



IOM International Organization for Migration



RUSSIA

MAPPING EXERCISE
LONDON, JULY 2007

CONTENTS

Introduction	03
1 Russians in the UK	05
1.1 Overview of the Russian community in the UK	05
1.2 Geographical location and spread of the Russian community	07
2 Mapping Exercise Outcome – Information Channels	09
2.1 Preferred source of information	09
2.2 Media	10
2.3 Use of services	16
2.4 Community groups and other organisations	21
3 Mapping Exercise Outcomes – Demographic Information	23
3.1 Gender	23
3.2 Age	23
3.3 Length of residence in the United Kingdom	24
4 Constraints	26
5 Conclusions and Recommendations	27

The aim of this Mapping Report is to guide IOM's outreach activities and communications strategies. The report does not purport to be exhaustive. The mapping consultant who conducted the exercise and wrote the report on behalf of IOM has taken every effort to ensure accuracy in his/her reporting and the views expressed in this report are his/hers. IOM cannot be held responsible for any omissions or inaccuracies.

INTRODUCTION

AIM OF THE MAPPING EXERCISE, TARGET GROUP AND METHODOLOGY

The aim of the mapping exercise carried out by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) was to identify the location of potential beneficiaries of IOM's voluntary return programmes, which are open to asylum seekers and irregular migrants, as well as the main channels of information used by them. The objective of the mapping exercise is to help IOM to improve its communications with foreign language communities in the United Kingdom through publications in the media, advertisements and presentations to community groups.

The first mapping exercise was undertaken in December 2005. It targeted the Brazilian community in the UK. Subsequently, more than twenty-two similar projects have been carried out by IOM and a few are in the course of being implemented. The mapping exercise for the Russian community in the UK was completed between April and July 2007.

As with previous projects, this mapping exercise aims to establish:

- the approximate size and geographical spread of the Russian diaspora in the UK;
- their preferred media, such as TV networks, radio stations, newspapers and magazines; as well as the role of Internet-based information sources;
- the languages in which they would prefer to receive IOM information materials;
- the institutions, such as libraries, religious centres and shops, which could be used for obtaining information about IOM's voluntary return programmes;
- what community organisations exist and who the community leaders are to whom members of the public turn for advice.

The Russian mapping exercise was undertaken with the help of a questionnaire, which was divided into two sections and consisted of twenty-five questions in total. The first section focused on media sources and other channels of information available to members of the Russian diaspora in the UK. It also asked about the community organisations and institutions where they meet their compatriots. The second section of the questionnaire requested specific baseline data from each respondent about age, gender, and length of residence in the UK. It should be emphasised that the anonymity of the respondents was completely protected and that no personal information, such as name or address, was gathered.

A Russian national was recruited to undertake the mapping exercise and compile this report. The mapping consultant's inside knowledge of the community, and well-established contacts with its members in the UK, proved to be an essential resource for this exercise.

The first phase of the project involved translating the questionnaire into Russian and adapting its contents. Primary research was carried out using a number of approaches to data collection. Information was gathered by disseminating questionnaires, by qualitative fact-finding and through in-depth interviews with multipliers.¹

¹ This term is used to indicate individuals or organisations that are well-known among diaspora groups and can therefore play a key role in delivering information.

Extensive networking was carried out to identify media, organisations, churches and individuals that interact with Russians. The field work took place between April and June 2007. During this period, 61 questionnaires were collected. These questionnaires represent not only the views of 61 individuals but also the consensus views of various groups and communities.

The mapping exercise was predominantly carried out in the Greater London area because it became obvious at an early stage of the research that this is where most of the Russian community lives. However, the exercise was not just limited to the capital, since there are growing numbers of Russians in other major cities as well. The consultant travelled to Oxford, Cambridge, Brighton, Birmingham, Cornwall, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Manchester. He met representatives of the Russian expatriate community in these cities, as well as meeting members of Anglo-Russian organisations and visiting several places frequented by Russians. This enabled him to reach a more comprehensive view of existing networks. It also helped make questionnaire answers statistically more accurate and representative.

This report includes charts and tables based on the information obtained from the questionnaires. Additionally, the consultant created an extensive list of contacts which merged data gathered directly from completed questionnaires with the results of the consultant's own fact-finding, and the information provided by the multipliers during interviews. This confidential catalogue will be used by the Information team at IOM in their outreach work.

It is important to emphasise that the mapping exercise relied on networks and that the questionnaire was completed by those who selected themselves to be part of this small study. It is not possible, therefore, to generalise from the data about the population of Russian nationals in the UK. However, the range of individuals who helped to facilitate the mapping exercise did constitute a broad and diverse sample.

1 RUSSIANS IN THE UK

1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE RUSSIAN COMMUNITY IN THE UK

History

The Russian diaspora in the UK has a long history. The first significant group of immigrants arrived around a hundred years ago, fleeing the revolution and civil war in their country. Many of these post-Revolution Russians and their children assimilated completely into British life. For a long time it seemed that there was hardly a distinctively Russian community in Britain at all. The former Soviet Union was also a very closed country with almost no opportunity for its citizens to leave freely. The number of Russians living in the UK therefore remained relatively small until the end of the 1980s. This began to change in the 1990s, a transitional and rather tumultuous decade for Russia and its society. With the political changes in the East, culminating in the break up of the USSR and the arrival of capitalism, the number of Russian-speaking newcomers has been increasing rapidly. In fact one can speak of something of a snowball effect, with more and more people arriving every year. Given that recent estimates conclude that nearly 600,000 East European migrants have come to the United Kingdom in the past two years, it is more than significant to note that upwards of 15% are Russian nationals.²

Some particularly wealthy entrepreneurs and famous artists are the ones that are primarily in the public eye but they represent a small overall fraction of Russians in Britain. The Home Office estimates that most Russians currently residing in the UK are either labour immigrants or people who have been granted visas on family reunion grounds. There are some asylum seekers as well, particularly from the Caucasus region. There were 280 Russian citizens applying for asylum in 2003, 190 in 2004 and 130 in 2005. Asylum, exceptional leave or humanitarian protection was refused in 340, 215 and 115 cases in each of these years.³

Number of Russian Citizens

Gathering accurate information about the size of the Russian diaspora in the UK has been as difficult as it has for similar mapping exercises for other ethnic minority groups. The fact that Russia formed the most significant part of the former Soviet Union, both in terms of population and, especially, territory, is a key factor. Russian was the prevailing language and dominated the ethnic structure of the old society. In simple terms, it means that an individual who only speaks Russian, who considers him- or herself to be Russian, and who is seen as “Russian” by others, could come from a former Soviet republic like Estonia or Uzbekistan, and would therefore not be directly covered by this survey. To establish formal nationality has been one of the main challenges of this exercise. It’s worth pointing out, though, that even if, for example, an ethnic Russian with a Ukrainian passport were interviewed, his or her preferences about information channels and community organisations would by no means be irrelevant.

² Independent Immigration Advice, ‘Work Permit’, *UK Immigration News*, 16 December 2006.

³ Home Office, *Asylum Statistics United Kingdom 2005* (HOSB) pp.34, 42.

The problem described above has to do with the specifics of a country with a perplexing ethnic composition but there was also a challenge that is common to all these mapping exercises: there is a general lack of up-to-date information on the number of foreign nationals in the UK.

The 1991 UK census only listed citizens of the former USSR. According to the census conducted in 2001, there were 15,644 Russian citizens living in Britain.

Figure 1: Breakdown according to age

AGE	CITIZENS
0-14	1,910
15-29	5,139
30-44	5,047
45-59	1,860
60-74	645
75 or older	1,043
TOTAL	15,644

There is no doubt that these figures have risen significantly during the last few years. However, the age breakdown is likely to remain valid.

The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) estimated that there were 18,900 Russian citizens in the UK in 2001.⁴ However, even these figures are out of date, given the developments of recent years.

Unofficial estimates suggest that approximately 300,000 Russians, or those who consider themselves as such, currently call Britain their home. (There has been a surge of approximately 100,000 in the past two years.) The numbers are, however, highly speculative and have not been formally confirmed by any authority, including the Home Office. The estimates are produced on the basis of other figures relating to other aspects of migration. One analysis, for example, collates issued visas, approximate numbers of Russian citizens returning to their country (given a rough estimate of how many have overstayed) and numbers of asylum applications approved and refused. In 2000, for example, 114,000 visas were granted to Russians; by 2003 the number had increased by 52%. Some official figures confirm this trend. 1,185, 1,025 and 1,365 Russian citizens settled in the UK in 2001, 2002 and 2003 respectively.⁵

A considerable relaxation of domestic rules on foreign travel in Russia in recent years and increasing co-operation between Russia and the EU states have contributed to a growing Russian migration to the UK. At the end of 2005, it was estimated that 250,000 Russians and Russian-speaking people lived in the United Kingdom. By December 2006, there were about 300,000.⁶

⁴James Rather, *Counting the Uncountable*, (IPPR Publications), March 2007. See Appendix.

⁵Annual Abstract of Statistics, 'National Statistics Acceptances for Settlement by Nationality', 2000-2002:

⁶Independent Immigration Advice, 'Work Permit'. See above.

1.2 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION AND SPREAD OF THE RUSSIAN COMMUNITY

Lack of officially verified and up-to date statistics is also apparent when it comes to a breakdown of the number of Russians living in different parts of the UK. Representatives for both the British authorities and Russian diplomatic staff agree on one thing: nobody really knows how many there are. Revealingly, the spokesman for the Russian Consulate in Edinburgh pointed out that, although there are just five hundred Russians officially registered with them, in reality many more have settled there. He said: "Our figures only include those who are technically registered with us. However, far from everybody does register, and even if they do, it tends to be only for a short time. There is no doubt that many more Russians live in Edinburgh, either retaining their native Russian status or not."

The Russian Embassy in London estimates that the vast majority of the approximately 300,000 Russian-speakers have settled in London. The unofficial assessment is that around 70% now live in the capital. Russians tend to be spread all over Greater London. However, the London Boroughs of Hackney, Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea and Tower Hamlets are their favourite destinations.

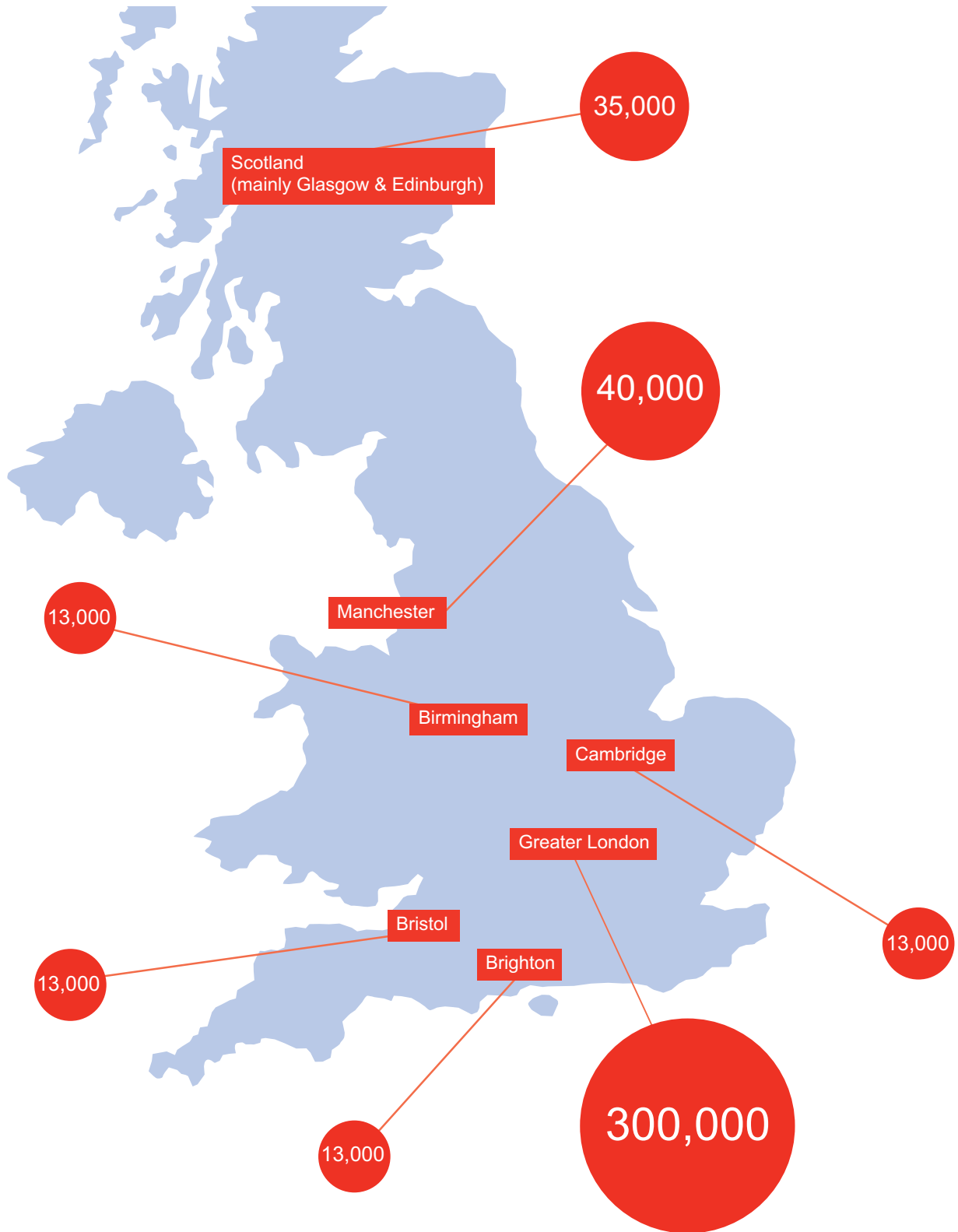
Manchester was said to be the second city of choice for Russians, with around 10% of the diaspora, closely followed by Scotland (8%, mainly in Glasgow and Edinburgh). The rest of the Russians are, in almost equal proportions, concentrated in Birmingham, Cambridge, Brighton and Bristol. This list is by no means exhaustive. As shown in other sections of the report, there is a significant Russian presence in all the major cities and regions of the country, with societies and community groups in places like Liverpool, Cornwall, Kent and Wales, to name a few.

Mapping Questionnaire Data and Other Sources

Respondents were asked whether they knew areas with significant numbers of their countrymen anywhere in the UK. Twelve respondents did not answer that question. The rest largely confirmed the data above. The vast majority of respondents produced answers like 'Bayswater', 'Chelsea', 'Hackney'. There was a clear view that the vast majority of Russian citizens live in the capital. This is consistent with information from the Home Office and the 2001 Census.

Unlike some diasporas, Russians do not tend to settle down in a particular area, either in London or in the UK in general. It has been confirmed by the respondents, and others involved in the community, that there are almost no examples of areas where a concentration of Russians could be labelled as "high" or "considerable". It is rather more appropriate to speak about certain parts of Greater London where you are more likely to hear spoken Russian or perhaps to see a Russian establishment, like a food store or a restaurant. The existence of such establishments is sporadic and does not depend on the fact that many Russians actually live in that particular neighbourhood. This is in sharp contrast to many other ethnic groups. This is perhaps partly a consequence of the size of the community and its longer history of being in Britain. Thus, the composition of the Russian diaspora is, in territorial and geographical terms, rather loose.

Geographical Spread of the Russian Community in the UK, 2007



The above are rough estimates. In London, the Russian community has mainly settled in Hackney, Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea and Tower Hamlets.

2 MAPPING EXERCISE OUTCOME

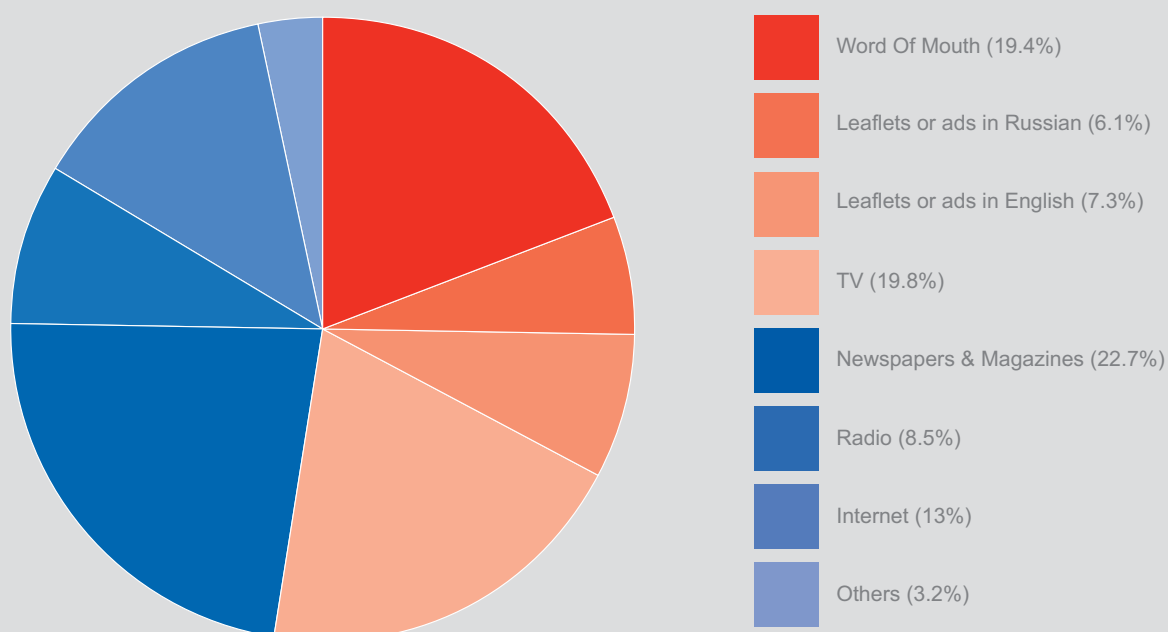
INFORMATION CHANNELS

2.1 PREFERRED SOURCE OF INFORMATION

Information Sources

Participants were asked how they normally obtain information about political, social, cultural and entertainment matters. The answers were as follows:

Figure 2: Preferred Source of Information



A few respondents listed communal notice boards and notice boards in shops and work places as a way of obtaining information. The fact that newspapers tend to be favoured by respondents is probably due to the availability of free newspapers in both Russian and English.

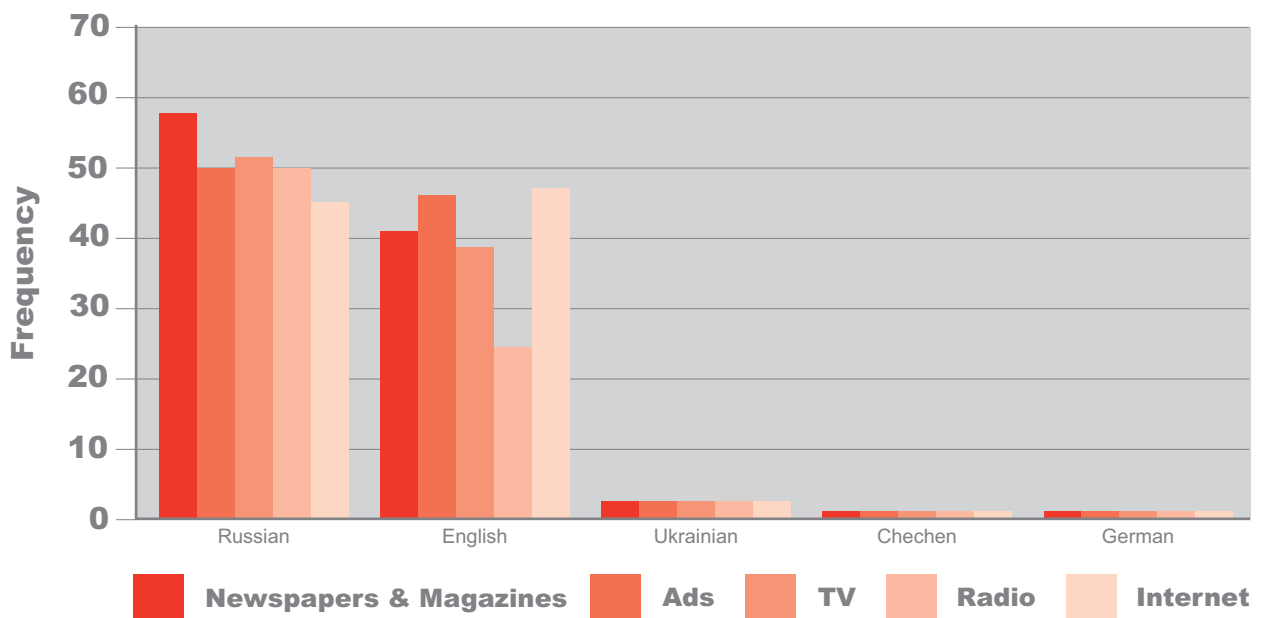
2.2 MEDIA

The first section of the questionnaire was designed to identify the main channels of information used by Russians in Britain. It was divided into three main categories: media; community groups and organisations; and other sources of information. The data, including contact details provided by the respondents and interviewees, was merged and organised as a unified list of organisations and contacts. This list is confidential and for IOM's use only. Its purpose is to serve as a foundation for IOM's work in establishing links with the Russian community, and as a vital tool for IOM's future outreach activities. It is not designed to be an exhaustive register of media and organisations. New newspapers and organisations appear all the time given the rapid growth of the Russian population in Britain.

Media Comprehension

Respondents were asked which language they prefer to read, and in what language they can best understand information from TV and radio, the Internet, newspapers and various publications and advertisements.

Figure 3: Media Comprehension

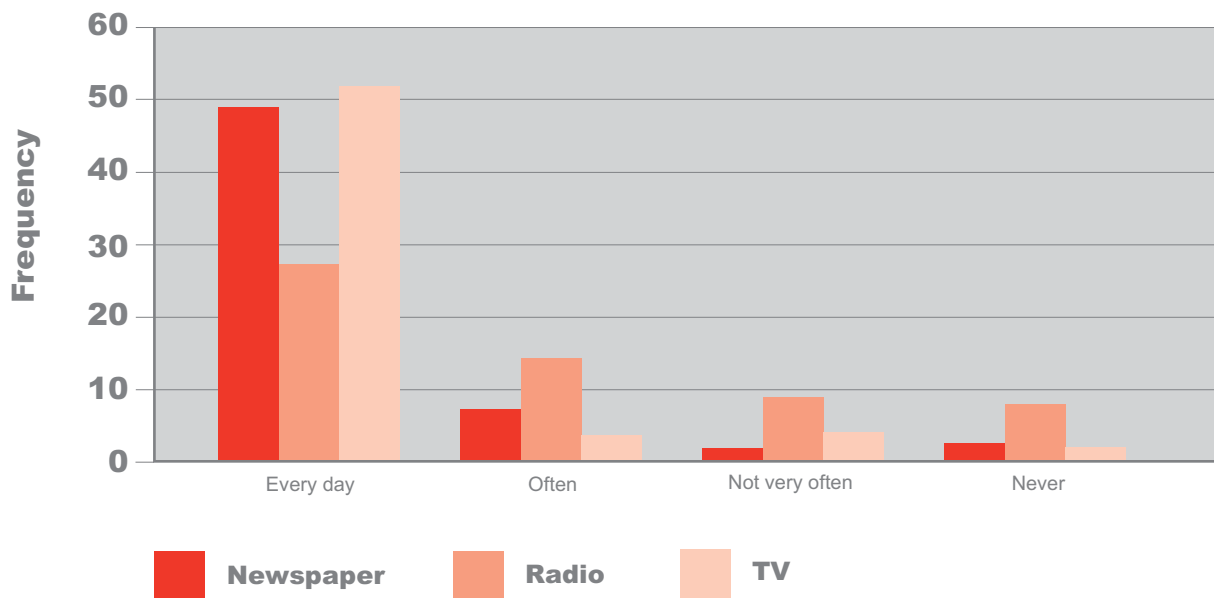


Unsurprisingly, Russian seems to be the language of choice. However, most of the respondents do consult English-language media as well, something that witnesses to their relatively low average age and high degree of integration into British society. Most Russians understand some other Slavonic languages as well, for example Ukrainian or Byelorussian. Nevertheless, they either did not show any interest in media products in these languages or could not find them where they live.

Frequency of Media Consultation

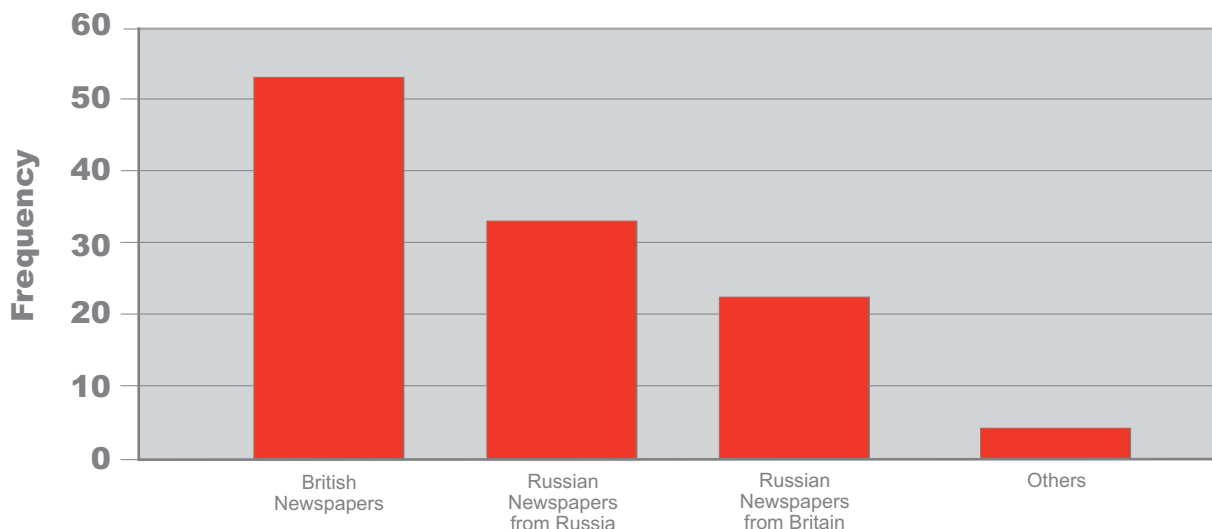
Most respondents said that they use the media daily. The vast majority of people said that they read daily free newspapers such as *Metro* or the *London Paper*, which are handed out on the streets and on public transport in major cities. Most of the respondents pointed out that “every day” actually refers to their consultation of English media. “Often” tends to represent answers from people reading Russian daily and weekly publications and listening to Russian radio stations at home.

Figure 4: Frequency of Media Consultation



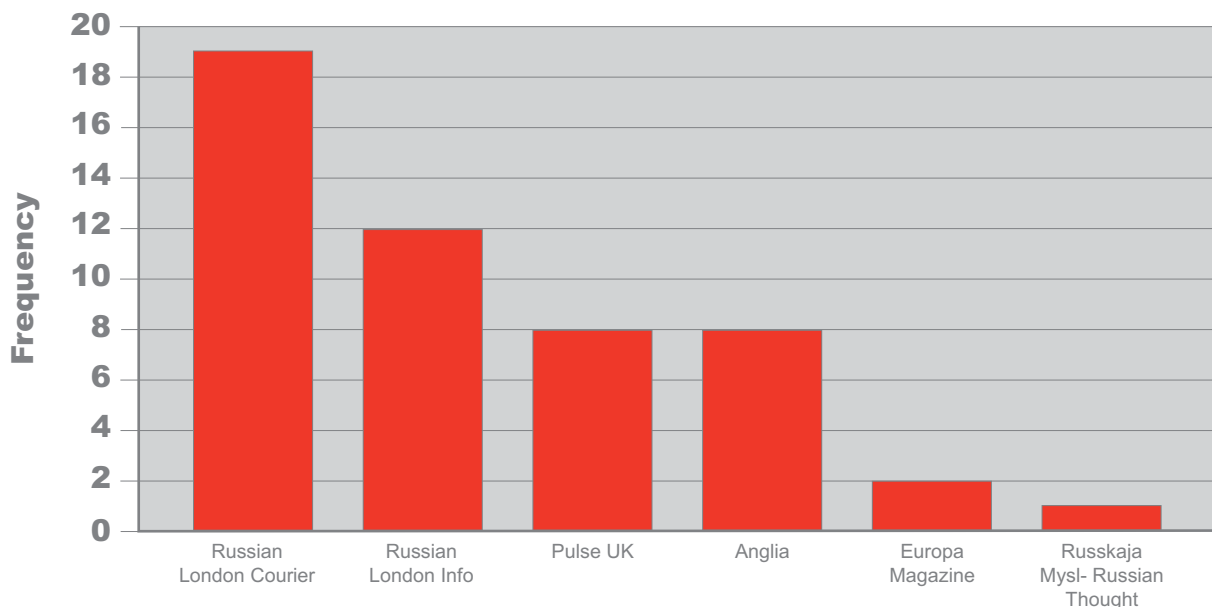
Newspaper Readership

Figure 5: Preferred Press



London supports four Russian-language newspapers: *Russian London Courier*; *Russian London Info*, *Pulse UK*; and *Anglia*. A few years ago there were just two but the demand for Russian newspapers in the UK is said by the publishers to be ever-increasing. The launch of more newspapers is likely according to the editors at the Russian Media House publishing agency. Although English-language newspapers, especially the free ones, are much more popular, the Russian Press in the UK is growing and gaining strength. The following publications were identified by the respondents:

Figure 6: Newspaper readership



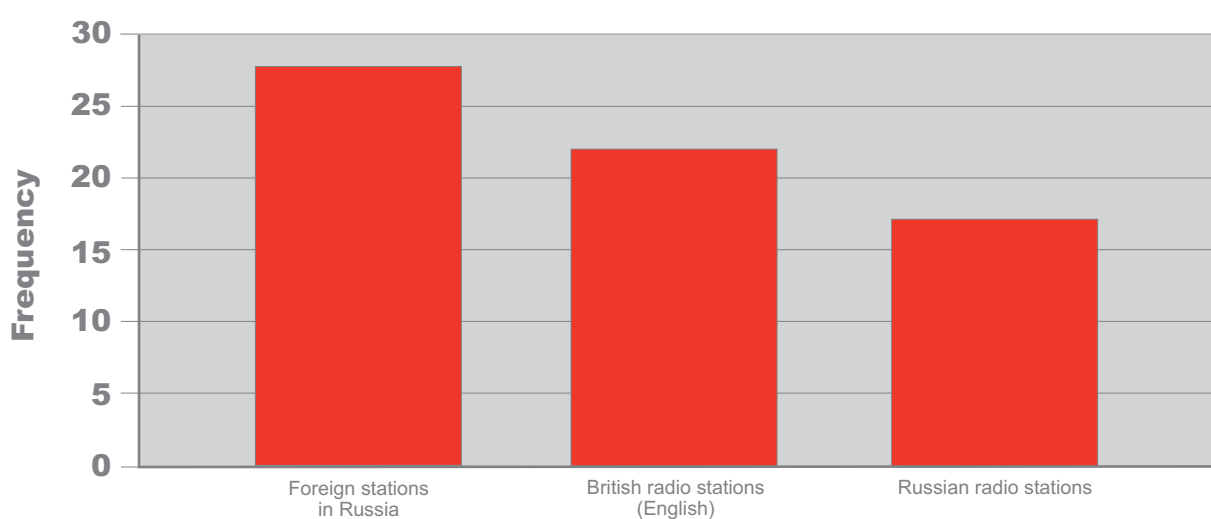
The first two newspapers from the left are the oldest. At first, they came out every fortnight but they have subsequently been upgraded to weekly papers. *The Times* and the *Guardian* were the most popular British newspapers, with 15 and 19 frequencies respectively in their favour.

Other Publications

The consultant did not learn of a weekly or monthly periodical magazine in Russian, that is produced in the UK. With almost no exceptions, all the magazines listed in the survey were either English-language ones, or Russian publications produced in the home country. The Russian-language magazine, *Europa*, advertises products like expensive jewellery, luxury watches and exclusive designer clothes. It is published in Vienna but distributed all over Europe. *Russian London* produces luxury guides, which encompass exclusive advertisements and tips about what to do and where to go in London. None of these magazines are likely to be useful to IOM.

Radio

Figure 7: Radio



This is an area where the respondents differed in their preferences according to age and length of stay in the UK. Such radio stations as *Radio Liberty/Radio Free Europe* and *Voice of America*, all in Russian, are still very popular with the older part of the population, as well as with those who have been here the longest. This is due to the fact that they are the old “dissident” stations and represented the only way people in the old Soviet Union could get information from the West. 10 participants listed these stations.

Russian radio stations broadcasting from Russia are far more popular and they are often accessible online. The most popular Russian-language radio station in the UK is *BBC Russian Service* (26 respondents). It is equally popular with older as well as younger listeners and has an impressive Internet portal as well. One of the early achievements of this exercise was securing the BBC’s interest in doing interviews about IOM’s voluntary return programmes.

1st Russian Radio (Pervoe Russkoe Radio) and *Ckomorox* are online radio stations with a focus on entertainment and similar subjects, popular among young members of the Russian community.

Television

The vast majority (56 respondents) watch British TV channels regularly. Only 19 respondents said that they have access to Russian TV. Some members of the community cannot afford satellite dishes or digital boxes because they live here temporarily or they live in shared accommodation. All the main Russian TV networks, such as *ORT*, *RTR* and *NTV*, have offices in London and their broadcasts are specifically designed for Russians living abroad. Advertisements on such networks are therefore adapted to a UK audience, focusing on goods and services one can obtain abroad, rather than in Russia. Apparently, a Russian TV network broadcasting in Germany ran information about visas and legal services in relation to immigration.

Internet

More than 60% of the respondents use the Internet on a regular basis at home or at work for business or leisure. It became apparent during the survey that, for many people, it is the only medium that allows them to check the news in Russian every day, especially younger people. Two thirds of the respondents regularly consult Russian UK portals and information networks. The most prominent are *BBCRussian.com*, *Russianquater.co.uk*, *RussianCourier.com* and, especially, *Russian London.com*. Users can subscribe to a fortnightly e-mail bulletin from the last-mentioned site which contains a wide range of topics and links. There are vacancies, legal aid ads and information about sports, cultural events, Russian schools, grocery shops, etc. Almost all Internet users mentioned this website and their e-mail updates. It is widely known to be the most comprehensive and up-to-date source of information for the Russian diaspora in the capital.

Conclusion

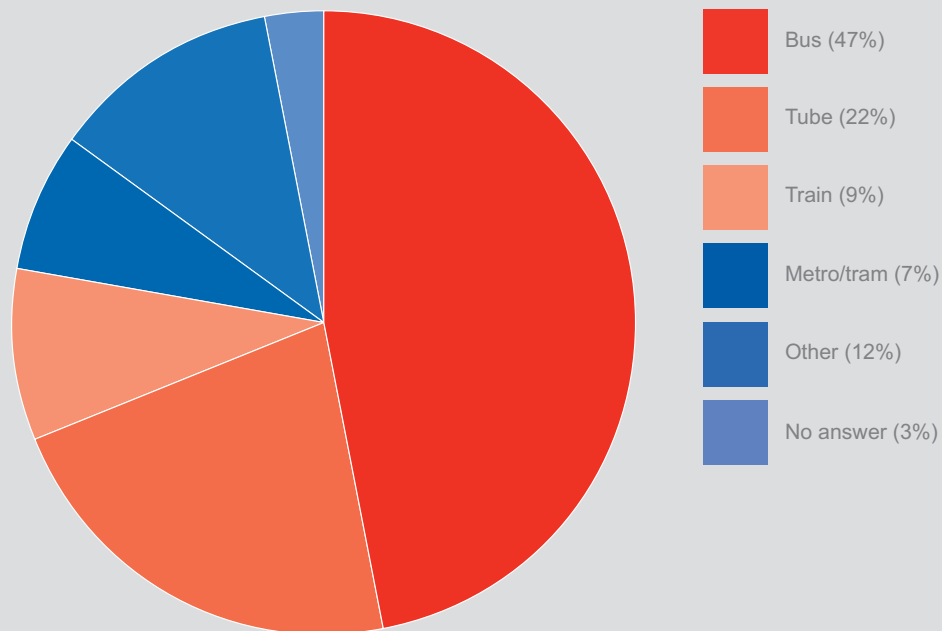
There is a growing number of Russian newspapers in the UK, particularly in London. All newspapers and Internet portals have a very versatile content, which often varies from a political and social agenda to advertisements about social events, shops and nannies. There is a wide audience which also encompasses many people from former Soviet countries who speak Russian and who perhaps do not have their own media in Britain. Some of the newspapers are free and available outside major bus and train stations as well as in Russian institutions and organisations in the UK. IOM should consider working with Russian media and Internet domains. Almost all their representatives expressed an interest in such co-operation during this research.



2.3 USE OF SERVICES

Means of Transport

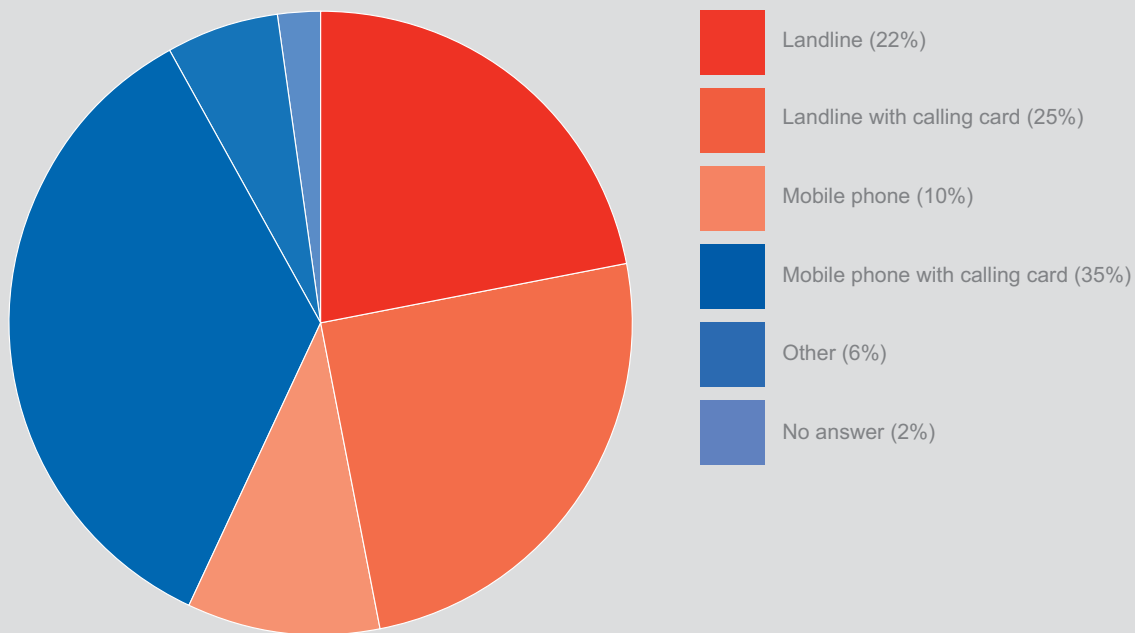
Figure 8: Transport



Most of the respondents live in London and their daily means of transport are predominantly buses or the Underground. Mainline trains were mainly used by the Russians living in Scotland and Brighton. “Other” generally meant using one’s own car or, perhaps, worker transport services. Irregular migrants who, for example, work in the agricultural sector, in removals or on building sites are sometimes picked up in a lorry or van, taken to work and are then returned to their home at the end of the day.

Phone Calls

Figure 9: Phoning Abroad

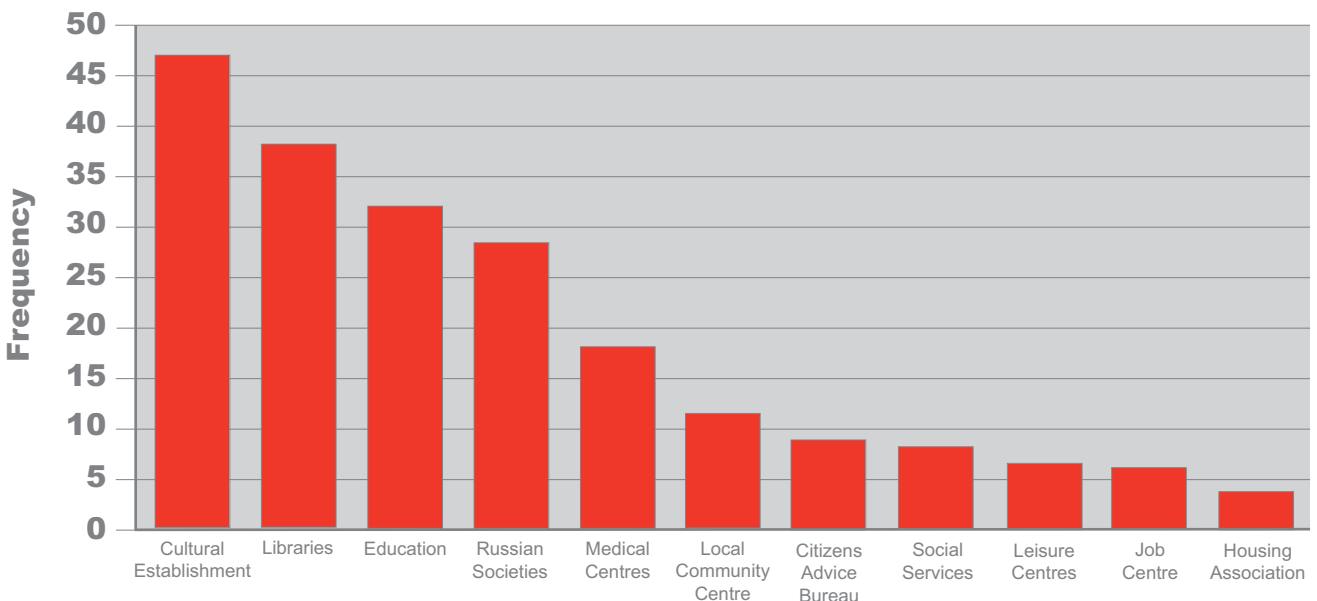


The survey clearly indicates that most people use calling cards to minimise their costs. There are several specialised calling cards, for example *IDT Eastern Europe*, *Eastern Tel* or *Tele-Tsar*, with preferential rates for calls to Eastern Europe, and the Russian language as a menu option. They are sold in most convenience shops, kiosks and markets.

Local Services

Figure 10 shows which local services are regularly used by the respondents. Many of them chose to tick several options.

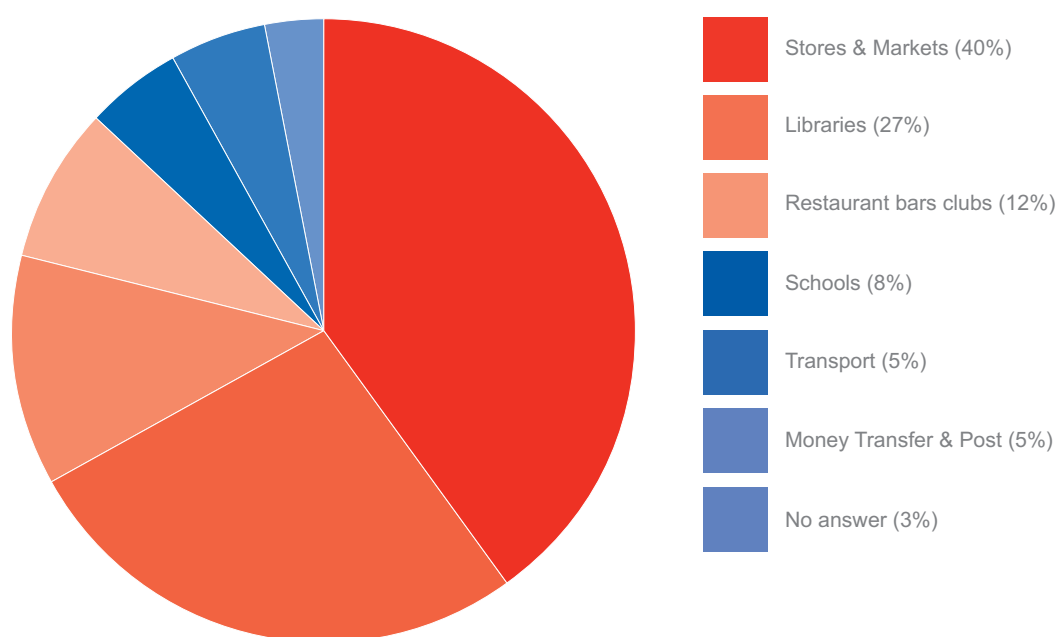
Figure 10: Local Services



The results highlight the fact that many Russians in the UK enjoy cultural activities and frequently use libraries. The latter are more applicable to older respondents. Much of the communal activity has to do with arts or entertainment. Many Russian associations in fact revolve around cultural events or undertakings.

Unfortunately, the follow-up question about where respondents thought information should be displayed did not produce an interesting result. Almost everyone chose most of the options on offer. They suggested that all the options were valid, and somewhat obvious. Even so, libraries and community organisations were generally preferred, closely followed by cultural establishments.

Figure 11: Places to Display IOM Materials



Conclusions

Buses and the Tube are the most common means of transport which makes them an obvious choice for advertisements. On the other hand, Russians do not tend to live in particular areas that they make their own. They often live in areas where many ethnic groups are represented and it could be more productive to display advertisements in a number of languages, including Russian, in order to maximize their impact.

Phone cards are a popular method of communication. There are several cards issued by different companies that are designed for making calls to Eastern Europe, with distinct Eastern European and Russian symbols and images on them. In recent years, different ways of carrying advertisements on these phone cards have been introduced. IOM should approach the makers and distributors of these cards and either advertise on them or set up promotions as part of the calling arrangements.

Libraries and shops selling books, music and DVDs from Russia are immensely popular with members of the Russian diaspora. The number of grocery stores selling Russian and Eastern European foods is increasing rapidly. IOM should consider advertising in these places, which would offer effective publicity for its programmes.

There are still not that many community organisations and centres for Russian people and they tend to revolve around events. But, they attract a large number of visitors, despite their irregular occurrence, and they tend to be a focal point of contact for many. In the view of the mapping consultant, these events present a real opportunity for establishing communication networks and promoting ideas.



Russian
Newspapers
from Britain

ian-language

2.4 COMMUNITY GROUPS AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Despite soaring levels of immigration into the UK in recent years, there are still very few Russian organisations and societies in the UK. They appear to be rather informally run, they are often not known to many other Russians, and they do not have many members. Many Russians are affiliated to these organisations and participate in their activities but far fewer subscribe to full membership or become actively involved in them.

This was confirmed by the experience of using the questionnaires and during in-depth interviews with community leaders and the general public. Unlike many other ethnic groups, Russians have so far been reluctant to organise themselves into different societies. They rely on individual contacts and smaller, more informal, networks. People seem to build mini-communities of friends, acquaintances and colleagues but refrain from becoming involved more seriously with larger associations. Fifty-three respondents said that friends and colleagues, or simply people they know, were their point of contact if help or consultation were needed. It is far from self-evident that such people need be Russian but there is usually a common denominator, such as language or customs. Thus, they are more likely to be from the old Soviet or Eastern European countries.

However, there is a rapidly growing number of advice centres, legal practices and charities that assist people from Russia and the CIS, or even specialise in working with them. There is also a constant increase in Russian forums and establishments, such as book shops and video stores, restaurants, social clubs, schools, nurseries, music schools and cultural associations. It is striking that most of the establishments that were discovered in the course of the mapping exercise are not yet listed in Yellow Pages or on the Internet. They are just too new!

A comprehensive listing of community organisations, institutions and enterprises has been compiled in the list of contacts, together with recommendations for action. Some of the more significant contacts are:

The Russian Community Association: a registered charity whose purpose is to provide services and support to Russian-speaking refugees and the immigrant community in Greater London. Members of this association come from all the ex-Soviet Union republics. It is an umbrella organisation for small ethnic groups in London and the rest of the UK. It organises a wide variety of social and cultural events and projects.

The Russian Immigrants Association provides help in asylum matters and helps with the integration of people who are granted leave to stay in the UK.

The Russian Refugees Aid Society gives assistance and support to Russian and Russian-speaking asylum-seekers, refugees and irregular migrants.

The Russian Annual Festival usually takes place in Trafalgar Square at the beginning of January. It is supported by the City of London and several prominent political and corporate figures. It attracts vast numbers of Russians, people from the former USSR and other Londoners. It is by far the biggest and the most important social event of the year.

The Russian-British Cultural Association (RBCA) promotes Russian culture in the UK and British culture in Russia. It organises cultural evenings, social gatherings and receptions, as well as providing information about Russian cultural events taking place throughout the UK.

Eventica is a multi-faceted organisation specialising in the Russian market, with extensive expertise in business-to-business and cultural events, corporate entertainment, publishing, sports and communications.

Russians Abroad is a comprehensive Internet portal and information network.

Bomonti organises trips, social events, cultural activities and sporting events.

The Scotland-Russia Forum (SRF) organises social gatherings, seminars, talks, classes, cultural events and forums.

Pushkin House is the showcase for Russian culture in London, mostly through cultural events and meetings.

3 MAPPING EXERCISE OUTCOME

INFORMATION CHANNELS

The second section of the questionnaire was designed to gather baseline data from the respondents about their age, their gender, and their length of stay in the UK. Its aim was to establish correct sociological parameters and to help visualise a typical member of the Russian diaspora community. The information here is more personal, and its confidentiality has been safeguarded.

3.1 GENDER

31 Respondents were women and 30 were men. Male interviewees were generally more reluctant to take the time to answer the questions fully but the mapping exercise still managed to achieve a good balance between the genders.

3.2 AGE

Figure 12 largely confirms both the experience of working with members of the Russian community and general knowledge. Although the mapping exercise does not claim to be a comprehensive sociological survey, it does support the observation that a considerable proportion of the Russian community is fairly young. The following table also confirms the fact that most of them have not been here for long and that they are rather new to this country.

Figure 12: Age

AGE	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Under 18	1
18-24	14
25-34	34
35-44	8
45-54	4
55-64	0
65 and over	0
TOTAL	65

3.3 LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Figure 13: Length of Residence in the UK

LENGTH OF TIME	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Less than 12 months	8
1 year but less than 3	27
3 years but less than 5	15
5 years but less than 10	9
10 years or more	2
TOTAL	61



4 CONSTRAINTS

The Russia Mapping Exercise did not encounter any considerable difficulties and experienced no obstacles whatsoever either from individuals or from the representatives of any organisation. People were often slightly cautious about the mapping exercise and a few did decline to participate in the survey. Lack of time or interest was the cause on most occasions. Nonetheless, examples of open suspicion and mistrust were almost non-existent.

It should be stressed, though, that, in order to ensure that the process of answering the questionnaires went smoothly, the consultant chose to interview people and fill in their answers himself, rather than leave it to them. This method also helped to ensure that most of the questions were actually answered and that the responses were more precise, since it was possible to go back and elaborate on particular subjects. It also helped significantly in discovering relevant societies and organisations. There is no doubt, though, that the degree of willingness to participate in the survey was higher among the respondents whose personal situation in this country was settled and secure. People in London also tend to be busier and more sceptical than people in smaller places.

The only complaints received about the exercise were that the questionnaire was rather long and some questions repetitive. This applied mainly to the media section. Some respondents thought that the answers to many of the questions were self-evident. They pointed out that everyone goes to the bank and post-office now and then, and almost everyone in London uses different kinds of transport. IOM should look into how this criticism can be addressed.

Finally it needs to be stressed that, although the number of Russian organisations in the country is rapidly growing, many of them have only just been established. Many of them have not been active for long and it may have affected how much people know about them, or whether they are known at all. A number of British-Russian student societies or associations created for learning the Russian language and culture were visited and people interviewed. This was because the British often have a better knowledge of Russian networks than the Russians themselves. They are often pro-active in looking for them, hoping to come across some Russians. The consultant believes, though, that this situation is changing. Increasingly, native Russians are becoming more aware of their own associations.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Specifics of the Russian Diaspora

The Russian community in Britain is an unusual – in many ways unique – entity. In fact, it is debateable whether it actually is a “diaspora” in the true meaning of the word. This is an important feature to bear in mind in the development of IOM’s outreach and communication strategy for this community. It appears that the number of groups, societies and organised social networks is small compared to the actual number of Russians in the UK. The mapping exercise established that many Russians seek only occasionally to engage in communal activity. They do not normally dedicate a substantial part of their time to this and they certainly do not often see such associations as a place where they can find advice and assistance.

There are several explanations for this. An obvious one is that many Russians arrived in the UK recently and simply have not yet had a chance to organise themselves. Another is that, although their numbers are now significant, they are still not numerous enough in comparison with other diasporas. A few respondents pointed out that a “critical mass” of potential members must be reached before a real involvement with nationality-based societies can start.

Another important factor is said to be the relative geographical and cultural proximity of Russia. It is just a short flight away. Also, many Russians have much in common with the British, in terms of customs and way of life, compared with many other ethnic groups. They are not visibly different from local people and therefore less likely to experience racism and xenophobia. So, there is less need to keep together in order to address these issues. Finally, most Russians arriving in this country are well-educated and speak at least a little English. As a rule, they have no problems in integrating into the British society and participating fully in their domestic social and economic environment. They simply have less need to rely on each other.

One aspect which is very characteristic for Russians and migrants from the old Soviet countries is that their links to the home country are to a very great extent based on culture and the arts. The mapping exercise established that libraries, book shops and video stores are extremely popular. In addition most of the associations and societies are either formed on the basis of some cultural activity or at least organise many events of that kind. Many respondents emphasised that expressions of cultural identity are something that members of the Russian community have in common. Films, books, concerts, exhibitions, the role of the Orthodox Church, and festivals such as Easter and Christmas were all mentioned repeatedly in the course of the survey.

The role of the Church, and the place of national holidays and celebrations, were one of the recurrent subjects of discussion. The Church was commonly referred to as the centre of communal activity and the focal point of Russian society in the UK. The Church appears to be the first thing that comes to mind if people are asked to nominate the “first meeting place”. Celebrations of Easter, New Year, or “The Old Orthodox New Year” (for example, the Russian London Festival in Trafalgar Square, mentioned above) are all essential parts of community life.

Finally, Russians normally have extensive sub-networks of Russian friends and relatives, although many of them may be reluctant to engage in communal activity. These networks are, in effect, a substitute for more formal and organised ways of community building. Many respondents admitted

privately that they keep track of what is happening in their old country by regularly reading various Russian news web-pages, in preference to British news sources. Many visit Russian websites based in the UK and receive weekly e-mails about forthcoming events. These types of forum clearly also fulfil a need for informal networks.

Recommendations of the Mapping Exercise

The following practical recommendations have emerged from the implementation of the exercise.

- IOM should follow the recommendations included in the list of contacts, which offers an effective basis for outreach activities within the Russian community in Britain. IOM should continue to liaise with the main multipliers. Examples of umbrella organisations offering contacts, information and event organisation are: The GB Russia Society; the Russian Community Association; the Scotland Russia Forum and the Russian Society in Great Britain.
- IOM should contact all the Russian newspapers produced in the UK and suggest placing advertising with them and in their Internet editions. They are *Russian London Courier*, *Russian London Info*, *Pulse UK*, and *Anglia*.
- IOM should approach existing Russian web-based forums and discuss placing advertisements there, especially in the circular e-mails that they send out to their subscribers. The main forums are *RussianLondon.com*, *Russianquarter.co.uk*, and *RussianCourier.com*.
- IOM should approach existing societies and organisations and discuss the possibility of participating in their events either by having a stand or handing out leaflets. The key annual event is the *Russian New Year* celebrations in Trafalgar Square during January.
- IOM should look into the possibility of engaging Russian religious institutions in talks about cooperation with IOM.
- Communication with the public should be in Russian. This, in turn will help to engage other Russian-speaking nationals of the former USSR.
- IOM should contact commercial establishments, such as shops, restaurants and bars, and discuss putting up their posters or leaving flyers and leaflets. Examples of such places are the KOLOS, Berezka and USSR shops; the A-10 bar; and the Trojka and Potemkin restaurants.

These recommendations ought to be implemented in the immediate future. The mapping exercise raised awareness about IOM's programmes among community leaders and members of the general public. At the moment, there is an opportunity to benefit from the contacts which have been established whilst they are still strong.

IOM UK

21 Westminster Palace Gardens,
Artillery Row,
London SW1P 1RR

Freephone: 0800 783 2332

Tel: 020 7233 0001

e-mail: iomuk@iom.int

www.iomuk.org



IOM International Organization for Migration



Actions co-financed
by Community Funds