

Press Release - embargoed until **00.01am 19 May 2011**.

## **London's growing Latin American population face high levels of exploitation and discrimination**

New research highlights that the Latin American community in London has increased significantly over the last decade and although comparable in size to other large migrant and ethnic groups in the capital its contribution and needs have largely been ignored.

*No Longer Invisible* is the most comprehensive research to date of this largely overlooked community and was commissioned by charities Trust for London and the Latin American Women's Rights Service. Produced by Queen Mary, University of London the report establishes the first robust estimate of the size of the community and explores a number of key economic and social features of the Latin American community in London.

The size of the Latin American community in London is estimated to be 113,500 and it has grown nearly four-fold since the 2001 census (the UK figure is estimated to be 186,500). This means that Latin Americans now represent a significant part of the city's total population. Their numbers compare in size to other large migrant and ethnic groups, such as the Polish-born population, which comprises around 122,000.

The largest national group are Brazilians followed by Colombians. There are also large numbers of Ecuadorians, Bolivians and Peruvians.

The research primarily draws its findings from a large quantitative survey, of over 1,000 Latin Americans living in London. It shows that:

- It is a largely young and well educated population which has very high employment rates (85%).
- Although employed in all spheres of London's labour market the majority are unable to fully utilise their professional skills. More than half are employed in low-skilled and low-paid jobs in cleaning, catering and hospitality services, despite previous careers such as teaching, accountancy, engineering and social work.
- Over 40% of Latin Americans experience workplace abuse and exploitation. Shockingly 11% of Latin American workers are illegally paid below the National Minimum Wage, which is 10 times higher than the average rate for the UK population (1.1%).
- Despite lower than average incomes, take-up of public services and state benefits is low: 1 in 5 Latin Americans have never been to a GP, 6 out of 10 have never been to a dentist in the UK and only 1 in 5 receive some form of state welfare benefit (which are primarily in-work benefits such as tax credits).

- The majority of Latin Americans (70%), including the second generation who are fluent in English, perceive discrimination to be a major barrier to improving their quality of life.

Tania Bronstein, Chair of Latin American Women's Rights Service said: "For too long the Latin American community has been ignored. The population estimate shows we are comparable in size to the capital's Polish, Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities. It is important we are counted, especially by Government agencies, so that our contribution and needs are not ignored.

It is only when we are visible that issues uncovered by this research, such as the low rate of registrations with GPs and dentists by Latin Americans, are identified and can be addressed," she added.

"This research shows the scale of the challenges facing Latin Americans in London," said Bharat Mehta, Chief Executive of Trust for London "Although most of the capital's Latin American community are working hard, many are facing high levels of exploitation and abuse and as a result experiencing significant poverty and hardship. This should be of concern to all of us and there is a need for this to be addressed.

We are particularly concerned that such a large number of Latin American workers are being illegally paid below the National Minimum Wage. At ten times the UK rate there is an urgent need for the Government to enforce the law."

The report will be launched at City Hall on 19 May. The event will be opened by the Deputy Mayor of London, Richard Barnes, who chairs London's Strategic Migration Partnership.

## **Ends**

Note for Editors:

### **Media enquiries**

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*No Longer Invisible* draws its findings from a large quantitative survey, with over 1,000 respondents, complemented by 50 in-depth-interviews and several focus groups, which managed to reach different socio-economic groups and Latin American nationalities. The population estimate is drawn from an analysis of several official datasets and triangulation of this against the quantitative survey

Trust for London is the largest independent charitable foundation funding work which tackles poverty and inequality in the capital. It supports work providing greater insights into the root causes of London's social problems and how they can be overcome; activities which help people improve their lives; and work empowering Londoners to influence and change policy, practice and public attitudes. Annually it provides over £7 million in grants and at any one point is supporting some 400 voluntary and community organisations – [www.trustforlondon.org.uk](http://www.trustforlondon.org.uk)

The Latin American Women's Rights Service is a charity set up in 1983 to address practical and strategic concerns of Latin American migrant women in the UK. It directly engages with over 4,000 women every year through programmes that provide tools for personal and social change and which focus on promoting economic security, tackling violence against women and girls, and on improving opportunities for successful integration - [www.lawrs.org.uk](http://www.lawrs.org.uk)

Queen Mary, University of London was rated as one of the world's elite universities in the 2010 Times Higher Education's Top 200 World University Rankings. Dr Cathy McIlwaine is based in the School of Geography, which was ranked joint first in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise, with three quarters of its research rated as world-leading/internationally excellent. She is one of the few senior academics in the UK working on Latin American migration to London. She has an established research career based on two decades of working in Latin America, combined with recent research on migrants and London's low-pay economy - [www.geog.qmul.ac.uk](http://www.geog.qmul.ac.uk) - 020 7882 8418 or [c.j.mcilwaine@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:c.j.mcilwaine@qmul.ac.uk)

The report will be launched at City Hall at 2.30pm on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May. The event will be opened by the Deputy Mayor of London, Richard Barnes, who chairs London's Strategic Migration Partnership. Speakers at the event will include the researchers Dr Cathy McIlwaine and Juan Camilo Cock from Queen Mary, University of London. City Hall is at the Queen's Walk, More London, London SE1 2AA. If you would like to attend please contact [events@trustforlondon.org.uk](mailto:events@trustforlondon.org.uk)

The full report and a summary will be available at:  
[www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/latinamericansinlondon](http://www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/latinamericansinlondon)  
Summaries in Spanish and Portuguese will also be available.