic minorities in Cardiff, and suggested that the ARWs be ‘rebranded’ to make the separation of roles more explicit. For Poles, who will recognise the word ‘arrest’ (‘aresztować’, pronounced ‘arrestovach’) but not ‘referral’ this is particularly important.

Fourth, the arrest referral process may slow down releases from custody, especially as the timing of the ARWs’ morning sweeps of the cells overlap with the Police releasing the detainees.

Fifth, ARWs should have access to ‘safe’ interview rooms for dealing with potentially dangerous clients; at the moment, these are only feasible in police stations.

Some direct recommendations can be made from this: to have ARWs on-site or on call whenever they are needed, and to have access to a fluent Polish speaker.

- ⇒ **Rec 2.1 (ARWs cover all peak periods)**
- ⇒ **Rec 2.2 (ARWs on-site with working space)**
- ⇒ **Rec 2.8 (review ARW name)**
- ⇒ **Rec 5.1 (DIP Polish speaker)**

These are expensive options; however, they are not mutually exclusive, and there may be some scope for combining, for example a Polish ARW with an outreach worker. There is also a need for piloting to assess the cost-effectiveness of the solution.

Adding more ARWs may not be expected to resolve all problems by itself. Overall, the problem seems to be that arrest referral does not seem to be integrated into police systems, and so there is a widely-expressed concern that ARWs work can get in the way of ‘real’ police business.

An outcome can be that prisoners infer that arrest referral is a low value service. If, as some report, ARWs are treated with a degree of contempt in some stations, this could send that

signal to the clients that the ARW does not have a strong enough position to be treated seriously.

The effectiveness of the ARWs in the stations is important. A personal contact with an ARW gives a higher success rate for referrals than just sending out letters. Without the ARWs, there is no duty on the police to 'sell' the service – in fact, actively 'selling' could lead to misunderstandings about the independence of DIP/Prism.

For Poles the likelihood of effective contact with an ARW is even lower because of the language difficulty. Poles tend to equate 'problem drinker' with 'alcoholic', and the nuances may escape them, even with a translator.

There may also not be a translator. The police can use the Language Line to get through the regular business of police work, and may require no further translation assistance. ARWs work outside the police system; they cannot call upon police resources to arrange a translator unless it is already necessary for police work. This increases the cost of ARW work enormously. As police resources are reported to be already struggling with unexpectedly high translation costs, there are unlikely to be any funds available to support civilian activities.

Ironically, if a translator is called in by police, the Poles may then have someone independent of the police to 'sell' services. Some of the time of the translators is spent in small talk with clients while police processes are pursued. This time could be used productively to encourage Poles to enrol in useful services, although care needs to be taken to ensure that translators' impartiality is maintained.

One way to address the low take-up rate is to make the arrest referral an opt-out system. The current opt-in system requires offenders to make a number of positive choices, and the custody officer to respond to those. While arrest referral may not be compulsory, a number of changes could be made to change the perception of it into something eligible prisoners get signed up to unless they express a contrary wish. As well as increasing the referral rate, it would move referral from an add-on to police processes towards making it a part of default procedures.

The key elements of moving from an opt-in to an opt-out system are that all the information is provided by default, that offenders should express a wish not to be referred, and that the police have an easy mechanism for creating appointments themselves. This latter point is important: unless an ARW is to be onsite to cover all periods of arrest, then police will have to take the step of setting up the appointment. A referral letter is not sufficient, as experience shows Poles will tend to ignore a letter suggesting they make a voluntary appointment; but they are more likely to make an appointment if it is given to them at the station.

⇒ **Recs 3.1-3.3 (default information sharing and appointments)**

A further implication is that ARWs and police have access to the same live system for making appointments. This is not onerous by itself – there are many on-line calendar systems – but if this is to be integrated into, for example, police technical solutions it may require some work.

⇒ **Rec 2.5 (set up appointments system)**

Finally, if an opt-out approach is adopted then this clarifies the role of translators. Their role is to explain what the service is, but they do not actively have to 'sell' it, allowing them to avoid accusations of partiality.

Introducing an opt-out system does not mean that there is no value in having ARWs at the police station. The physical presence of ARWs and an opt-out service are complementary solutions. On the contrary, joint planning for the implementation of all recommendations is essential. For example, more use of automatic appointments can speed up the process, and would allow a busy ARW at the station to prioritise contact with arrestees; however, if more initial contacts are not in person at the police station then there may be a need to have safe rooms at DIP/Prism offices for first meetings.

⇒ Rec 2.6 (safe room at DIP/Prism)

An alternative would be for the first appointment to require a return to the police station for interview when the ARWs do their regular rounds; or if an ARW is permanently based at the station appointments could be set for 'quiet' times. In summary, the cost-effectiveness of these options is intertwined.

10.3.5 What are the chances of Poles responding to the ARW and alcohol service referrals?

An arrested Pole's primary concern is to get out of the station and return home or to work; the latter is particularly important, as the Poles are very concerned about anything that could affect their jobs. The Poles are therefore likely to sign everything passed to them, without paying attention to what they are agreeing to, if they think it might help to get them out of the station.

However, once released the story changes. Poles rarely accept a service if it is not obligatory, and this is even more the case for anything to do with the police system. They

- are suspicious of the police environment – they do not understand confidentiality rules
- do not understand the legal system in the UK, and the implications of making or skipping referral appointments
- do not understand the service offered to them, confusing alcohol services with Alcoholics Anonymous
- deny alcohol problems – this is still a very macho culture
- do not believe that what one drinks is any business of the police or social services
- will not do anything if they think it might jeopardise their employment situation (for example, they might believe that DIP/Prism services would contact their employers)

In summary, Poles are offended by the suggestion that they might need help, assume that if they tell one person the world will know, and on that basis will avoid anything that is not mandatory. Having the information only in English makes it easier to ignore.

⇒ Recs 5.2 – 5.7 (information and letters for arrestees, in Polish)

10.3.6 Is there scope for increasing compliance through compulsion?

DIP/Prism is a voluntary service; it heavily relies on the ARW engaging a client, but there is a visible problem with motivation.

DIP is a complementary service to probation. The most valuable clients for DIP/Prism are those who are not going to be caught by probation: namely, those who will be fined or cautioned. Not fully recording alcohol related cases increases the chance that ARWs will miss this group of potential clients, especially the Poles who are mainly arrested for low-key offences.

⇒ Recs 1.1 & 1.2 (better alcohol reporting)

Asking Poles to sign up for arrest referral is probably ineffective. As noted, Poles at the station are likely to agree to anything that will shorten their time in custody, but without any intention to fulfil their obligations. This is particularly true if release procedures are taking place in the morning and the arrestee is desperate to get to work. This wastes ARW resources and distorts performance statistics.

Poles do respond if they can see a definite benefit. For example, a driving ban hits Poles hard, and so the drink driving rehabilitation course (DDRC) is popular among the Poles as they can reduce the banned period.

This suggests that using mechanisms which introduce an element of compulsion might be more effective. For example, the use of conditional cautions could be increased (and re-introduced for alcohol offences), where the condition is satisfactory engagement with DIP or Prism.

⇒ **Recs 4.1-4.4 (use compulsory mechanisms)**

In cases where conditional cautions are not appropriate but an arrestee is still eligible for referral, refusals to engage with DIP/Prism could be recorded and offenders made aware that this information can be requested by courts. This could be most effective when managed in line with automatic appointments and an opt-out system (see above). This would have the advantage of DIP/Prism being able to identify those who are arrested repeatedly but who refuse to engage. However, keeping records of refusals would not be appropriate in the case of those arrested and not charged.

⇒ **Recs 3.4 & 3.5 (record refusals to make or keep appointments)**

⇒ **Rec 3.6 (information on refusals shared)**

Greater use of incentives related to punishment would require clarity on what constitutes 'satisfactory engagement' with DIP and Prism. If more low-key offenders are to be introduced to the service, one would also expect that the need for interventions to be correspondingly lower, and so Prism, in particular, would need to be given the latitude to decide on the effectiveness of engagement over a wider range of clients. In addition, DIP and Prism are Tier 1/Tier 2 services only, and so their ability to achieve 'satisfactory outcomes' with more difficult cases is limited to their ability to refer cases on to other bodies.

⇒ **Rec 4.5 (define 'satisfactory engagement')**

10.3.7 Does the police perspective on ARWs need to be changed?

Motivation is necessary for police as well as offenders. Police officers are less keen to set up referrals for regular visitors to the cells – the 'what's the use?' view seems to predominate. Obviously those repeatedly arrested for alcohol and drugs offences are the ones that should be of most interest to DIP and Prism, and yet these seem, on the whole, less likely to be given a referral.

This comes back to the point raised earlier – that ARWs are not seen as part of the police procedure. The short-term disruption to police activities outweighs potential long-term benefits of addressing substance misuse through behavioural development. In this context, the lack of interest by police in referring repeat offenders makes sense – there is no point pushing for arrest referral if past experience leads you to expect no positive outcome.

This leads to a number of recommendations. First, it is not clear that there is some conflict between short-term and long-term objectives for ARWs and police. Second, less short-term disruption could lead to a more positive, joint, view on long-term outcomes.

⇒ **Rec 2.3 (review police incentives)**

⇒ **Rec 2.4 (review ARW procedures)**

Third, both police and ARWs having an explicit commitment to concentrate resources on repeat offenders would send a strong signal about the need to engage with major problem cases.

⇒ **Rec 1.3 & 1.4 (expand DIP remit to all alcohol-related cases)**

⇒ **Rec 1.5 (concentration on repeat offenders)**

10.3.8 Does the split between alcohol and drug services improve treatment?

Prism has been running for some years, providing Tier 1 and Tier 2 alcohol services. When DIP was set up, ARWs dealt with both drugs and alcohol services, the latter being provided

by Prism staff on secondment to DIP. In early 2009, changes in funding meant that alcohol interventions work reverted to Prism; DIP retained responsibility only for drug interventions. However, DIP remains the only ARW visiting police stations, and refers alcohol work to Prism.

In practice, DIP and Prism seemed to work closely together and so the split may be more conceptual than actual. Nevertheless, because the two bodies have separate funding and because the recommendations from this report have implications for both organisations, it may be useful to consider whether this has had an impact on treatment and its relevance to the Polish community.

The main issue from Prism's perspective is that it is a generic services provider: it has a standard treatment model, most of its clients are non-CJS referrals, and it focuses on personal rehabilitation. This makes it difficult for it to adapt to the requirements of the CJS. In particular, there is concern that if alcohol abuse is causing serious social harm, this should be dealt with under the CJS. A second concern is that referrals from the CJS are more likely to be violent or abuse offenders; dealing with these clients requires measures to ensure the personal safety of advisors, but in a non-CJS environment. Third, with DIP being the main source of contact at police stations, an additional stage is introduced before a client comes into contact with an alcohol worker, decreasing the chances of a successful referral. Finally, there is the administrative aspect: although conditional cautions, for example, seemed to be an effective way of engaging clients, they required a significant amount of commitment by both ARWs and police to get off the ground; part of the impetus came from DIP being part of the CJS.

On the other hand, Prism's greater scale of alcohol service provision across the community enables them to have specialist staff. The fact they work outside the CJS also allows them to work with clients who have not committed crimes. This may be important for Poles who are taken into custody for low-key offences but then are released without charge.

One option may be to revert to the previous model of alcohol intervention as a part of DIP's function. This would clarify the relationships between CJS and non-CJS services. ARWs could directly cover both drugs and drink referrals. This could speed up police procedures, allow the 3-session brief interventions model to be delivered without additional referral, and also allow a joint alcohol-drugs user to be effectively channelled to the right group. As drug use is almost always accompanied by alcohol use (but not vice-versa), this would also allow those arrested for alcohol offences to identify their drugs problems in confidence. This could be a way of drawing out hidden drug use.

⇒ Rec 2.7 (DIP responsible for alcohol cases initially)

Consideration of this issue is tied in to funding, and there may be other organisational reasons why the involvement of both Prism and DIP is more sensible. Nevertheless, there is now experience of several different ways of running alcohol services. Given the other changes recommended in this report, this would seem an appropriate moment to consider the involvement of CJS and non-CJS services.

⇒ Rec 0.1 & 0.2 (targets and organisational structures to be reviewed)

10.3.9 Role of other service providers

The role of other service providers in addressing substance misuse amongst Poles is difficult to assess because almost no other agencies have any Polish clients, with the exception of the dedicated Polish Centre in Llanelli. The latter has no direct role in substance misuse, acting largely as a clearing house for information and providing translation services.

However, one important point of contact is GPs. Poles, generally disbelieving of confidentiality claims by others, do put a comparatively high level of trust in doctors. This places GPs in a unique position to advise Poles on the service, and reassure them that, for example, contact with Prism does not mean one is an alcoholic. GPs would also be able to direct Poles to drug services, if not DIP (which is strictly available through the CJS in Carmarthenshire).

GPs may have difficulties communicating with Poles, and therefore an effective method of getting the information across may be leaflets in Polish. However, Poles do not tend to pick up leaflets unless they have already been prepared for them; and picking up a leaflet for Prism in a public waiting room would, to many Poles, be equivalent to admitting to a drink problem. Therefore giving GPs leaflets to distribute amongst Polish clients may be more effective.

⇒ **Rec 5.5 (GP leaflets)**

If GPs are to play the role of referral worker, then it would make sense for them to have some counselling, particularly in terms of Poles' view on confidentiality and trust. Poles do not place the same level of trust in A&E services as they do in doctors, and so changing this should also be a part of the information programme.

⇒ **Rec 6.4 (outreach worker to engage with health services)**

⇒ **Rec 6.6 (GP training)**

GP leaflets, and all the other information resources discussed, should be made available on the DIP website. This could also be included in the NHS 'Welcome Pack' for migrants.

⇒ **Rec 5.6 (DIP website and NHS Welcome Pack)**

Polish shops often provide a focal point for the Polish community. These may be an effective starting point for the outreach worker – as they were for this project.

Finally, one potential source for propagation of alcohol and drug services would be the Polish church. This is an organisation with regular access to the Polish community, and with contacts amongst charitable support services. Most importantly, the church is seen as a respecter of confidentiality, and so may be more trusted by Poles in crisis. The Red Cross is also an organisation with a high level of trust, and has been working with a Polish outreach worker in other areas. Other agencies (for example, women's support groups) may be carrying out a similar role, although they were not identified during this research.

⇒ **Rec 6.9 (possibility of volunteers)**

⇒ **Rec 6.10 (contact with church)**

⇒ **Rec 6.11 (outreach worker to engage with Red Cross)**

One of the roles of an outreach worker would then be to ensure that knowledge of this information resource is circulated. Another is to feed back to the service providers on whether the information being provided is appropriate and useful.

⇒ **Rec 6.5 (Bi-directional outreach)**

The Polish population is constantly refreshed by long-term and seasonal migration. This provides a particular problem for outreach workers who are continually required to engage with a new set of clients every few months. This also affects service agencies as the high turnover of Poles means that, for example, only brief interventions are liable to have a significant chance of success. Service agencies should therefore assume that referrals to other agencies (eg for Tier 3 services) is less likely to be taken up; and performance targets in respect of the migrant community should be set in terms of brief interventions.

⇒ **Rec 5.8 (DIP/Prism targets to reflect Polish mobility)**

There are two factors working in favour of an outreach worker trying to keep up with a developing population. First, the networking of Poles means that not all new arrivals need to be reached. As most new arrivals come knowing someone in the area, an effective education programme can be disseminated through existing contacts. Second, most of the Poles in Carmarthenshire work for a small number of large employers, and their seasonal work

patterns are predictable. This means that an outreach worker has an opportunity to target employers for mass communication programmes.

Thus the high turnover is a difficulty but not an insurmountable one. It does however suggest that an effective outreach worker should be actively targeting new arrivals and designing educational materials with a few to a regular turnover.

⇒ **Rec 6.8 (target new workers)**

Finally, one of the key recommendations from this report is the appointment of dedicated outreach worker. This outreach worker could also double as, for example, an alcohol/drug worker for DIP. However, this does not mean the outreach worker has to be fully funded by DIP, or work entirely for them. On the contrary, it may well be that an outreach worker shared between several agencies would enable synergies in those agencies' services to be exploited. A collaborative approach to outreach work should therefore be considered as a positive move to develop a cross-community working, not just as a way to share costs.

⇒ **Rec 6.7 (share outreach work)**

11 Recommendations

This section lists the recommendation from this study. Some are specific to the Polish community. However, some have wider implications for the substance abuse services. Note however, that these recommendations were drawn up after studying the Polish community; a detailed comparison with the experience of the Welsh was not attempted.

In the recommendations, Groups 1-4 reflect general service recommendations which affect the Poles but might also be relevant for other groups. The recommendations in Group 5-6 are targeted specifically at the Polish community.

Whilst these recommendations are thought to be reasonable, practical and requiring a feasible level of resources, no estimates of the costs of implementing these recommendations have been made. In particular, many of the recommendations would be expected to increase the number of DIP/Prism clients, requiring the resources to handle that increase.

11.1 Organisational recommendations

Although this report was commissioned by Carmarthenshire DIP, some recommendations require implementation by other bodies, individually or in combination with DIP. This research took the position that take-up of DIP services is part of a sequence of events, and that to ignore other parts of the chain would have limited the effectiveness of any response to the research questions posed by DIP. As a result, DIP in its current form cannot implement all recommendations on its own. This leads to a general recommendation for WAG as the ultimate funder of all parties involved

Rec. 0.1: Performance targets in respect of alcohol/drug referral should be set jointly for police, DIP and Prism

Rec. 0.2: The Welsh Assembly Government should review organisational structures and allocation of funding for DIP, Prism and the police to ensure effective implementation of the recommendations.

11.2 DIP/Prism/Police recommendations by function

1 Identifying ARW clients

These recommendations address the issues of identifying substance abuse. The number of alcohol related problems is difficult to say with certainty because of confusion over which offences should be classified as 'alcohol-related' and difficulty in recording this effectively. Where alcohol is the most obvious cause of arrest, this may mask unproblematic drug use.

Rec. 1.1: Agree and disseminate a definition of 'alcohol-related offending'

Rec. 1.2: Allow arrest recording systems to easily mark 'alcohol-related' as a contributory factor irrespective of the specific offence

Rec. 1.3: Extend DIP/Prism remit by including 'alcohol-related' as well as alcohol-specific offences

Rec. 1.4: Extend DIP/Prism remit by including all alcohol-related arrestees, not just those charged

Rec. 1.5: Identify those arrested more than twice for alcohol-related offences and prioritise for ARW contact

2 Creating the ARW contact

Direct contact with ARWs seems to be the best way of ensuring commitment to the DIP/Prism programmes. However, ARWs are only able to attend the police station for a small part of the time; they do not cover the peak arrest time at weekends; and when at the station they may disrupt police business. The latter may be because the police do not see sufficient value in

the ARW work, and hence do not allow for ARW requirements in their procedures. These recommendations are designed to improve ARW-police effectiveness.

- Rec. 2.1: Provide sufficient ARWs to cover arrestees on-site at stations for all peak periods, including weekends**
- Rec. 2.2: Provide a permanent ARW worker (including working space) in the police station**
- Rec. 2.3: Review police training on role of ARWs, focusing on impact of successful interventions on police work**
- Rec. 2.4: Review ARW procedures to see if they can be integrated more smoothly into police processes**
- Rec. 2.5: Develop an electronic appointment system for DIP/Prism which can be used by both police and DIP/Prism to create appointments from the custody suite.**
- Rec. 2.6: Provide safe room at DIP/Prism offices**
- Rec. 2.7: DIP to have responsibility for arrest referral/initial interventions for alcohol cases**
- Rec. 2.8: Consider renaming ARWs to remove 'arrest'**

3 Improving service uptake

The current system has many potential points where referral can fail. The recommendations below are intended to shift the emphasis from an opt-in to an opt-out service:

- Rec. 3.1: All those arrested for drug or alcohol-related offences to be given written information on DIP/Prism and the ARW process as a part of standard arrest procedures; the written information should emphasise the confidentiality of the process, separation from the CJS, and the lack of a fee**
- Rec. 3.2: Make appointments automatically with ARWs for those arrestees unless they ask not to be referred**
- Rec. 3.3: Provide arrestees with appointment information immediately as well as information (as in 3.1) on DIP/Prism service**
- Rec. 3.4: Refusal to have appointment to be recorded**
- Rec. 3.5: Failure to make appointments to be recorded**
- Rec. 3.6: Data from 3.4 and 3.5 to be made available to both DIP and police for following up repeat offenders**

4 Improving compliance

Motivation to take up appointments is a problem. An opt-out system may lower the motivation for those who do take up the appointments. These recommendations aim to improve attendance at appointments either by compulsion or by giving an incentive.

- Rec 4.1: Increase use of conditional cautions for alcohol offences, with satisfactory engagement with DIP/Prism as the condition**
- Rec. 4.2: Consider the feasibility of offering satisfactory engagement with DIP/Prism as an alternative to fines**
- Rec. 4.3: Encourage courts to take satisfactory engagement with DIP/Prism into account when considering sentences**
- Rec. 4.4 Explore other financial incentives that could be result from satisfactory engagement with DIP/Prism**
- Rec. 4.5: DIP/Prism to draw up policy on what would be seen as 'satisfactory engagement', with case study examples.**

5 Improving understanding

These recommendations address the issues relevant only for Poles; the main problems are language, knowledge of UK service, and misunderstanding of confidentiality laws in the UK.

- Rec. 5.1: DIP/Prism to employ at least one Polish speaker**

- Rec. 5.2: Leaflets on ARWs (as in Rec 3.1) to be made available in Polish**
- Rec. 5.3: Leaflets covering safe drinking and law on 'Polish-specific' drug-/alcohol-related offences to be made available in Polish**
- Rec. 5.4: Leaflets to address Poles' misperceptions of alcohol services as only for alcoholics**
- Rec. 5.5: Leaflets to be distributed to GPs for personal distribution (that is, rather than left for browsing in waiting rooms)**
- Rec. 5.6: Information from leaflets (5.2-5.5) to be made available on DIP websites, and in NHS 'Welcome Pack' for migrants**
- Rec. 5.7: ARW appointment letter should be in English and Polish; either as a copy of the letter in both languages, or as a letter in English with standard explanatory notes in Polish; the appointment letter to contain information as in 3.1**
- Rec. 5.8: DIP/Prism to have performance targets for migrants to reflect transient nature of the migrant population**

6. Polish outreach workers

The research suggests that Poles are not keen on engaging with CJS or support services, and will only respond to face-to-face contact. These recommendations are intended to improve the efficacy of the awareness-raising recommendations.

- Rec. 6.1: A Polish outreach worker for Carmarthenshire to be appointed, with the function of raising awareness of three main issues: UK law, UK service providers, and basic substance misuse information**
- Rec. 6.2: The outreach worker should build contacts with the Polish communities throughout Carmarthen**
- Rec. 6.3: The outreach worker should use these contacts and Polish networks to set up face-to-face meetings to cover topics in Recs 5.2-5.5; for example, workshops or small group discussions.**
- Rec. 6.4: The outreach worker should engage with community health services (including A&E) to circulate information to Poles about health effects, and about confidentiality**
- Rec. 6.5: The outreach worker should be a channel for Poles to learn about service providers and the CJS, and vice versa**
- Rec. 6.6: The outreach worker should seek to make GPs aware of Poles' perceptions of alcohol use, confidentiality concerns and role of GPs**
- Rec. 6.7: The possibility of sharing the DIP/Prism outreach work with other service providers in the region should be investigated**
- Rec. 6.8: The outreach worker should actively seek to engage with new waves of workers, possibly through major employers**
- Rec. 6.9: The possibility of using volunteers to engage the Polish community should be examined.**
- Rec. 6.10: The outreach worker should engage with the Polish church in South Wales to identify areas where the latter could contribute to outreach work**
- Rec. 6.11: The outreach worker should contact the Red Cross, and possibly other agencies, to build on their experience with Polish migrants**

Appendix A1 Polish migrants in Carmarthenshire

The information in this appendix is based on three main sources: the focus groups, the interviews, and the survey described in the Methods section.

The survey consisted of an assisted-completion questionnaire of 120 Poles in Llanelli carried out by Doleczek, Chambers, Dunkerley and Thompson (2009a), augmented with a further 120 interviews from Carmarthen and Llanybydder by Kreft. Doleczek et al (2009a) produced an initial tabular analysis of the data and a draft presentation (Doleczek et al, 2009b). A more detailed version of Doleczek et al (2009a) is in development.

Note that, in Carmarthen and Llanybydder, the survey was distributed via trusted agents rather than a random sample. Nevertheless, with a sample proportion approaching 40% in those towns, we are reasonably confident the results are accurate, particularly as the age/gender split reflects independent assessments of those populations.

Table A1.1 Survey sampling proportions

| | Llanelli | Carmarthen | Llanybydder | Carmarthenshire |
|--------------------------------------|----------|------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Estimated long-stay adult population | 714 | 154 | 164 | 1180 |
| Responses | 115 | 59 | 60 | 234 |
| Proportion | 16% | 38% | 37% | 20% |

See main text for the source of population estimates. Note that temporary workers may boost adult populations during peak season by up to 10%-30%

Additional data reported here was supplied directly to the authors.

A1.1 The source of migration

A1.1.1 Sources of migrants

Migrants came in two waves to the UK: the agency phase, and then the family connections phase.

Shortly after Poland joined the EU, UK employment agencies began developing contacts in the A8 countries, targeting areas where large numbers of workers could be brought over. One employment agency opened in the Polish town of Zychlin (pop 9,000), described in the focus groups as 'high unemployment, low education'; a predominantly agricultural town with one large employer which was closing down. The agency used this resource to provide employers in Llanelli with a large monocultural workforce. Focus group employees state that all the first wave of Polish employees came from this one small town. Word then spread to nearby Kutno (pop 48,000) and further afield.

A similar story unfolds in Llanybydder: workers from poor agricultural areas were brought over by agencies en masse. These workers had the additional advantage for the town's main employer, Dunbia, that they were used to working with meat, sheep in particular.

This initial phase lasted from 2004 until 2006. At that point, the large employers began taking on workers directly, rather than using agencies. Poles who had established themselves also started encouraging friends and family to come over. Information about job opportunities was spread more widely over the internet.

As a result the current group of Poles come from a much wider group of towns. They did still tend to arrive in groups from one area, but this seems more to do with networks of contacts spreading the word than activity on the part of particular agencies. However the list of home towns of current Poles still reflects the early concentration on small agricultural towns:

Table A1.2 Home towns of migrants

| Home town size | Llanelli | Carm. | Llanyb. | Total | |
|----------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----|
| < 1 thousand | 11 | 7 | 3 | 21 | 9% |
| 2-10 | 17 | 15 | 7 | 39 | 17% |
| 11-50 | 30 | 9 | 20 | 59 | 26% |
| 51-150 | 15 | 8 | 7 | 30 | 13% |
| 151-250 | 7 | | 8 | 15 | 6% |
| 251-500 | 11 | 8 | 5 | 24 | 10% |
| 501+ | 22 | 11 | 10 | 43 | 19% |
| Total | 113 | 58 | 60 | 231 | |

A1.1.2 Sources of information

Sources of information have changed since the first wave. According to the current wave, sources of information about working in Carmarthenshire are

Table A1.3 Sources of information about opportunities in Carmarthenshire

| Source of news about Carms. | Llanelli | Carm. | Llanyb. | Total | |
|-----------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----|
| Family member | 34 | 26 | 35 | 95 | 40% |
| Friends | 43 | 26 | 12 | 81 | 34% |
| Job agency | 22 | | 8 | 30 | 13% |
| Job centre in Poland | 5 | | 3 | 8 | 3% |
| Internet | 8 | | 2 | 10 | 4% |
| Newspaper | 3 | 2 | | 5 | 2% |
| Partner | | 5 | 2 | 7 | 3% |
| | 115 | 59 | 62 | 236 | |

That is, family and friends dominate with agencies being important but in third place. However, workers in the main factories estimate that agencies have, over five years, been responsible for 70% of the workers in the four largest factories.

The social network is more haphazard. For example, Poles coming from Przemysl (pop 65,000) and Konin (pop 81,000) seemed to find out from the internet and then tell their friends.

For those coming through social contacts the decision to work is often quite rapid:

- *“One comes after a telephone call: ‘Come over, there is work for you.’ In 3 days he’s here.”*

There is negligible time to investigate the place one is travelling to on this basis. However, this is almost irrelevant: friends and family will have sorted out accommodation and work, and anything else can wait. In this, the personal contacts are carrying out the role previously done by agencies. However, it was not always so straightforward: in the early years, Poles coming to work and relying upon friends or family to sort things out might have no idea what they were going to do when they arrived. Nowadays, no-one arrives ‘w ciemno’ (‘in the dark’) in respect of work unless they are coming to join their families. On the contrary, Poles will ask their friends or family in Wales to keep their eyes open for work opportunities.

An example is a large care home in Llandovery. Initially posts were filled by Poles responding to advertisements; but now the Polish network has substantially reduced the need for advertising.

It is interesting to note that in Carmarthen almost all information comes through personal contact. Carmarthen has no large employers as Llanelli and Llanybydder do. Hence the opportunities for agencies to achieve significant economies of scale in supplying a workforce are more limited, which may explain why Carmarthen relies much more than the others on direct contact.

This importance of networks in Carmarthen is reflected in the fact that almost everyone in the current group knew someone when they arrived:

Table A1.4 Contacts on arrival in Wales

| Knew someone on arrival? | Llanelli | Carm. | Llanyb. |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------|
| Yes | 58% | 95% | 78% |
| No | 42% | 5% | 22% |
| Total | 114 | 59 | 60 |

The difference in Carmarthen will be a recurring theme throughout this study. Notice, however that Llanybydder also shows the strength of networks.

A1.1.3 The role of agencies

As is well known in the migration literature, network effects are important for determining the path of migrants and their ability to work in different cultures. The first wave of Poles was actively sought by Polish and British employment agencies. These agencies provided housing, work, contracts, employment support services, and transport to workplaces. The agencies even organised travel from Poland to ‘unknown places’ like Llanelli and Carmarthen; this was more expensive than regular bus travel but it obviated Poles from the need to negotiate their way across Wales with no language skills (note that some reports eg Shipton (2006) took the view that this was profiteering by agencies).

The Poles operated in a largely Polish environment in the UK, and could quite feasibly live without the need to use English apart from the odd shopping trip. As a result, these agencies were crucial in establishing a critical mass for Polish migration to Carmarthenshire.

The agencies did bring over more nationalities in the first place. However, with the growth of the social networks, the role of the agencies has changed to become more of a facilitator if anything; and the Poles dominate migration. However, the focus groups thought that agencies were still important for a small but significant group of Hungarian migrants.

A1.1.4 Reasons for coming

Respondents to the questionnaire gave a generally consistent picture:

Table A1.5 Reasons for coming to Wales

| Reason | Llanelli | Carm. | Llanyb. | Overall |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| Needed money urgently | 34% | 41% | 56% | 41% |
| Favourable exchange rate | 33% | 20% | 29% | 29% |
| Looking for new experiences | 23% | 27% | 20% | 23% |
| Improving English | 17% | 16% | 16% | 17% |
| No work at home | 20% | 8% | 2% | 13% |
| To join partner/family | 8% | 24% | 11% | 13% |
| Responses | 109 | 51 | 55 | 215 |

These answers are not ranked in terms of importance (respondents could select as many as they liked), but needing money urgently was the most often cited reason for coming to the respondent’s location, particularly in Llanybydder. However, there is an interesting difference at the bottom of the table. 20% of those living in Llanelli mentioned the lack of work in Poland, apparently an unimportant consideration in Carmarthen and Llanybydder. In contrast, almost a quarter of Carmarthen-based respondents mentioned joining the family as one of the reasons to come to Wales. Overall, the impression is given that moving to Llanelli is the result of a negative decision; in Carmarthen, and to a lesser extent Llanybydder, it is a positive decision.

In the focus groups, answers were much more clear-cut: money is important.

- *“Even going to [the supermarket], for £10 I take back 2 shopping bags, as my wife loads me I struggle to get back home.”*
- *“Living in Wales, for the last two years ... I do not have to think I do not have money... That I am short of money to pay bills. I can afford everything and I still have money left. And, in Poland, unfortunately I didn't have it.”*
- *“We do bigger shopping here because we can afford this shopping.”*
- *“Budget, and once again budget! Home budget.”*
- *“It's easier to live here. The money is better. I can afford living here. I can afford to go weekly and buy something, like shoes or trousers. I can afford it, and support the family.”*
- *“A bigger ability of solving one's problems.”*
- *“One lives better life standard here, than in [one's] country.”*
- *“[In Poland] I can't afford [drinking] earning only 1000zl [£200]. To earn more I would have to work a day and a night ... I can afford here to have a beer every day, to smoke cigarettes. There, I would have to cut it short, I wouldn't afford it: a beer costs two loaves of bread in Poland.”*
- *“If everyone is working, everything is OK, we live here really a good life, we can afford buying a car, going on holidays.”*
- *“In Poland, a crisis is all the time . It's only more publicised now! Here one lives normally.”*
- *“I go to a shop and don't check how much what costs. If I feel like something, I take and buy it.”*
- *“If I go [to a shop] with 20zl in Poland, I cannot buy much, I spend 20zl, the fridge is still empty. Here I go [to a shop] with £20 and I buy a full plastic bag [of food].”*
- *“One cannot afford much in Poland especially if one has a family and children.”*
- *“If for an hour of work here I can buy 3 loaf of bread, in Poland I buy one, so there is already a difference?”*
- *“It is quite good money.”*
- *“I will work less here and earn more. In Poland I will work 3 times as hard and I will not earn the money I have here.”*
- *“If they are happy to live [in Poland] from pay day to pay day, on constant borrowing, I wish them the best, let them go back. I don't have to borrow here. I tightened the belt and in 3 months I bought a car here. In Poland I would probably have to work 3 years for it.”*

One particular fact struck home: the ability to buy a car, even on low wages:

- *“Go and buy in Poland a car for your weekly earnings! You won't buy even a bike!”*
- *“Surely, it's easier to buy a car here than in Poland... The car taxes are more expensive there.”*
- *[of having a car:] It's some kind of a dream to come true, because all his life one would like to have a house, a big garden, a car, or something ... We don't have any luxury cars we dream about, but here we can afford to make our dreams to come true, the basic ones that make our lives easier.”*

Buying a car, even ropey old second-hand ones, so quickly was a surprise to colleagues back in Poland.

So Poles come because the wages are higher and the cost of living is lower, especially in relation to wages. Even the butchers, skilled professionals who had no difficulties finding work in Poland, were tempted to come by the higher wages.

As well as the higher income, weekly pay is important:

- *“It is easier to survive having being paid weekly wages ... If on Thursday we do not have money but here there is something still in the fridge, than we will survive to Friday, and there is money on Friday. In Poland if one gets their wages once, so there are three weeks of ‘jako takiego zycia’ [‘life you can survive’], and later the week*

to the next wages ...How should the fridge be full to be enough to take us through a week?" "It is not only the fridge, but also the bills!"

For couples living together, there is a significant improvement in life:

- *"Here even if one person loses a job, and another one still works, one can afford to live here."*
- *"In Poland, a wife doesn't earn as much as a man, which is also important."*

The ability to save is important; if both partners are working, one salary can be put aside for a rainy day, spent on holidays, sent to Poland. Knowing that a family can carry on even if only one partner was working, even on the minimum wage, provides a strong sense of financial security:

- *"spokoj, psychiczny spokoj ['mental peace']"*

Not all jobs are better paid here – there were cash-in-hand jobs paying well in Poland, but there was obviously no security, health benefits, pensions and so on. But working in the UK gave a higher and more dependable standard of living – particularly as the Poles realised they were eligible for some welfare benefits.

A positive exchange rate prompted some to come – one focus group discussed the rate in 2004/5 and whether this combined with a 'get there while the jobs are free' mentality led to the early rush for jobs in an unknown environment.

Poles had a positive impression about the way businesses were run, even in the hard manual jobs:

- *"[The factory] employs all regardless of age, as long as they want to work, to come to work and follow instructions, that's all ... [Working there] is choosing the easiest option ... The firm helps an employee to sort out all the documents, all the forms, including Home Office, including NINo, and then gives some start for further life in the UK... it is good for start."*

For the more ambitious Poles, this was a good way to get a head start in a new market.

Older age groups were thought to be treated more equitably in the UK; in Poland those 50-plus have no chance to get a job in the current crisis (one focus group suggested even the over-40s were unlikely to find employment). However, the Poles did think that the disabled were better-off working in Poland.

Aside from work and financial considerations, other reasons mentioned by the focus groups were:

- Better social conditions
- The UK and Wales was a 'safe' place to live
- Avoiding conscription
- Not being aware of the nature of the work (although the speaker still stayed)
- Having a bit of adventure; seeing something new, better
- Families breaking up at home (divorce etc)
- Joining families already here

The latter group includes older/retired relatives joining children, sometimes to look after children; and adult children joining parents, often bringing partners.

For families, the financial situation can be significantly improved in the UK. Kindergartens allow mothers to go out to work. In addition, up until a child turns 16 it gets lots free of charge (eg dental work, glasses), whereas in Poland the amount of financial help is felt to be inadequate to the cost of bringing up a child.

A1.2 Personal characteristics of the Polish in Carmarthenshire

A1.2.1 Age and gender

The age and sex distribution varies between the three sites:

Table A1.6 Age and sex distribution of migrants

| Age | Llanelli | Carm. | Llanyb. | Overall | Male | Female |
|------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
| Up to 25 | 16% | 31% | 19% | 20% | 17% | 24% |
| 26-30 | 22% | 19% | 34% | 24% | 27% | 21% |
| 31-35 | 15% | 15% | 15% | 15% | 15% | 15% |
| 36-40 | 10% | 15% | 7% | 10% | 12% | 9% |
| 41-45 | 13% | 8% | 3% | 9% | 11% | 8% |
| 46-50 | 11% | 0% | 8% | 8% | 7% | 9% |
| 51+ | 13% | 12% | 14% | 13% | 12% | 14% |
| Responses | 114 | 59 | 59 | 232 | 128 | 104 |
| Age | | | | | | |
| Male | 48% | 58% | 67% | 55% | | |
| Female | 52% | 42% | 33% | 45% | | |
| Responses | 114 | 59 | 60 | 233 | | |

Llanelli has a relatively flat age distribution, apart from a large group in their late 20s. Llanybydder also has over a third of the respondents in the 26-30 age bracket, but few in the 36-50 range (although this is from a sample half the size). Carmarthen however is clearly skewed towards the younger age group, with almost a third of adult interviewees being under 25. The women are on average younger than the men although there are also proportionately more women in the oldest age bracket.

In Llanybydder the age distribution was identified accurately by the focus groups. One estimated that 50% of the Poles there are under 30, and that there is a second group of older workers aged forty and above. Another suggested that the village was dominated by 25-35 year olds, a third by the 20-40 year olds. All these are consistent with the above figures.

In Llanelli, one group estimated those in their 20s and 30s dominated, while another suggested that the 35-plus dominated. Given that the table indicates the median age is around 35, both responses are close to the truth; but this does indicate how the respondents saw their environment quite differently in some cases.

Interestingly, the women, who are on average younger, suggested under the 25-35 figure; the men, on average older, suggested the older age group dominates. Both groups are playing up the importance of the group to which they belong (what Gardner (2008) calls the 'Example Rule').

The gender difference is most evident in Llanybydder, with two-thirds of the population being male. Three-fifths of the population of Carmarthen is male. In Llanelli the population is relatively evenly split.

These numbers were reflected generally in the focus groups, who generally believed the gender split to be 50-50 in Llanelli, and 65-35 in Llanybydder. The exceptions were a group of women working in Llanybydder who thought the gender split was nearer 50-50 there as well (again, overestimating the size of their own group); and perceptions of Carmarthen which put the split at nearer 50-50 as well.

These tables reflect the current state of the Polish population. However, this has changed over time. The first wave was dominated by men – up to 75%, according to one estimate. This is related to the role of agencies in bringing Poles over in groups to work in manual jobs. Although women work in many of the same businesses (eg dominating packaging) the main requirement was for unskilled or skilled manual labourers.

This early period was also characterised by uncertainty about the type of work and the environment. It was thought 'easier' for the men to move to Britain and find out what the work and conditions were like. Once Poles began moving to Britain, information returned about the type of work, costs of living etc and more women began coming, often but not always as partners. They explored a wider variety of work, including cleaning and other part-time jobs. Over time, news about child benefit and other support mechanisms also filtered back, improving the options for women in particular. As a result, the female focus groups reported 'lots' of single mothers with children in Carmarthenshire – not the most obvious migration group.

It was noted that the youngest tend to be seasonal workers, in Carmarthenshire for a short time. This may be due to the nature of the work, but it was also suggested that this group has difficulty coping with separation from Poland for more than a few months.

Several groups commented on the employment opportunities for older workers, even for the over-50s – these are coming primarily to build up their retirement funds. However, interviews identified that some of the older Poles coming to the UK are not coming primarily to work – they are coming to stay with their (adult) children, providing child support for grandchildren. They may get work once they are here, but it is not the primary reason.

One group also discussed pensioners for Poland coming over to see how life is abroad and settling down. It wasn't discussed whether they only do this if they have relatives to live with, or whether there is group of Polish OAPs with wanderlust, but again, it suggests the simple model of migrants as young, unattached workers may be missing some important groups.

A1.2.2 Family relationships

The survey demonstrated a range of relationships between Poles and their families:

Table A1.7 Presence of partners and children

| | Children here | Children away | No children | |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|------------|
| Partner here | 25% | 9% | 21% | 55% |
| Partner away | 3% | 12% | 5% | 20% |
| No partner | 4% | 4% | 18% | 25% |
| | 31% | 25% | 44% | |

Note that both partners in a couple could have been asked to complete the survey, and so there may be some over-representation of partners. Given that caveat, it appears that three-quarters of respondents are in a relationship, with three-quarters of those having their partners here. 44% of the Poles surveyed have no children; of those who do, they appear to be slightly more likely to have their children here than in Poland.

There are regional differences:

Table A1.8 Children and partners, by area

| | Llanelli | Carm. | Llanyb. | Overall |
|---------------------------------------------|----------|-------|---------|---------|
| Partners here | 54% | 59% | 52% | 55% |
| Partners away | 19% | 15% | 25% | 20% |
| No partner | 26% | 25% | 23% | 25% |
| Children here | 39% | 27% | 22% | 31% |
| Children away | 26% | 15% | 32% | 25% |
| No children | 35% | 58% | 47% | 44% |
| Partner and children both here or both away | 80% | 70% | 76% | 77% |

Poles in Carmarthen are most likely to live with a partner; Poles in Llanybydder are the most likely to have a partner living elsewhere. Roughly a quarter in each area have no partner.

There is a lot more variation in terms of children. Poles in Llanelli are the most likely to have children and in Carmarthen the least likely (possibly because the age group is younger). However, if the Poles do have children then 60% of those in Llanelli and Carmarthen seem to keep the children with them. In Llanybydder the situation is reversed: 60% are likely to have their children elsewhere.

So, Carmarthen Poles are most likely to be living with their partners, and least likely to have children; if they do have both, they also show more variation in their arrangements, with only 70% having both partners and children in the same place. In Llanybydder, they seem more likely to be in a relationship, but with their partners and children more likely to be away. And in Llanelli they are much the most likely to have children and to keep partners and children together.

These proportions for children are much higher than those implied by GP registration data (see main text). However, both partners might have completed a survey form and so children may be double counted; the results here should be interpreted as data for any one individual, not estimates of family size.

There are a number of other relationships which could be teased out of this data: for example, the relationship between age, gender and children. This is beyond the scope of this work.

Some family relationships may have transferred from Poland:

Table A1.9 Migration with partner

| Migrated... | Llanelli | Carm. | Llanyb. | Overall |
|--------------------|----------|-------|---------|---------|
| On my own | 52% | 61% | 75% | 60% |
| With family member | 20% | 20% | 13% | 19% |
| With friends | 12% | 12% | 5% | 10% |
| With partner | 16% | 7% | 7% | 11% |

Poles in Carmarthen and Llanybydder are most likely to have come over on their own; but from Table A1.10 shows that most of those would have known someone on arrival. Llanelli shows more variation. For Llanelli it is also useful to compare the relationship between moving with a partner and moving into an existing social network:

Table A1.10 Migration into existing network (Llanelli only)

| | Knew somebody on arrival | Knew no-one on arrival | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|------|------|
| On my own | 29 | 30 | 45% | 63% |
| With family member | 18 | 5 | 28% | 10% |
| With friends | 6 | 7 | 9% | 15% |
| With partner | 12 | 6 | 18% | 13% |
| | 65 | 48 | 100% | 100% |

Llanybydder and Carmarthen information restricted due to small numbers

There is also a clear gender difference:

Table A1.11 Arrival network by gender and area

| | Lanelli only | | Carm. & Llanyb. | |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------|-----------------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Knew somebody on arrival | 49% | 66% | 82% | 93% |
| Knew nobody on arrival | 51% | 34% | 18% | 7% |

Carmarthen and Llanybydder combined due to small numbers

Females are much more likely to arrive knowing somebody – in Carmarthen and Llanybydder almost no women arrive ‘in the dark’. The network effect is also very strong for males in those places, whereas in Llanelli males are just as likely not to know anyone.

Turning to the focus groups, one Carmarthen group was detailed on the dynamics of migration:

- The initial group were singletons brought over by the agency, with almost no families
- The first partners started coming after 6 months, but only if there was work
- By 2005 15-20% had wives or partners with them
- Families started coming visibly in 2006
- Now 50% have wives or partners, and ‘every’ man has some family member (partners, child, parent, other relative) staying with him

Although all focus groups talked of ‘him’ coming first, one Llanelli group did identify females coming over with relatives, and bringing their partners later.

The model of one partner comes over, finds work, finds accommodation, settles down, and then brings over families was repeated across all focus groups:

- *“One comes on his own, spontaneously!”*
- *“One needs to prepare the ground.”*
- *“Usually, one comes on his own, prepares a nest. When the nest is prepared, one brings the family over.”*

A group from Llanelli estimated that 80% are living with family and/or partners; they thought that it would take a migrant a year or so to get established and bring over the family. Again, 2006 was seen as the turning point for bringing families. In Llanybydder, there was a feeling from one focus groups that only 20%-30% were in relationships, notwithstanding the results in Table A1.8 (although one member did suggest that 50% was nearer the mark). Another group suggest families were still a minority of 30%. It’s not quite clear if this relates to partners or families with children, and some of these figures can be reconciled if the low proportions refer to households rather than individuals, but this is difficult to determine post hoc.

In the initial stages, workers were still living mainly in agency housing and so options for partners were limited – they only tended to come over if there was work for them as well. However, once here, families could start to afford private rented accommodation; moreover, after the first couple of years the Poles became aware that accommodation was not tied and so moving out of agency housing without risking one’s job was an option.

Those bringing young children would often bring a relative to look after the children, for a small fee and accommodation. Families are more likely to bring young girls; single mothers were more likely to bring a mother, sister or aunt. Families could also make use of kindergarten facilities. Some Poles would organise their own kindergarten facilities, where one woman would look after the children for friends and neighbours. The Poles also realised that there was much more financial support for children compared to Poland – up until 16 much was free, and there was also child benefit. While this was not really cited as one of the reasons why families moved to the UK, this was clearly a factor in decisions to stay.

Partners do not necessarily come with children – these may be left with relatives in Poland. One group reckoned one would need 2-3 years to get settled enough for a family. However, others noted that increasingly couples are moving to the UK together.

Separation from families is seen as a temporary necessary thing: there is recognition of the difficulty of a long-distance relationship

- *“One hour on the phone, even every day, cannot replace family life.”*
- *“They live one leg in Poland and one leg in the UK”*

The Polish Centre reports that phone calls are one of the main expenses of migrants.

There are also positive benefits from bringing the family together: it can be more economical, and the (social) support networks are seen as good.

Some couples also form in the UK, with more success in different areas – one respondent complained that there are no single Polish girls in Llanybydder...

An indication of the changing nature of the migrant community is that the medical services interviewed noted that UK births to Poles have become noticeable in recent years. The first young mothers to have a second child in the UK are also starting to appear.

A1.2.3 Education and skills

There is a perception that the Poles coming to work are low-skilled, particularly because the occupations they choose are typically low-skill manual or service jobs. However, the survey does suggest otherwise. Table A1.12 compares skills of Carmarthenshire male and female Poles with the general Polish population:

Table A1.12 Education levels of migrants

| | Males | Female | All | Poland |
|-----------------------------|--------------|---------------|------------|---------------|
| No qualifications | 8% | 5% | 7% | 15% |
| Vocational | 44% | 21% | 34% | 30% |
| Medium technical | 27% | 32% | 29% | 25% |
| Medium comprehensive | 15% | 25% | 20% | 10% |
| University & pre-university | 5% | 17% | 10% | 17% |

Poland data: Polish statistical office

There are significantly fewer males coming to Carmarthenshire with either no qualifications or university level qualifications. On the other hand, they do have higher mid-range qualifications (unfortunately, there are no direct equivalents to these qualifications in the UK, and so it is not possible to compare this group with the Welsh population).

Females, on the other hand, are a comparatively well-qualified group. They are relatively few with no or minimal qualifications but more with A-level-type qualifications and a national level of university qualifications¹².

Language skills are generally low. Survey respondents were asked to assess their oral and written language skills on a scale from 1 (no skills) to 5 (fluent). They were asked for their language skills on arrival, and then their current level of skill. This information was used to create an index of general language skills, and an 'improvement index':

Table A1.13 Language skills

| Language skills | Llanelli | Carm. | Llanyb. |
|------------------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------|
| Initial | 1.65 | 1.64 | 1.45 |
| Improvement | 0.86 | 0.82 | 0.72 |

Mean language skills are minimal, and show some improvement but not much. Interestingly, one would normally expect the lowest starting point to show the biggest improvement, but Llanybydder has the lowest starting point and improvement. This is likely to be because Llanybydder has the most isolated group of Poles: they count for a large part of the population and the workforce, they are likely to live together, and they have relatively few opportunities to mix with the locals. There is therefore little need or incentive for them to improve their language skills.

¹² The female graduate proportion may be higher as the pre-university grades are included in the 'medium comprehensive' for this data, but in the 'university' sector for the Polish national averages; however, these are a very small part of the population

The focus groups noted that the younger migrants tend to have better language skills. This is partly a cohort effect. For some years English has been part of the curriculum for children aged ten onwards, whereas the older generation might not have come into contact with English before college level. This may partly explain why Llanybydder, with its older average workforce, has the lowest level of English.

Lack of language skills may be exacerbated by the local accent. While some Poles say the locals are clear speakers, a number mentioned difficulties with the Welsh accent. This may be leading them to negatively assess their language skills. A further problem was that in Llanybydder (an area with a high proportion of Welsh speakers), speakers would mix English, Welsh and jargon.

In Llanelli, there is some language teaching in the local library; however, the Poles felt this had been largely unsuccessful. Partly this was due to little time and energy after work, and partly because declining attendance made the classes unworkable except for employer-provided classes for supervisory staff. The Polish Centre also organised 'conversation meetings' with native speakers for a period, although attendance was low here as well.

In Carmarthen, students on the English course mentioned that the turnover of Poles effectively killed the classes: they were started anew each time new arrivals turned up, which meant that those who had been attending a while just went back to the beginning.

In Llanybydder, a course was organised by the main employer, but attendance has been going down over time, which resulted in a cut in the number of lessons. This may be the other reason for the low improvement in English skills in Llanybydder.

A1.2.4 Where the Poles live

The Poles live and work in three main areas: Llanelli, Carmarthen and Llanybydder. Those living in Llanybydder work in the village and account for about 12% of the population of 1,400. However, only about 40%-50% of the Poles working there live there. The rest tend to live in other villages in the area as well as Llanelli and Carmarthen. There are also Poles scattered around the rest of the county.

Poles arriving in the UK whose work is arranged by an agency are placed in agency housing; a convenient arrangement for both parties:

- *"Coming here, one doesn't know what and where one can do. One is given a flat [by an agency], and one takes the opportunity."*

This was almost everyone's experience in the early years, but the Poles started moving to private accommodation fairly rapidly. Agency housing is thus likely to be taken up only by those who have no contacts in the area. Otherwise, family and friends will tend to arrange accommodation for new arrivals.

One of the concerns Poles had was that agency housing was tied to work – moving out would lead to less work being offered (as the workers were on contracts with few guaranteed hours). Some of the Poles still felt that this was the case – those moving out into private accommodation would get offered less work.

Agency accommodation in multiple-occupancy housing (MOH) in the early days was severely overcrowded. Different focus groups reported:

- 15 men in a bunk-bed dormitory with one toilet
- 5-6 people per flat, up to 16 per house
- 6-8 people per flat or house
- 6-8 people in a flat, sometimes 13 or more

Amongst the problems reported were the overcrowding and poor conditions

- *“We paid too much.”*
- *“I lived in so bad conditions that in my worst dreams I wouldn't have expected that one could live that way. Instead of the floor there was cement, instead of normal walls– something with a big damp and peeling off wallpapers. A small room, to tell the truth, 1,5 meter per 3 meter, and 4 beds - 2 bunk beds - and the passage between the beds so narrow. And only beds; zero sideboard, or wardrobe, nothing at all.”*
- *“The beds themselves are testimony to the conditions: the policy to squeeze people in.”*
- *“There were 17 of us living together. There were 'layers' in the sitting room, and a tiny passage to get to the bathroom. There were 17 people living in one room. [“Two storeys and one bathroom!”] We had only one [bathroom].”*
- *“Not enough that there were 10 people living there already, they still threw [new people] in, not for a long time – for a week – they still threw in some 5, 6 people.”*

And groups complained that the agency could arrange accommodation without consulting people, and almost at will:

- *“It was organised this way: I was returning from work, after hard work, because it was very hard work in [the company], say after 8pm - because I had stayed 'after hours'. Literally after 20min – one didn't have time to eat anything, to warm up – the door opened and the representative of the house manager burst in and said: ‘You have 40min for packing and we are moving out.’ The evening, after work, the next day one is getting up after 4am, and we have 40min for moving out to another flat. Shock, stress! Emotions!”*

One respondent was moved four times in eighteen months. Another group reported that it was not unusual to come home from work and find someone new sharing the room – or for that person to be moved on again in a few days.

Most of these comments related to problems up to 2006. While agency housing still exists, the arrival of social networking means that Poles are more likely to be in private accommodation. Also, as businesses employ Poles directly rather than through an agency, accommodation becomes the responsibility of the worker.

Thus in 2009 the accommodation situation is:

Table A1.14 Current accommodation of migrants

| Accommodation | Llanelli | Carm. | Llanyb. | Total |
|-------------------------------------|----------|-------|---------|-------|
| I own my flat/house | 2% | 0% | 0% | 1% |
| Renting flat alone | 7% | 0% | 0% | 4% |
| Renting room in shared house | 30% | 35% | 59% | 39% |
| Living with partner in shared house | 6% | 35% | 14% | 15% |
| Renting a place with partner | 37% | 19% | 27% | 30% |
| Employer's accommodation | 4% | 7% | 0% | 4% |
| Other | 14% | 4% | 0% | 8% |

Single entries have been deleted. Note that because of the sampling methodology, there may be some underestimation of Poles still living in employer's accommodation.

Poles move out from agency housing either to independent MOH housing, or they get together with friends and family to rent a whole house together. In Carmarthen, the focus group estimated that 30% of those in non-agency accommodation are living in the former, 70% in the latter. Costs and a good environment are the key factors.

Non-agency MOH typically has 5-6 rooms in a house, with 1-2 people per room; overall 6-7 people per house. Kitchens and gardens are common areas. A weekly rent might be around £35-£45 per room. Couples tend to share with other couples, although they may not have a choice in this. Single men are most likely to be in this type of accommodation, although men-only households are rare; usually there are a couple of women as well.

The other option is that a group of Poles will get together and rent a whole house. The average monthly cost of renting a house was given as £800-1000 (rent plus bills). This is too much for one couple (a couple is usually given as the driving force behind this move), and so they will invite friends and relatives to join them. This can drive down costs, as well as ensuring that the house is shared by people who get on.

Houses are found through letting agencies, but also through the internet and friends. There is no sense of Polish 'quarters' in Carmarthenshire. The Poles seem to be widely distributed. This is then related to the perceived need for a car:

- *"Even going to Poland one needs a car to get to Swansea. Otherwise one needs to ask someone for a lift, and pay for it."*

For those with children, renting a house only with relatives is seen as essential; thus, the relationship between work, family, transport and housing is fairly close.

Some Poles never move houses: a Carmarthen focus group suggested 20% of Poles just come, find somewhere to stay, and stay there; these tend to be the ones most focused in saving money and returning to Poland as quickly as possible. In general, however, up until getting a house the Poles are fairly mobile, moving wherever the housing is cheaper.

An additional factor in the high mobility of migrants is the problems associated with MOH. There is little privacy. Poles are quizzed about their private life in Poland; there is lots of gossip and interest in housemates' private lives. There are tensions if some are getting better working hours than others; there are tensions if those who are not working are partying to the detriment of those who are due to work. Alcohol caused problems, as did not contributing enough to a general house spirit

- *"One for example had finished one's working day and was relaxing, and another one was just preparing themselves for work, and this was the difference [that caused frictions]."*
- *"There were conversations. There weren't quarrels, there weren't fights, there wasn't any damage making, nothing like this. I would call it normal drinking: long and noisy because the people are talking ... And this malice that I'm not drinking, that I'm not buying the alcohol, not contributing to the alcohol kitty. They didn't like it, so I moved out pretty quickly. I landed up even worse, because I moved out because of alcohol too."*
- *"I'm the example of the similar situation: picked on because of not drinking, not taking part in parties, hunted down, and I literally ran away as a rat, really."*
- *"So if someone behaves differently, and isn't interested in some wide socialising including the kitties, they must fall out of such a group."*
- *"It may be a pain as some may drink or smoke, and one may not like it."*
- *"The one who does not drink, is not looking for trouble, is moving out somewhere and is looking for the people who they can live normally without any parties, because we have movable days off, so one is having a party and you have to get up [early] to go to work."*
- *"One needs to escape it."*

Alcohol, parties, and 'domowki' (alcohol-fuelled quarrels in the home) are given as the most common problems resulting in people falling out and having to move out; one participant mentioned moving twice in the same week because of drinking flatmates. However, it does depend upon the house:

- *"Here, usually those who are drinking, they get together and no one is disturbing anyone."*

And there is also a strong feeling that a lot of this is a problem of the past. Some of this is due to a different group of people coming through; but a key factor seems to be the smaller number of agency workers. That means migrants are less likely to be forced into unsuitable accommodation; if they are, there are more options available to them. In essence, there is

more space for the Poles to sort themselves out and find some 'spokoj' ('peace'). One can still hear of problems, but in the last eighteen months the position has improved noticeably.

Lastly it is worth noting that a very small number of Poles do live in council accommodation. There was an awareness that single mothers who have achieved residency status could apply for social housing, although it is not known what the extent of this is.

A1.2.5 Work

Employment rates are much higher than for the British population:

Table A1.15 Employment rates by gender and area

| | Llanelli | Carm. | Llanyb. | All | Carms ¹ | Wales ¹ | UK ² |
|--------|----------|-------|---------|-----|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Males | 85% | 82% | 100% | 89% | | | 79% |
| Female | 78% | 80% | 95% | 82% | | | 70% |
| All | 82% | 81% | 98% | 86% | 72% | 71% | 74% |

UK/Wales/Carmarthenshire data from Annual Population Survey
 1 UA/LAD tables Jan-Dec 2008 2 Local Area Labour Markets April 2009

In Llanybydder, almost everyone who responded to the question worked. This may reflect the smaller proportion of families in Llanybydder. In the other towns, employment rates are still respectably high. It is possible to speculate that employment rates were higher in earlier years and fell as more families came (that is, the earlier waves were more similar to Llanybydder).

It is not possible to identify workless households from the survey, but the view from the Poles themselves is that these are rare cases.

The Poles earn relatively low wages, and males earn significantly more than females:

Table A1.16 Migrants earnings by gender

| Gross weekly earnings | Males £ | Females £ |
|------------------------|------------|------------|
| Mean | 228 | 185 |
| Median | 220 | 185 |
| Minimum (in the range) | 75 -125 | 50 -100 |
| Maximum (in the range) | 400 - 500 | 300 - 400 |
| <i>Welsh average</i> | <i>494</i> | <i>389</i> |

Source (Welsh data): Labour Force Survey 2008 Q3

Female earnings are evenly distributed, whereas male earnings are skewed in the standard pattern of a small number of relatively high earners. The difference in male-female earnings may be due to a number of items; for example, females may be more likely to work part time, males more likely to work overtime; or the males may include relatively more skilled workers, such as butchers, whereas women work as packers and cleaners, for example. It is not possible with his data to examine these issues. However, it is interesting to note that females earn less despite having much higher levels of qualifications. The gender wage ratio (females earn 81% of male average weekly earnings) is similar to the Welsh average (79%).

Note that some Poles felt that the numbers given above were likely to be an underestimate. Poles doing additional cash-in-hand work are unlikely to include this in these figures, and there were a few reports of this; the main source seems to be women picking up cleaning jobs. However, the scale of this is not known, and the Poles seem to be happy with legitimate work.

Poles in the focus groups were of the impression that most in Llanelli still work for the agencies (two-thirds according to one group). The specific agencies have changed over time.

The main workplaces listed by the Poles in Carmarthenshire include:

- Meat processing – three large units plus smaller operations and shops

- Big supermarkets
- Farms
- Cleaning companies
- Bakers
- Hospitality
- Carers
- Building/construction

as well as a number of other small businesses. Some living in Llanelli also work in Swansea for one large and several small employers.

For most of the roles English is useful and an opportunity for advancement. Some of the roles (for example, carers) require a high level of English; it was noted by one (Welsh) interviewee that the carers seemed to be particularly well integrated, possibly because of their strong language skills.

The large meat processing companies have a critical mass of Poles: English is not required, there is no pressure to speak the language, and failure to do so does not have a negative effect on one's employment. However, the team leaders all have a degree of English, and promotion does depend upon improve one's command of the language.

The Poles that work in these industries are also aware that they have all their eggs in one basket: if one of the large meat processors fails the employees would have little chance of finding other work with a negligible command of English (and in Llanybydder this one employer counts for 90% of Polish employment). In contrast, those who do speak English sometimes see agency work as the starting point to get them into the UK labour market. This was not thought to be a significant factor in high turnover rates; these were generally attributed to Poles not finding the work or country as expected, and moving on; or to the natural turnover caused by seasonal workers, or students. The focus groups also mentioned the phenomenon of repeat workers: after working in the UK for a specific period, they return to Poland; unable to find suitable employment, they come back to Carmarthenshire where they are familiar with the environment.

Much of the work the Poles do is hard manual labour: in the meat processing factories, it requires long hours (6am-5pm) in often difficult conditions (such as working in a cold climate). However, this did not put off everyone – some pointed out that this work was what the butchers, for example, had been trained for. Hence this may be more a problem of unrealistic expectations.

One focus group was also particularly concerned about British workers getting better conditions than Poles (longer breaks, better money, more lenient treatment. One also quoted different attitudes to work as a potential source of friction:

- *“The conflicts happen because they [British workers] have a break and you want to finish [what you are doing].”*

For one participant in that focus group it wasn't a problem in his work:

- *“We have a break and you keep working if you want.”*

The Poles identified this difference as a result of Poles having more respect for their work.

Current financial conditions are causing concerns. Poles are keeping their heads down to keep their jobs:

- *“We are sticking to what we have and we're happy what we have.”*

One participant reported he'd been trying to get better wages and was now jobless. In general, however, the Poles showed an awareness that there were mixed fortunes in the job market.

One recurrent issue from the meat processing plants was working time. One plant gave directly employed workers fixed hours. Agency workers were then left to provide the flexibility needed:

- *“One is having a day off, one gets a telephone call from the agency that one needs to be at work within an hour. And of course, one can have ... for example an appointment with a doctor, simply one's private life. Refusing [to go to work] wasn't easily accepted, literally vulgarly described, without quotes, something along the lines of ‘You've come to the UK to ***** work not to sleep away’. One needed to be constantly on stand by, otherwise one was 'treated' to extra days off. They punished you.”*

A similar comment was made in another focus group.

Even for direct employees, there is uncertainty over hours, particularly out of season:

- *“It is difficult for one to plan a day... I can either return [home] at quarter past five pm or 11am.”*

However the employer did guarantee minimum hours, and tried to arrange hours so that the work was evenly shared, thus making for some predictability.

Shift working meant that days off might not be fixed; only about 30-40% of the Poles in Llanybydder might work a Monday-Friday week, particularly in specialisms like butchery. For the rest, days off would be flexible but they would usually get at least one day off at the weekend. However this does vary with the business demand.

Seasonality also comes into play. Out of season, hours are shorter for the production lines, but the same for other workers. In season, additional workers may be drafted in, or existing workers may be paid high rates – which causes some tension between regular and seasonal workers:

- *“We are working and they are not trying their best.”*

Specialist staff like butchers will earn higher rates at any time.

Outside meat processing, the other occupation with uncertain hours is the building trade. Work might involve seven-day weeks and then periods of no work. As times get harder, the Poles felt that building firms preferred to use UK workers. During the downturn, a lot of builders had returned to Poland for training and additional qualifications, on the assumption that they would be returning in a few months. This has the implication that this group are now considering the UK as their normal place of work.

A1.2.6 Contact with Poland

Tables A1.17 and A.18 provide an indication of the level of contact between Poles in Carmarthenshire and Poland.

Table A1.17 Trips to Poland

| | Llanelli | Carm. | Llanyb. | Total |
|-------------------------------|----------|-------|---------|-------|
| Yearly trips to Poland | | | | |
| Less than one | 5% | 4% | 0% | 4% |
| One | 35% | 28% | 20% | 30% |
| Two | 42% | 52% | 73% | 52% |
| Three-five | 16% | 16% | 8% | 14% |
| Six or more | 1% | 0% | 0% | 1% |

Note: response rates for the 'yearly trips' question were only 65%-80%

Table A1.18 Telephone contact

| | Llanelli | Carm. | Llanyb. | Total |
|----------------------------------|----------|-------|---------|-------|
| Calls to family in Poland | | | | |
| Daily | 25% | 10% | 17% | 19% |
| Couple of times a week | 36% | 41% | 30% | 36% |
| Once a week | 22% | 21% | 35% | 25% |
| Couple of times month | 11% | 17% | 10% | 12% |
| Once a month | 4% | 3% | 5% | 4% |
| Less than once a month/never | 3% | 7% | 3% | 4% |

Almost all Poles go to Poland at least once a year, and two-thirds make two or more trips. The concentration of two-trip Poles in Llanybydder may be related to a strong seasonal working pattern. It may also be related to holiday season (Easter and Christmas) as Llanybydder Poles have the highest proportion of their families in Poland.

There is little variation between places on the level of contact with family in Poland – perhaps surprisingly, given the differences in family status between the areas. However, the migrants clearly have strong ties back to Poland.

A1.2.7 Intended stay

The long-term plans of Poles are not clear-cut:

Table A1.19 Long-term plans for migrants

| Expecting to return | Llanelli | Carm. | Llanyb. | Total |
|---------------------|----------|-------|---------|-------|
| Yes | 47% | 34% | 60% | 47% |
| No | 41% | 42% | 33% | 39% |
| Don't know | 11% | 24% | 7% | 13% |
| | 114 | 59 | 60 | 233 |

In Llanybydder, there is a strong indication that most are here to earn money and then return to Poland; there is little uncertainty. Llanelli is also fairly certain, but more evenly split between staying and going.

In Carmarthen, one-quarter do not know their long term aims. But amongst those who do, there is a clear majority planning to make the UK their long-term home. This reinforces the idea that the Poles in Carmarthen are a different group – settling down, integrating, planning their future there.

This is reflected in the focus groups. The Carmarthen groups emphasised the relatively high wages, and noted that Poles are looking to buy flats here. One group estimated that 70% of Poles will stay permanently, or at least for a long time. For the 30-35 year-olds, the focus group argued that there is not much to keep them in Poland: life, money, friends and often family are all here now.

- *“I generally don't have anything to return to. I don't have any farm.”*
- *“We have TV, we have a contact all the time, we know what's happening in Poland”*

Those aged 40 to 60 are more likely to go back; their time here is to build up their retirement fund, although the group was keen to point out this is a generalisation. The 50-60 year olds are almost certain to return to Poland if they lose their jobs – they are covered by the Polish social security system as the main part of their work career was in Poland, and they have ‘earned’ their pensions. Note however that speculation on whether these groups return is dependent upon their jobs, but losing one’s job does not mean an instant return:

- *“[Would you return to Poland if you lost your job?] No, I would find another one.”*

There is a sense that the local labour market is now saturated; those without any language skills, in particular, will find it hard to get work here. This may worsen in the economic downturn. However, the Poles recognise that, even on very low wages, a couple can survive here on a single wage, better off than they would be in Poland. Carmarthen stands out as the area most likely to retain its Poles, with the highest proportion of couples and the lowest proportion of children – and a commitment to making a life here.

Moving away from Carmarthen, there are common themes in all three areas.

The first is that the things that brought Poles to the UK are still the same: higher wages, higher standards of living, better social security, some free health- and child-care, more chances of employment, the chance to buy a house or car. These things are also available in other countries, but the UK is the closest English-speaking country (the participant did not mention high rates of migration to the pseudo-Anglophone Nordic countries). The advent of cheap air travel has amplified the benefits. In the past, migration was a major commitment. Now it is just a budget flight away.

The second is that things might be getting harder in the UK, but they are likely to be worse at home. Jobs are hard to come by there, and to earn the same money as in the UK a Pole would normally be working cash in hand on the black market. Good money can of course be made in other parts of Europe, but the Poles are aware that in many countries they can still not work legally.

The third theme is that many Poles come planning just to earn money, and only thinking about settling down once they are here.

- *“I came for 6 months and have been here almost three years now.”*
- *“It depends on an individual, but I know that people change their minds, and stay... I planned to come here for few years, I did not know I would start a family ... and definitely I did not know my son would be born here.”*
- *“After arriving in Wales, for many people, the standard of life has changed, for better one. And the people do not like to give it up.”*
- *“Because we get accustomed and we don't feel like returning.”*
- *“For a big group of the Poles it's easier to live here. Even if they came thinking of returning, then when they start life here, have some work here, they may stay.”*

Some came on fixed-term contracts, but as these have been extended, so the workers have settled down.

Fourth, older Poles are more likely to return. The young ones can enjoy themselves, and have limited attachment to the motherland. The ones nearing retirement will struggle if they can't master the language, and many of them will have an interest in a house in Poland. There is perhaps also more for them to miss in Poland – farms, allotments, graves, relatives who can't travel.

- *“In other words: the young want to stay here. As for the older ones: one does not replant old trees.”*

Finally, there are some short-term migrants who only stay for a couple of months. These are of three types

- The students will work over the summer, staying with relatives, often partying hard, and return to study.
- The seasonal workers are brought over for specific jobs; often the same ones are brought back year after year
- Some come just for a short time to earn money for specific reasons

Of the latter, those who have migrated just to, for example, pay for building work or a car, might not return; but those who have planned it this way will often return. This group baffles some:

- *“One would rather not bother somebody to come over [here] for such a time like 2 months, it's [better to have] unlimited time.”*

Some of course do not stay long or repeat their visit. For the young, several groups mentioned the ones who come over, are dazzled by the amount of disposable income and party it away – sometimes losing their jobs in the process.

Another group are the ones who don't fit the environment

- *“It varies, some came to the conclusion that they have had enough and will try [living] in Poland.”*

And judgments are harsh on those who think coming to the UK is an easy ride:

- *“The one who is returning [after the first problems] to Poland, he wasted his time coming here. He's not coping here. If he doesn't cope here, he won't cope in Poland either.”*

A1.3 Integration issues

A1.3.1 Integration between Polish groups

One focus group from Carmarthen discussed the importance of social networks. This is essential for the new arrival:

- *“One prepares nest for someone one brings over here. One finds an accommodation for him ... a place where to come, where to sleep, the work. And later how he's coping depends on him. Whether he stays or not.”*

Friends and colleagues bringing someone over will often pay the initial expenses of renting a room; this is paid back once the person starts earning. This social responsibility continues when someone is settled in. Poles are expected to help each other when, for example, dealing with authorities. Families will often organise child-minding facilities amongst themselves. The cultural imperative is that the Poles do each other a favour, and return a favour. The system brings the Poles together, helping to create or strengthen friendships:

- *“I wouldn't like my family to go through what I experienced: with a broken leg, and 3 months without work. I didn't have any income. The colleagues were sending me to Poland, they wanted to get rid of me ... I'd had a good job in Poland. I was wondering why I'd really come here ... A friend helped me much, helped very much ... I was living in his place, I didn't have to pay the bills. The fact I didn't work didn't push me into debt.”*

As noted above, Carmarthen seems to be the most networked of the three areas, but the comments here are supported by other areas, if less clearly. However, some groups did note that Poles are more likely to fight amongst themselves than with the locals. This may support the idea that Poles tend to exist in sub-groups with strong internal networks but firm external barriers.

A1.3.2 Integration with the locals

From the Poles in Llanybydder, the perceptions of the Welsh are positive. They are seen as friendly and open, and happy to communicate if this is possible; one participant from Llanybydder described them as having a

- *“high 'personal culture' [ie manners]”*

The impression of the Welsh is contrasted with the Poles, and the likelihood that Poles are more likely to be unfriendly, both to the Welsh and to each other.

They do feel that the Welsh have different interests, and perhaps not as strong 'family values': starting a family and having children are not seen as priorities. Instead the Welsh tend to live 'in the moment' – spending money now to have a good life. However, the Poles saw this as a positive attitude, because this is not age limited – even those 'in their 50s' can enjoy themselves!

In Carmarthen, the Poles were more concerned about the job market and the way this might have an effect on Polish-Welsh relations; the effect on keeping wages down was also noted. Some noted that there are not enough Poles in Carmarthen to create Polish 'ghettos', although it was not recorded whether this was a positive or negative thing.

In Llanelli, the focus group recorded a negative impression:

- *"The Welsh do not like the Poles"*

This may be the view of just one participant who was forced to move out by neighbours; no comments, supporting or disagreeing, were made by the rest of the focus group. However, some service providers also thought that Polish-Welsh relationships in Llanelli were deteriorating, particularly as the economic situation worsened; and one service provider expressed irritation that, four years down the line, Poles could still not speak the language.

One Welsh interviewee reported that Poles had the reputation of being rude or abrupt, but was of the opinion that this was due to limited language skills: Poles could only communicate with a few words and phrases. Most of the Poles did not have the enough English for the usual exchange of courtesies or conversational aspects of transactions.

A1.3.3 Use of services

Poles used a variety of services in Carmarthenshire:

Table A1.20 Services used by migrants

| Services used | Llanelli | Carm. | Llanyb. | Total |
|--------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| GP/Doctor | 65% | 73% | 73% | 69% |
| Dentist | 26% | 31% | 15% | 24% |
| Language schools/courses | 24% | 37% | 3% | 22% |
| Library | 28% | 44% | 12% | 28% |
| Public agencies inc CAB | 3% | 7% | 0% | 3% |
| Job Centre | 33% | 49% | 25% | 35% |
| Professional advisor | 3% | 0% | 0% | 1% |
| | | | | |
| Used any service | 86% | 93% | 80% | 86% |
| | | | | |
| Total respondents | 114 | 59 | 60 | 233 |

Most Poles had used a GP and or doctor. Poles have a relatively low number of A&E admissions, and so this seems a reasonable estimate of GP registration rates.

In general, women and families are more present in primary care services. The Polish men are more likely to seek medical care in crisis situations, with hospitals and emergency units. As a national group, the Poles come out as a healthy population; however, they do present with a small number of more serious or complex illnesses needing more time in the surgery. Some of these are the result of differences between the treatment modes of the Polish and UK health systems.

The Polish cases also take longer due to the language barrier. Despite the widely available language line, the surgery patients usually bring a relative/friend to do the translation for them.

There is a visible lack of knowledge of the local health system among the Poles, especially in regards to awareness of the free services. The group is notorious for not turning up at screening appointments. For GP appointments, they expect to go away with a cure in their hands, and some have been discouraged by being given advice rather than pills (although GPs report the Poles are learning). Poles also do not understand UK confidentiality laws and so may try to hold back information which they feel is not relevant or could affect their employment prospects.

GPs were not aware of any alcohol/drug misuse amongst the Poles, apart from isolated cases of misuse of prescription drugs prescribed in Poland. This problem arises because some Polish doctors prescribe in bulk for Poles going to work abroad. The Poles themselves may not report this when presenting to their doctors.

Single figures of Polish alcohol related referrals from A&E were not followed up by GPs as the patients denied having any alcohol problem.

Overall, Poles' views on GPs are mixed. While they do register and visit doctors, they are often disappointed by treatment (or the apparent lack of it), the length of appointments, and by the fact that UK doctors seem to be less pro-active than Polish ones. They are likely to be easily disheartened by negative experiences, and so the reported engagement rates may be an overestimate. One consequence of this is that Poles will often see a doctor while on temporary visits to Poland, and there is therefore a risk of double prescribing which GPs need to be aware of.

Poles were next most likely to seek out the Job Centre and library. It is interesting to note that these two services are most important in Carmarthen, less important in Llanelli, and of much lower importance in Llanybydder. For the last, this may be due to a lack of both those services in the village; but in Llanelli and Carmarthen, there is a full range of services, and so the higher level of interest in Carmarthen may be indicative of an active involvement in one's new environment.

In Carmarthen, the Poles used the Job Centres primarily for help with benefits and National Insurance; it's quicker to use a friend for job-hunting:

- *"Hardly anyone will find a job via a Job Centre. A colleague will have a word with his employer: 'I've got a good friend etc., a trustworthy man etc.' ... still via a friend one will organize more than through a Job Centre."*
- *"It doesn't make sense [to go to a Job Centre], that's why we don't go there. People are more likely to go there to sort out their benefits rather than jobs."*

Poles did make use of the Polish Centre in Llanelli; however concerns were raised that the service was essentially passive. Only problems raised by the clients were addressed, and the Centre did not try to take the initiative or distribute information.

Appendix A2: Arrest referral and drug treatment processes

This section is largely based upon the interviews with ARWs, with some additional material from other service providers and police.

Many of the comments here relate to the period when DIP was responsible for alcohol and drug arrest referrals. Since the early 2009, the funding for alcohol arrest referral at DIP finished and so there are currently only drug arrest referral workers. Any alcohol cases encountered by the ARW are referred on to Prism by DIP.

Prism is a non-CJS provider of generic alcohol services for the community. It provides Tier 1 and Tier 2 services, including initial assessments and brief interventions, and is a gateway to Tier 3 and Tier 4 services.

A2.1 Sources of referrals

For DIP, police are the first point of referral; referrals also come from courts, solicitors, GPs, housing associations, and support groups. DIP is the main source of referral for Prism, because sometimes alcohol may turn out to be the main problem, not drugs. Self-referral is also possible, but this did not come up in discussion.

Referrals from the police come in two ways: visits to cells, and emails. Although there are two services, ARWs will handle work for both when visiting cells:

- *“It depends in which area you are, but in this area Prism run both, which is handy. We all know each other and it is very easy for us all to work alongside each other.”*

Referrals can also come from the courts but only for drugs

- *“We go to court twice a week... to the initial courts where people are seen initially, to try and catch new people, people we haven't seen in the cells going through the system. And we have a look at the court list and the results and if they have gone to prison, if they don't want to see us, or if they do go to prison, either on remand or are sentenced, then we will try to work with the workers in the prisons, and offer them service when they come out. But that's only for drugs and not for alcohol.”*

Prison is also a potential source:

- *“If they go to see a CARAT worker, they will send [DIP] a record, of what they have been doing with them, what their release date is and what their care plan for them is on release. And so, we get CARAT workers calling saying Johnny Jones is out next week so they fax an appointment so they already have an appointment when they come out.”*

There is the chance that those who agree to appointments whilst in prison ignore them once outside, but DIP felt the most of the CARAT referrals were being picked up. For those who do not make contact with CARAT in prison, DIP chases up release dates and sends prisoners an email on release offering an appointment.

DIP is voluntary, but there may also be mandatory appointments made through the CJS. Prism takes referrals from the CJS but defines itself as providing 'generic services' to the general public.

A2.2 Station visits

The main point of referral is visits to the police cells. Up until February 2009, the ARWs visited Llanelli and Carmarthen stations. DIP had two ARWs concentrating on alcohol and drugs, and

the station visits were organised so that the drugs worker covered Llanelli and the alcohol worker Carmarthen as, those were the dominant problems in those areas. However, ARWs would cross-refer and not only see clients in their particular specialism.

Since February 2009, DIP only has ARWs focusing on drugs, and no alcohol workers.

Cell visits take place in the morning:

- *“We go everyday in the morning and we inform the custody suites that they can phone the office through the day that if they have someone who needs to be seen and if we are free we will go ... There is possibility that we might start going twice a day in the future, but at the moment it is once a day. That is because people get arrested in the afternoon-evening and they are always there in the morning. It is the peak time when we can see the most people.”*

The police do enquire whether the arrestee wants to see an ARW but because of concerns about confidentiality there is a higher success rate if the ARWs go:

- *“Quite often the Police will ask them as there is an alcohol or drug worker would they like to see them. And most of them go no, no, no. So we ask can we go to the cells and ask, because otherwise – if we go to the cells then people are more likely to go and see us.”*

However, the available time at the police station is very limited. A typical initial assessment at a station would last only 10-15 minutes, whereas the first appointment at the DIP/Prism offices would be scheduled for an hour. This allows the ARW to go into client's background in a lot more detail – and to sell the benefits of continued engagement as well.

A2.3 Email referrals

If there is a person in a cell who wants to see the ARW who has left the police station, the Police notify DIP via an email, including the offence one was arrested for, home address, name and date of birth.

- *“I did cell sweeps in the morning and we received a number of third party referrals via the email system from the Police. Ok, so that consists of when the Police arrested them or released if they are on bail. They ask if they would like to see a drugs or alcohol worker, and if they say yes then they press a little button and we get an email through with that person's details.”*

On receiving the emails, DIP sends out a letter:

- *“We would send them a letter saying: ‘You've been referred to us by Llanelli Police, and this is the service we offer ... and if you would like a service from us please contact us.’ ... It was raised to me that should go in Polish, I say we even do not send it in Welsh.”*

Letters have been changed to reflect the change in relationship between DIP and Prism since February 2009.

Note that, if the client does not take up the appointment, referral information is destroyed after 28 days. In other words, no record is kept of a client's referral unless that client chooses to engage with the service.

A2.4 Qualification for referral

Qualification for referral is based around ‘trigger offences’. For drugs, trigger offences are straightforward to identify:

- *“All the ones that I would have seen [for drugs], have been arrested ... You have to have criminal problems to be using DIP in this area. Somebody who would see their GP with the alcohol problem they wouldn't be seeing DIP...Prism is a generic service that takes its referrals from anywhere... if they [were] not receiving the service from probation, or through DIP, then they would use this service.*

But for alcohol the problem is more complex:

- *“In terms of alcohol, ... anybody who had a trigger offence or direct offence with alcohol [would be offered the service]. We don't say: ‘Ok, you are not that problematic, we won't see you.’ [So alcohol related crime triggers referral?] Yeah, and then we would say; ‘Yes, you can see us if you want to.’ Then, we would do an assessment, if the person wants to ... It depends. If they are drunk and disorderly they are not going to prison, we will give them an appointment anyway.”*
- *“I think if it is a crime related to alcohol or committed under the influence of alcohol, that's the simple criteria ... and they are offered the referral ... They may be offered a chat about it, some policemen are quite good like that. It could be a domestic violence case, or drink driving; people get asked every time it happens so hopefully at some point there will be a referral made.”*

A2.5 Assessment

The first task of the ARW is to identify the primary problem, and consequently the right organisation to deal with the client. There is no clear relationship between drugs and alcohol:

- *“Valium, benzos, cannabis comes with everything – most people who are drinking or drugs, have a little bit of cannabis, as long as they are a smoker there seems to be cannabis in there anyway ... Not so much stimulants though ... But what we need to do is look at what is the primary substance. So if there is alcohol and drugs – is it the alcohol or the drugs which is the issue? ... [Services] will work with both if the person is confident and able to do so.”*

The initial triage is a short process:

- *“We just go through the last week and monitor how much they have been using drugs or alcohol, we take a summary of any recent substance use and related issues, looking at whether they are showing signs of dependence, if they have had any.”*
- *“They come out of the cell and we take them to an interview room, we would do very brief triage assessment, where we literally take the basic information from them, we would take their pattern of use, we would ask them if they had any mental health, physical health or social circumstances that we needed to know about. In particular with alcohol if they are driving, and give them a brief intervention if they are happy drinking and driving. And making sure that we have their name, their telephone number. And sometimes when we interview them they change their mind, so this is a good way of screening for us which ones want to come and see us and who don't. And that is five-ten minutes.”*

Drug use is the easier to classify:

- *For us, it is a little bit easier in terms of drugs. Users will define their use quite easily, so if I have a heroin user who is using everyday, then he is dependent. If I have a cannabis smoker, is it causing you a problem, is he recreational, if he is having 1-2 joints in the evening, he or she will view themselves as a recreational drug user. If they are using cocaine on the weekend, they will say that they are a recreational drug user. They will only change to problematic if it is causing them issues, if that recreation starts to creep up and causes them issues; health, social, rowing, not enough money, debts, being arrested. They are less likely to figure that as being a problem.”*

Alcohol problem is harder. A broad classification of dependent, problematic (including binge), harmful, and hazardous drinking is used to make initial judgements. As a widely-used legal substance, clients are reluctant to admit that they might have problems:

- *“Most people I think when you see people for the first time, they might be conservative; they might not say how much they are drinking. But I think if you are a reasonable worker, by the time they see you a second time – one of the things we say on the second time is that we are separate from the Police, we are going to keep your confidence, unless it is a risk to you or a child, or a member of the public, something you tell me is completely confidential, it doesn’t go anywhere.”*
- *“Well, some people say that they have only been arrested once and on the whole I don’t drink and you go through the assessment with them, and you say, ok, well for some people it is a one off. Obviously, you have to bear in mind they might not be telling you everything then, they maybe a bit embarrassed or whatever, and if they come back then we do education and information with them then about which ever substance they are using.”*

Misinformation may also be supplied by those worried about investigations from child protection agencies; this is more likely to be an issue with drug users.

Because of this need to win trust, often the first meeting is only an assessment, with education starting on the second meeting. This clearly has implications if the client is not committed to the rehabilitation process.

A2.6 Clients

Clients for drug services are predominantly heroin users, aged 25-40, with relatively clearly-defined problems. Alcohol users are different because of the status of alcohol:

- *“Alcohol is still the favourite drug around here. But it is the one that is totally socially acceptable, there are still rural areas where they won’t accept people to use other drugs, but they will still drink quite heavily, and that’s ‘ok’. A client group of my age would tend to just use alcohol. And view the other one as a totally different thing.”*

This, in conjunction with a lack of opportunities, can lead to a heavy drinking culture:

- *“... you break up early Friday and you drink to Sunday night, and it is seen as normal. Easily that can become a problem over years of doing that; you know it is not a great idea when you first start to do that but that can lead to dependent drinking over a period of time ... A lot of the things around here, rugby, football for men have a drinking element to them.”*

This can make accessing services harder:

- *“We still tend to see the heavier drinkers rather than people coming in for advice ... There is still quite a stigma about seeking help. [Do clients come in crisis?] With the criminal justice system, it was a norm, and all their friends were doing it. Therefore, the problem is quite significant when they approach the services.”*
- *“I think that most people we see are in crisis, and they generally need help.”*

Alcohol problems are dominated by males, and although some work (builders, factory workers, casuals), most of those who come to the ARWs are unemployed – whether this is a cause or a consequence of the drinking is not known. Relationship problems also seem to bring about excessive drinking, and this seems to peak in middle age:

- *“They are the ex binge drinkers, who became borderline dependant, around 50. Drinking in men can become problematical, often when they have other problems, there may be relationships breakdowns etc... Usually they are not working. They stopped working, some never worked. Lots of them haven’t been working between 5*

and 10 years. Lot of them are on incapacity benefits, lots of them have mental health problems or problems caused by drinking. So yes, employment is a problem.”

One consequence of the heavy drinking culture are the opportunities for relapsing:

- *“Yes, the biggest problem for lots of [alcohol] clients is the isolation; they can’t break away from the alcohol as everyone they tend to know is related to their drinking. And they feel that they would be isolated – and they would for a period of time, until they have built a new life for themselves ... It is the main barrier that leads to relapse, there are not enough community schemes to ... [Alcohol services] would do a short piece of work and look at tier 3 or tier 4 and maybe send someone away for detox, but when they came back there was virtually nothing in the community for them. So they did tend to go back to the place they knew where they found company. It is very understandable then.”*

This is also a serious problem for drug users; see eg Kreft et al (2008).

Drug users, particularly the young, tend to mix social backgrounds more, as well as their substances of choice. Alcohol and cannabis will be frequently mixed, although the users will not perceive themselves as drug users:

- *“I think that alcohol and cannabis users – there are quite a few of them now, but a lot of alcohol clients do not see themselves as drug users at all. They view them as different people; ‘we are not druggies’ they will say. Still the majority of [service clients] would be just using alcohol; the younger ones tend to mix it more.”*

Interestingly, in Carmarthenshire there appears to be substitution out of drugs and into alcohol:

- *“What you find in people weaning themselves off drugs and onto alcohol. [Services] have clients which were heavy drug users and now they have picked up alcohol instead, because it is easier to get hold of, it is legal and it is less of a struggle; maybe there are other underlying issues. [So there is now more of] those who have been quite heavy drug users and have had a period of abstinence and began leaning more on alcohol, and it has become a problem.”*

Finally, there was some concern about the issue of problematic CJS clients, and whether this was being tackled at present; for example, in terms of having secure rooms for interviews and waiting areas.

A2.7 Treatments

DIP, like Prism offers Tier 1 and Tier 2 services only. Tier 3 intervention is provided by West Wales Substance Misuse Service (WWSMS), and Tier 4 rehabilitation by the Social Care and Housing team.

- *[When someone contacts DIP] they allocate them ... a DIP worker and they work with them to get them into treatment... [DIP cannot provide treatment] but they were meant to be a fast track into treatment and their way into treatment was getting West Wales Substance Misuse where the drug workers are to treat the individuals... [ARW] will make an appointment for you with a DIP worker and that DIP worker then will work with you and try and get you into treatment as fast as possible.”*

The ARW would initially see the person up to three times, offering brief interventions with the focus on harm reduction:

- *“Even if someone just turns up for the assessment they’re going to walk away knowing how to calculate the units safely ... They often say that the first three*

sessions anyway is the most valuable piece of work we do with a client, and there's a lot of evidence to back that up."

If still motivated after this period, the client would move into more formal treatment: DIP's 13-week programmes, WWSMS, or Prism's services. Since the ending of alcohol work at DIP, referrals to Prism are now made straight away.

Alcohol referrals should be seen within a week (ten days for the Prism generic services) and drugs within three days. DIP is a thirteen-week programme, including motivational interviewing and relapse prevention (see Kreft and Ritchie, 2009); alcohol is usually three to six weeks.

Care plans are based around the individual, and there is some specialism amongst DIP staff; for example, for women or for stimulants (but not A8 migrants). DIP and Prism work with other agencies in case of serious physical dependency. GPs generally also co-operate except in providing methadone scripts.

DIP services were seen by other agencies as limited:

- *"[DIP] haven't been that useful for them only because they didn't have enough power to prescribe ... DIP drug intervention ... was a fantastic service but they didn't have that power to prescribe people who they were working with; and this was, DIP intervention program workers were meant to be a fast track into treatment but it wasn't working ... I think that's why they have teamed up now with Kaleidoscope ... Kaleidoscope are meant to be covering Llanelli, and they are the treatment provider for Prism, and I think it's a fast track."*

Capacity problems are partly to blame:

- *"But it wasn't a fast track really, it was very slow because [WWSM] is all clogged up ... Let's just say [WWSM have] got 10 drug workers, now each drug worker can only hold a certain case load, generally right? So when that gets filled up, when every 10 drug workers get filled up, they wait then for someone to drop off...until they can get someone back in there. So Prism were in the same situation ... trying to refer someone into [WWSM], it wasn't making things any faster really then."*

The arrival of Turning Point is seen as a positive development in relation to substance abuse.

- *[Turning Point stabilises person] up until they can get a drug worker in [WWSM]."*

Appendix A3 Original project proposal

CARMARTHENSHIRE DIP

POLISH COMMUNITY RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSAL

1. Introduction

Since May 2004, the number of 'A8 migrants' (from the new Eastern European EU members)¹³ to Carmarthenshire has increased dramatically. For example, the Polish community has gone from tiny numbers to being, on some measures, the largest single ethnic minority group in the county.

These changes are not reflected in the take-up for the Drugs Intervention Programme. This may be because there is no problem for DIP to address. However, the profile of this group would suggest that substance misuse issues would arise; and those same characteristics make the activities of the group difficult to identify with any certainty. So a natural question arises: is there a hidden problem.

This proposal considers what is currently known about the new ethnic minority, identifies areas of missing information, and proposes a work plan to address those knowledge gaps.

We focus on the Polish community as this accounts for the majority of new migrants, but it seems likely that the discussion could also apply to other A8 members.

2. Background

2.1 Measuring A8 migration

Ethnic groups are traditionally identified by Census data. However, as the last Census in 2001 precedes the EU enlargement date, there is a widespread acceptance that this data does not represent A8 migrants to the UK. Instead, information relies upon administrative sources.

At present, there are two administrative sources to get the information on the immigrants entering the UK labour market:

- *Work Registration Scheme (WRS)* which should identify a worker's place of employment, nationality, latest employer, and status as an A8 migrant, non-student, looking for work; these are used to produce the Accession Monitoring Report (AMR)¹⁴
- *National Insurance Number allocations (NINo)* which should identify all those, irrespective of status, taking up a PAYE job in the UK; these data are used to produce NINo registration statistics

Neither shows an exact figure for any of the A8 nationals currently working in the UK. They both calculate inflows, but do not show outflows - the number of immigrants leaving the country. Additionally, each system has its own characteristics that affect the final calculation. For example, WRS records data according to the location of the employer rather than the residential address of the applicant, as is the case with NINo.

As a result, figures both differ between data sources and are subject to challenge: NINo records 1,900 A8 applications Carmarthenshire (April 2004 – April 2007) whereas WRS records 2,600 for a similar period (May 2004 to March 2007); both these numbers are subject to the criticism in that they do not record movements out of the area.

¹³ Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia

¹⁴ http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/aboutus/reports/accession_monitoring_report/

Both schemes also only cover the employed – they omit the self-employed and those not working. Both of these groups may still be making a claim on services, which is not being recorded.

Finally, acquiring data for Carmarthen is difficult: as a small county, much of the registration data is subject to confidentiality restrictions.

Nevertheless, these remain the best source of statistics on worker activity, and so are used in most analyses of migrant numbers.

2.2 How many Poles in Carmarthenshire?

The 2001 Census gave the ethnic breakdown for Carmarthenshire as:

| | Carmarthenshire | Wales | | |
|---------------|------------------------|----------------|-------|-------|
| White British | 168060 | 2786605 | 97.2% | 96.0% |
| White Irish | 1018 | 17689 | 0.6% | 0.6% |
| White other | 2141 | 37211 | 1.2% | 1.3% |
| Non-white | 1623 | 61580 | 0.9% | 2.1% |
| Total | 172842 | 2903085 | | |

Source: ONS

However, NINo registrations identify a large increase in Carmarthenshire A8 residents looking for work since 2004:

| | Total registrations 2002/3 - 2007/8 | | | Registrations 2005/6 - 2007/8 | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------|
| | Total Registrations | % of total population | | Total Registrations | % of total population | |
| 'Old' EU | 0.52 | 12.04% | 0.30% | 0.23 | 7.23% | 0.13% |
| Poles | 2.49 | 57.64% | 1.44% | 2.24 | 70.44% | 1.29% |
| Other A8 | 0.21 | 4.86% | 0.12% | 0.19 | 5.97% | 0.11% |
| Other | 1.1 | 25.46% | 0.64% | 0.52 | 16.35% | 0.30% |
| Total | 4.32 | | | 3.18 | | |

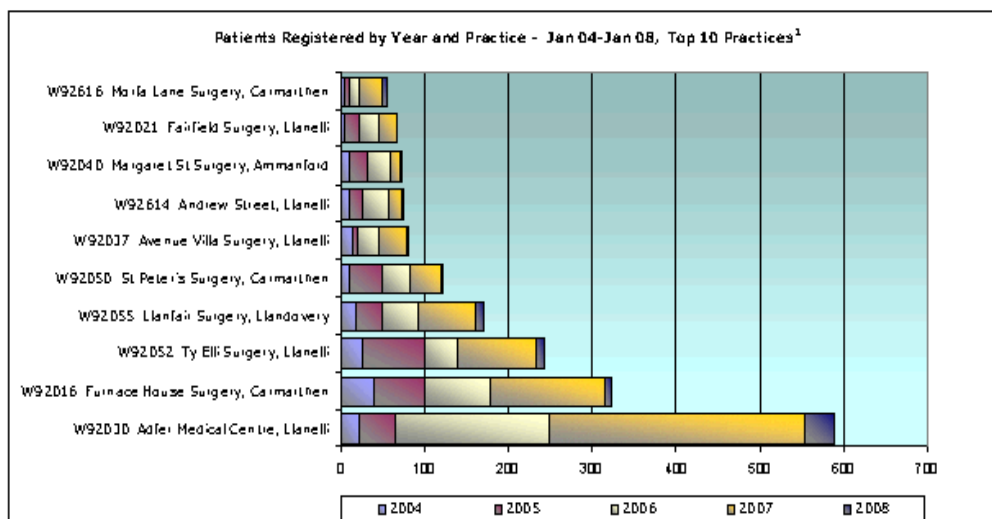
All figures in thousands

Source: DWP NINo allocations http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/tabtool.asp#ni_alloc

The registration rate since accession has been far higher for A8 migrants, and Poles account for 92% of A8 registrations. Assuming that most A8 migrants would come into the category "White Other", this implies that the size of this ethnic group has almost doubled since 2001, largely due to Polish migration since accession.

How accurate are these figures? The Annual Population Survey (APS2007) places the 2007 non-White population at c3,000 (rounded to nearest thousand, based upon a sample of just under 1% of the population), which is in line with the 1,600 Census data plus 1,100 additional registrations since then. This would seem to suggest that the registration data gives a good indication of current numbers.

On the other hand, evidence from support workers and GP registrations suggests that this figure is too low: Llanelli is the town with the highest concentration of Poles in Carmarthenshire with an estimate of at least 2000 immigrants. Patient registrations show that other towns with significant number of immigrant, presumably Poles, will be Carmarthen (over 500 registrations) followed by Llandovery and Ammanford (approx 170 and 80 registrations respectively); see the graph below.



Source: Social Justice Security Committee Task and finish Group 2006/07

There are no official statistics on the movement of A8 immigrants around either Carmarthenshire or Wales. However, within Wales, the NINo allocations and the WRS figures, which are taken at different times, show a similar geographic pattern, with over half of the post-accession migrant workers concentrated in just four authorities: Wrexham, Carmarthenshire, Newport and Cardiff.

Within Carmarthen, all sources agree that Llanelli continues to be the main destination for Polish migrants in Carmarthenshire.

Finally, anecdotal evidence suggests that these figures are much too low; for example, an unsourced quote on Wales Online suggested that as many as 8,000 may be living in the wider Gwendreath Valley area¹⁵.

2.3 Characteristics of Polish migrants

Both APS2007 and a Bevan Foundation report¹⁶ found that over two-thirds of A8 migrants in Wales were aged 16-34, albeit with some suggestions of an increase in the over-50 category too. In all age categories, there tend to be slightly more male migrants than women (AMR June 2008)

According to Polish-Welsh Mutual Association in Llanelli (PWMA), the vast majority of Polish work immigrants in the town speak little or no English¹⁷. The PWMA Polish Centre provided 995 translations and 76 assisted visits for the Polish community between October 2007 and July 2008. The language barrier is one of the biggest challenges for local services mentioned by Social Justice Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group 2006/07's report on migrant workers in Carmarthenshire (SJSC2007)¹⁸.

On skills there is less agreement. In contrast to the widely-reported perception of Poles as being mainly skilled workers (particularly in construction), the Bevan Foundation study found that 33% of A8 migrants workers have no qualifications (13% for the UK population). On the other hand, 40% of those registered with WRS have qualifications at NVQ level 4 and 5 in comparison (25% UK). Finally, the Polish Centre estimates that about half of young immigrant workers to Llanelli come with a university level diploma.

On health, SJSC2007 found that

¹⁵ http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/tm_headline=poles-immigrate-to-welsh-town-by-thousands&method=full&objectid=18855717&siteid=50082-name_page.html

¹⁶ ref for Bevan report

¹⁷ Note however that those with the worst language skills are most likely to seek the help of the support agency.

¹⁸ Ref for SJSC report

'...the majority of migrant workers are young, relatively healthy and make few demands on health services. There is evidence that families are now coming to the county although the available information relating to GP registrations is not reliable because of under-registrations.' (SJSC2007)

The main source of health problems amongst migrants identified by the PWMA is work-related injuries in the local meat industry and in agriculture.

The majority of Polish migrants appear to live in Multiple Occupancy Housing (MOH). The Bevan Foundation indicated that this might be a third of all migrant workers.

2.4 What do the migrants do?

AMR2007 states that

'The top five sectors for registered workers, who applied between May 2004 and June 2008, were administration, business and management (39%), hospitality and catering (19%), agriculture (10%), manufacturing (7%) and food, fish, meat processing (5%)' (AMR2007)

However, this is over the country as a whole. In Carmarthenshire, migrant work is dominated by a small number of large employers in the meat processing industry. Work in these companies is generally low paid and low skilled, often with few guaranteed hours or income and tied expenses such as travel and accommodation. Multiple job-holding is common. Much of the workforce is supplied through agencies advertising in Poland.

However, both PWMA and the Bevan Foundation found that migrants were taking the opportunity to move out of the low-wage, low-skill category:

'...as some migrant workers settle in Wales an increasing proportion are moving into 'mainstream jobs' which they access themselves or through, e.g. the local job centre or employment agencies.' Bevan Foundation

PWMA reports that the major concerns about employment are to do with short contract hours, deductions by employers, perceived lack of employment rights (that is, migrants are not informed about their rights), and uncertainty of tenure. However, it should be noted that PWMA has most contact with Poles experiencing work problems, and so should not be taken as an indication that all Polish workers are suffering employment problems. PWMA is also likely to be picking up issues across South Wales more generally, as it is the only dedicated Polish support centre in the region.

2.5 Summary

In summary, it is difficult to say precisely how many Poles are in Carmarthenshire, or working; it is difficult to say exactly what they do. It is fair to say that there has been a large increase in recent years, and that, while the migrants tend to be young, healthy and employed, there is evidence that a large section of the migrant population is having a difficult time in the UK.

3. Is there a hidden substance misuse problem?

As noted in the Introduction, the influx of migrants has not had any appreciable impact on DIP operations. It might well be that this is genuine. The majority of migrants are young, healthy, employed and highly motivated. These are not typical substance misusers (with one exception to which we return below).

However, we do know that a significant proportion of Poles do appear to be having difficulties: alienated from the community, perhaps unemployed or very insecure in their work, and if working, carrying out menial tasks for very small pay. These are all characteristics associated with substance misuse in other communities. Moreover, arrest statistics from the region do

suggest that significant numbers of Poles are brought into police stations¹⁹. Is there a problem which is simply not being identified?

One reason why there appear to be no DIP referrals from the Polish community may be that the main drug of choice is legal. Whilst there is some cannabis use, anecdotal evidence suggests that alcohol is the preferred relaxant. This causes difficulties for DIP monitoring, as trigger offences for alcohol are different compared to illegal drugs.

The aim of this project therefore is to try to address these issues in more detail. Three specific questions will be addressed:

- Is there a substance misuse problem in this community?
 - If so, does it come within DIP's scope (ie are crimes being committed)?
 - And if so, why is it not being recognised?

Clearly, whether the second and third questions are pursued will depend upon the answers to the first and second questions.

¹⁹ For example, Poles accounted for 36% of arrests of non-UK nationals in Carmarthenshire, Jan-Sept 2008

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