

Statistical bulletin

# Migration Statistics Quarterly Report: Dec 2016

The Migration Statistics Quarterly Report (MSQR) is a summary of the latest official long-term international migration statistics published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the Home Office and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).



Contact:  
Nicola White  
migstatsunit@ons.gsi.gov.uk

Release date:  
1 December 2016

Next release:  
23 February 2017

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# 1 . Main points

The reporting period for the International Passenger Survey data in this release is for year ending (YE) June 2016 and therefore these data cover the year prior to the EU Referendum (apart from 1 week). Entry clearance visa, National Insurance number (NINo) and labour market data are available to the end of September 2016 and therefore include 3 months of data following the EU Referendum.

Long-Term International Migration estimates in the YE June 2016 were:

- net migration = +335,000 (similar to YE June 2015), comprising +189,000 EU citizens, +196,000 non-EU citizens and -49,000 British citizens
- immigration = 650,000, the highest estimate recorded (up 11,000 (not statistically significant) from YE June 2015)
- emigration = 315,000 (up 12,000 (not statistically significant) from YE June 2015)

Net migration was similar to the YE March 2016 estimate of +326,000.

In YE June 2016, 284,000 EU citizens immigrated to the UK (the highest estimate recorded), compared with 265,000 in YE June 2015 – this difference was not statistically significant; also 289,000 non-EU citizens immigrated.

Work remains the most common reason for long-term immigration at 311,000 (the highest estimate recorded), compared with 294,000 in YE June 2015 – this difference was not statistically significant; of these, 182,000 had a definite job to go to and 130,000 arrived looking for work (a statistically significant increase from 107,000 the previous year).

There were 629,000 National Insurance number (NINo) registrations by EU nationals and 195,000 by non-EU nationals in YE September 2016; note the NINo data include many short-term migrants and this together with other definitional differences mean they do not provide estimates of trends in Long-Term International Migration. For more information please see our [information note](#) of 12 May 2016.

Employment statistics from the Labour Force Survey showed there was an increase of 454,000 in the employed UK labour force in July to September 2016, compared with the same quarter for the previous year; of this 47% can be accounted for by growth in employment for British nationals, 49% by growth in employment for EU nationals with the remaining 4% accounted for by non-EU nationals (these growth figures relate to the number of people in employment rather than the number of jobs and therefore show NET changes in the number of people in employment).

The number of people immigrating for more than 12 months to study was estimated to be 163,000 in total (that is, including EU, non-EU and British citizens) in YE June 2016, a statistically significant reduction of 30,000 from 193,000 in YE June 2015. There were 167,208 non-EU university-sponsored study visa applications in YE September 2016 (down 1% compared with the previous year).

There were 41,280 asylum applications (including dependants) in YE September 2016, the sixth successive annual increase (although the number is less than half the level of the peak in 2002 (103,081)). Applications were lower compared with YE June 2016 (44,323) reflecting a decline in applications for the third quarter of 2016 as compared with the third quarter of 2015 (from 12,311 to 9,268).

In addition, 4,162 people were granted humanitarian protection under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme in the YE September 2016 (4,414 since the scheme began in January 2014).

In 2015, for the first time Romania was the most common country of last residence, making up 10% of all immigrants.

## 2 . Statistician's quote

"Net migration remains around record levels, but it is stable compared with recent years. Immigration levels are now among the highest estimates recorded - the inflow of EU citizens is also at historically high levels and similar to the inflow of non-EU citizens; there were also increases in the number of asylum seekers and refugees. Immigration of Bulgarian and Romanian citizens continues the upward trend seen over the last few years and in 2015 Romania was the most common country of previous residence. The main reason people are coming to the UK is for work, and there has been a significant increase in people looking for work particularly from the EU.

These long-term international migration figures run to the end of June, so it is too early to say what effect, if any, the EU Referendum has had on long-term international migration. There does not however appear to have been any significant impact during the run-up to the vote."

Nicola White, Head of International Migration Statistics, Office for National Statistics

## 3 . Things you need to know

This edition of the Migration Statistics Quarterly Report (MSQR) covers Office for National Statistics (ONS) statistics for the year ending (YE) June 2016, though statistics from other sources may cover different periods, as stated. More detail can be found in charts and tables in the [accompanying download of provisional data tables](#) alongside this report, including breakdowns of the statistics by main reason and by citizenship grouping. Definitions of the main terms used in the report can be found at the end of the report, along with links to find more information, and a note on statistical uncertainty.

The reporting period for Long-Term International Migration (LTIM) data in this release covers the year ending June 2016 and therefore includes the period of the EU referendum and one week after. Entry clearance visa, National Insurance number (NINo) and labour market data are available to the end of September 2016 and therefore include 3 months of data following the EU referendum. Our next release, on 23 February 2017 will include LTIM data for the year ending September 2016 (with visa and NINo data to YE December 2016 and labour market data for October to December 2016) and will therefore cover a longer period following the EU referendum. Data covering a full year after the referendum (YE June 2017) will be available in November 2017. For more details on [when our outputs will cover the referendum period](#), please go to the Visual.ONS website.

There is considerable interest in migration statistics both nationally and internationally, and they are a fundamental component of our mid-year population estimates. These are used for planning and service delivery, resource allocation and managing the economy. Additionally, these statistics are reported regularly by the media to assess the government's progress against its ambition to reduce levels of net migration to sustainable levels.

ONS migration statistics use the [UN recommended definition of a long-term international migrant](#): "A person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year (12 months), so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence."

Long-Term International Migration (LTIM) estimates are based on data from the International Passenger Survey (IPS), with adjustments made for asylum seekers, non-asylum enforced removals, people resettled in the UK under resettlement schemes, visitor and migrant switchers and flows to and from Northern Ireland. LTIM estimates are used where available. Estimates of citizenship by reason for migration are based solely on IPS data. In these cases the IPS totals will not match LTIM totals, but will give a good measure of magnitude and direction of change. It should be noted that the data for 2015 published with this release are finalised data and replace the provisional data used in previous publications. As more timely data becomes available the estimates are updated, as a result, comparisons between these figures and any from our previous releases may show differences. IPS and LTIM estimates for 2016 remain provisional.

Figures relating to visas are produced by the Home Office and include long-term and short-term migrants and their dependants; the Department for Work and Pensions National Insurance number (NINo) registrations to adult overseas nationals also include long-term and short-term migrants.

[Short-Term International Migration estimates for England and Wales](#), covering those coming to the UK for 1 to 12 months, are published annually by ONS, with the most recent (for year ending June 2014) published in May 2016.

There are many sources of official statistics that measure the number and characteristics of international migration into and out of the UK (flows) as well as the migrants who have settled in the UK (stocks). Taken together they provide a rich picture of migration in the UK. It is important to understand that these sources measure different things: some measure flows, some measure stocks, some measure workers, some students and some only measure the characteristics of those migrating from outside the EU. Each source is valuable in its own right in measuring particular aspects of international migration.

We have produced several notes this year looking at how some of these sources differ such as: the note on [International Student Migration](#) published 22 January 2016; [IPS and National Insurance number reconciliation note](#) published 12 May 2016; and the [IPS and Annual Population Survey \(APS\) comparison paper](#) published 1 December 2016, which concludes that it is not appropriate to estimate a flow from the change in the level of stocks from the APS; in the same way it is not appropriate to estimate stock figures by adding together flows. A separate [summary note](#) takes some of the main themes from the notes to help users understand that the differences between the sources are driven by differences in definitions and coverage.

A consultation on international migration statistics outputs was launched on 11 November 2016. The purpose of this consultation is to gather insight and seek your views on the presentation and timing of the Government Statistical Service's international migration statistics outputs and specifically what products are used, why they are used and what other data sources you would like to see published.

ONS is publishing the consultation but it also includes some questions relating to outputs produced by other government departments that contribute to the Migration Statistics Quarterly Report (MSQR) or publish separate National Statistics relating to migration (Home Office, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)).

The consultation runs until 23 December 2016. To respond, please complete the [consultation document](#) and email it to: [migstatsunit@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:migstatsunit@ons.gsi.gov.uk).

## 4 . Net migration to the UK remains similar to recent levels

The net migration estimate (the difference between immigration and emigration) for the year ending (YE) June 2016 is +335,000 and has a 95% confidence interval of +/-40,000, similar to the estimate of +336,000 (+/-39,000) in YE June 2015.

Net migration was similar to the YE March 2016 estimate of +326,000.

(From here on, any reference to change, such as increase or decrease, refers to YE June 2016 compared with YE June 2015. All estimates quoted within this section are Long-Term International Migration (LTIM)-based estimates, and comparisons are not statistically significant, unless otherwise stated).

Table 1 shows the headline figures for YE June 2015 and YE June 2016 with their corresponding confidence intervals. Statistically significant changes are normally denoted with an asterisk, but no changes in this table are statistically significant in this period. Note that the estimates given are the sum of the EU, non-EU AND British citizenship groupings.

**Table 1: Latest changes in migration, UK, year ending June 2015 and year ending June 2016**

	thousands				
	YE Jun 2015	95% CI	YE Jun 2016	95% CI	Difference
Net migration	336	+/-39	335	+/-40	-1
Immigration	639	+/-34	650	+/-34	+11
Emigration	303	+/-20	315	+/-21	+12

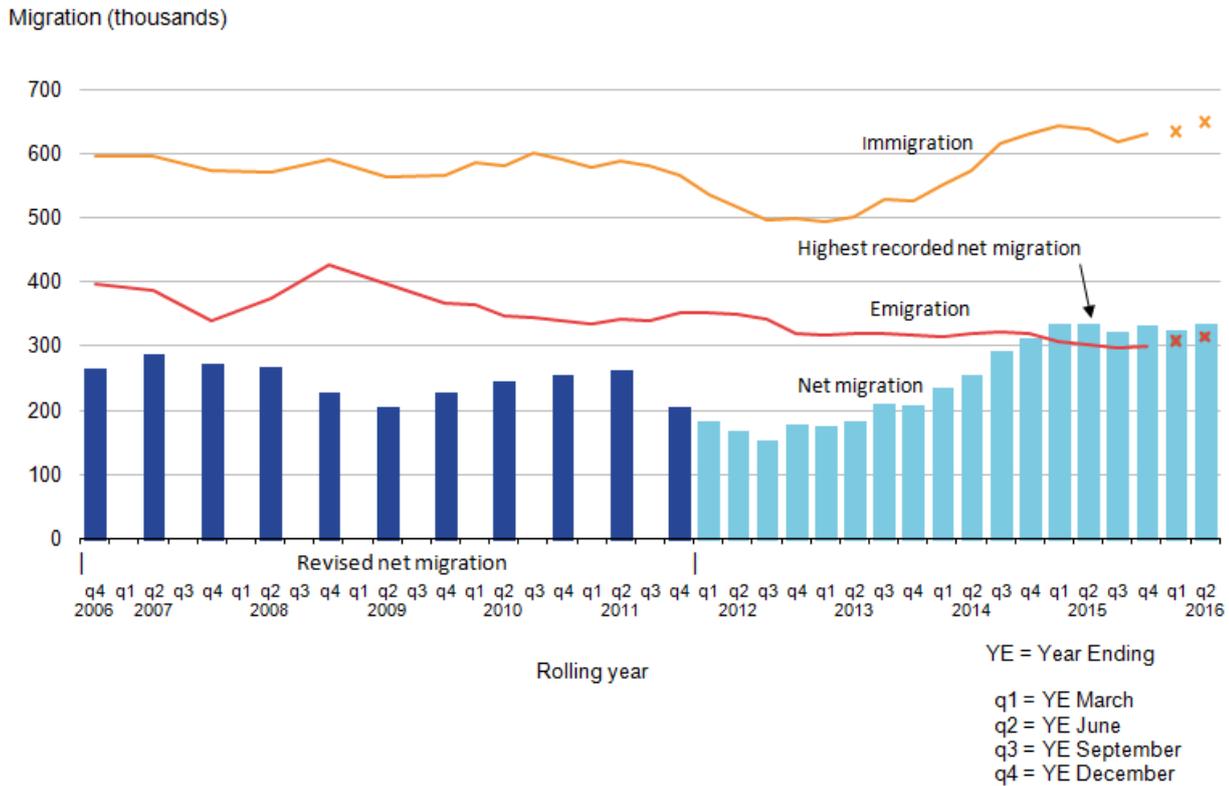
Source: Office for National Statistics, Long-Term International Migration

Notes:

1. 2016 estimates are provisional.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest thousand. Figures may not sum due to rounding.
3. Further information on confidence intervals can be found in the MSQR Information for Users.
4. YE = Year Ending.
5. CI = Confidence Interval.
6. Statistically significant change at the 5% level is indicated by an asterisk.

Net migration has remained stable and is among record levels. Both immigration and emigration showed small increases (not statistically significant) compared with the previous year leading to net migration being similar to that of a year ago.

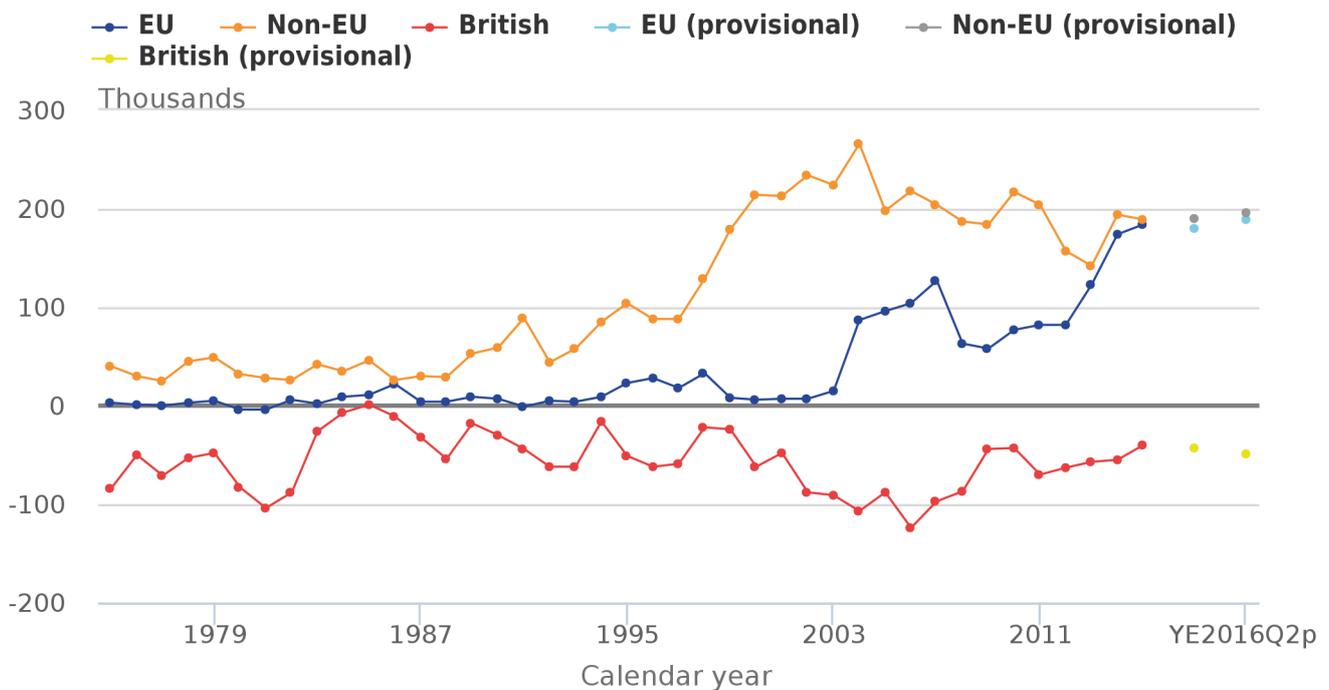
**Figure 1: Long-Term International Migration, UK, 2006 to 2016 (year ending June 2016)**



Our [online interactive timeline](#) provides annual totals and additional commentary from 1970 to 2015 to show the longer-term context, with the underlying data available for download.

Figure 2 shows the trend in net migration for EU, non-EU and British citizens and shows that the current level of net migration for EU citizens is similar to that for non-EU citizens, although the gap has narrowed in recent years. You are encouraged to visit the [datasets](#) that accompany this release, which break down these groupings further so that the various changes in smaller country groupings can be seen.

**Figure 2: Net Long-Term International Migration by citizenship, UK, 1975 to 2016 (year ending June 2016)**



Source: Office for National Statistics, Long-Term International Migration

**Notes:**

1. Figures for 2016 are provisional. All other figures are final calendar year estimates of LTIM. In this chart provisional estimates are shown separated by a break in the series.
2. This chart is not consistent with the revised total net migration estimates as shown in Figure 1. This also means that estimates for the period 2001 to 2011 are not fully comparable with those for later periods.
3. Figures up to and including 1990 are IPS only, and from 1991 onwards are LTIM.
4. Users are encouraged to review the published tables for confidence intervals and an insight into the inherent uncertainty in these statistics.

**EU citizens**

Net migration for EU citizens was estimated to be 189,000<sup>1</sup> in YE June 2016 (the highest estimate recorded), compared with 180,000 in YE June 2015. This difference was not statistically significant. Net migration of EU15 and EU8 citizens has remained similar to the previous year at 84,000 and 42,000 respectively, whereas net migration of EU2 citizens was estimated to be 61,000 compared with 49,000 the previous year.

**Non-EU citizens**

In YE June 2016, non-EU net migration was 196,000, similar to the previous year.

**British citizens**

Net migration of British citizens was estimated to be -49,000 (meaning more British citizens left the UK than came to the UK), similar to the previous year.

## Notes for Net migration to the UK remains similar to recent levels

1. Throughout the report, users are encouraged to review our published tables and note the confidence intervals around our estimates. These confidence intervals give an indication of the accuracy of the estimates and the extent to which comparisons can be drawn between them.

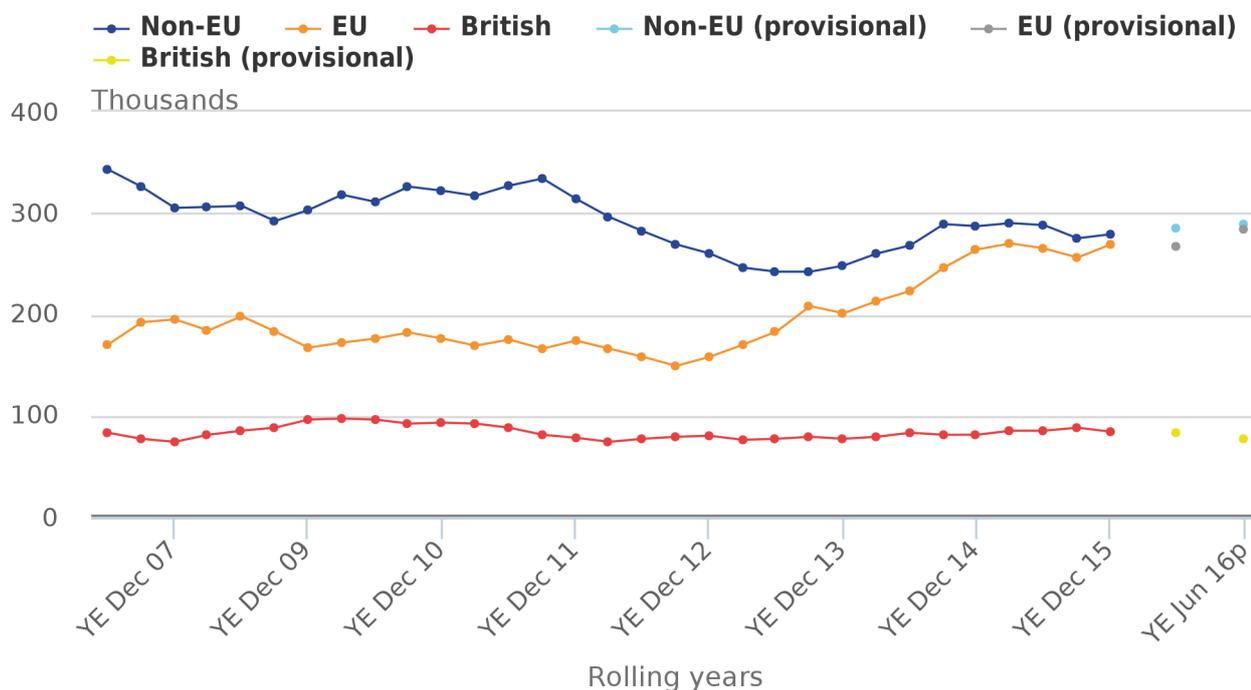
## 5. Immigration to the UK was 650,000, the highest estimate recorded

The latest immigration estimate for the year ending (YE) June 2016 is 650,000, with a confidence interval of +/- 34,000 (the highest estimate recorded), compared with 639,000 (+/-34,000) in YE June 2015. This difference was not statistically significant.

(From here on, any reference to change, such as increase or decrease, refers to YE June 2016 compared with YE June 2015. All estimates quoted within this section are Long-Term International Migration (LTIM)-based estimates, and comparisons are not statistically significant, unless otherwise stated).

Immigration of EU citizens was estimated to be 284,000 (the highest estimate recorded), compared with 265,000 the previous year. This difference was not statistically significant. Immigration of non-EU citizens was estimated to be 289,000, similar to the previous year, and shows that the gap between the 2 citizenship groups has narrowed in recent years (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Immigration to the UK by citizenship, 2006 to 2016 (year ending June 2016)**



Source: Office for National Statistics, Long-Term International Migration

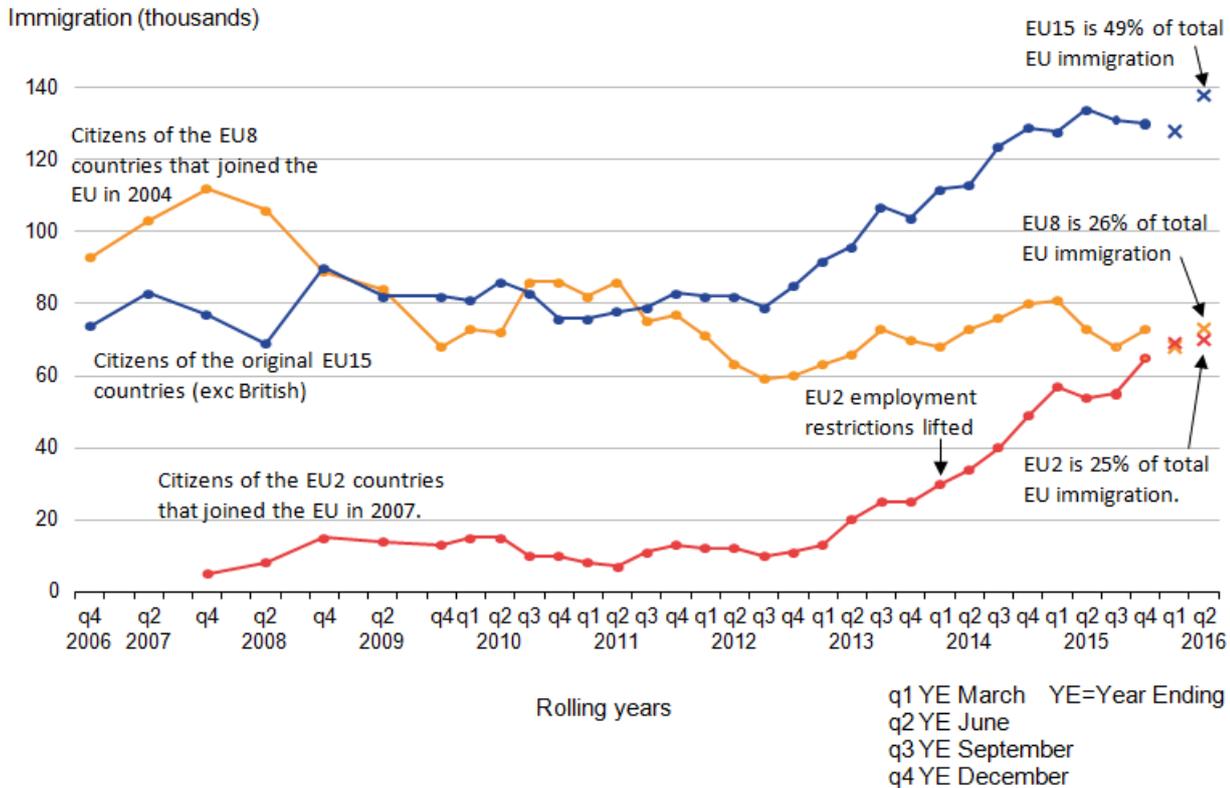
### Notes:

1. Figures for 2016 are provisional. In this chart provisional estimates are shown separated by a break in the series.
2. This chart is not consistent with the total revised net migration estimates as shown in Figure 1.

## EU citizens

Figure 4 shows how EU immigration is split between the 3 main EU groups, showing that EU15, EU8 and EU2 immigration was estimated to be 138,000, 73,000 and 70,000 respectively. Long-term immigration from the EU has been broadly rising since 2012.

**Figure 4: EU immigration to the UK, 2006 to 2016 (year ending June 2016)**



## Non-EU citizens

Immigration of non-EU citizens was estimated to be 289,000, similar to the previous year. No statistically significant changes were seen for individual country groupings, though you can see contrasting increases and decreases in the datasets that accompany this report.

Nationality information on individuals that are subject to immigration controls, coming from non-EU countries, is provided by visa data produced by the Home Office. Recent trends in visas granted have provided a good leading indicator for trends in long-term non-EU immigration. The total number of non-visitor visas granted in YE September 2016 (559,344) increased slightly from YE September 2015 (up 24,177 or 5%). There were increases for Chinese nationals (up 10,144 or +11%) and falls for Nigerian nationals (down 2,789 or -18%) and Libyan nationals (down 1,551 or -68%), with the highest numbers of visas being granted to Chinese and Indian nationals.

Note that there are a range of potential reasons why the long-term immigration estimates from the International Passenger Survey (IPS) may differ from figures for visas granted, including:

- visas will include shorter visas (for less than 12 months)
- differences in coverage, for example differences between stated intentions and length of stay
- sampling variation in the IPS
- timing differences between when visas are granted and when an individual travels
- visa and admissions data can include dependants recorded in different subcategories from the IPS

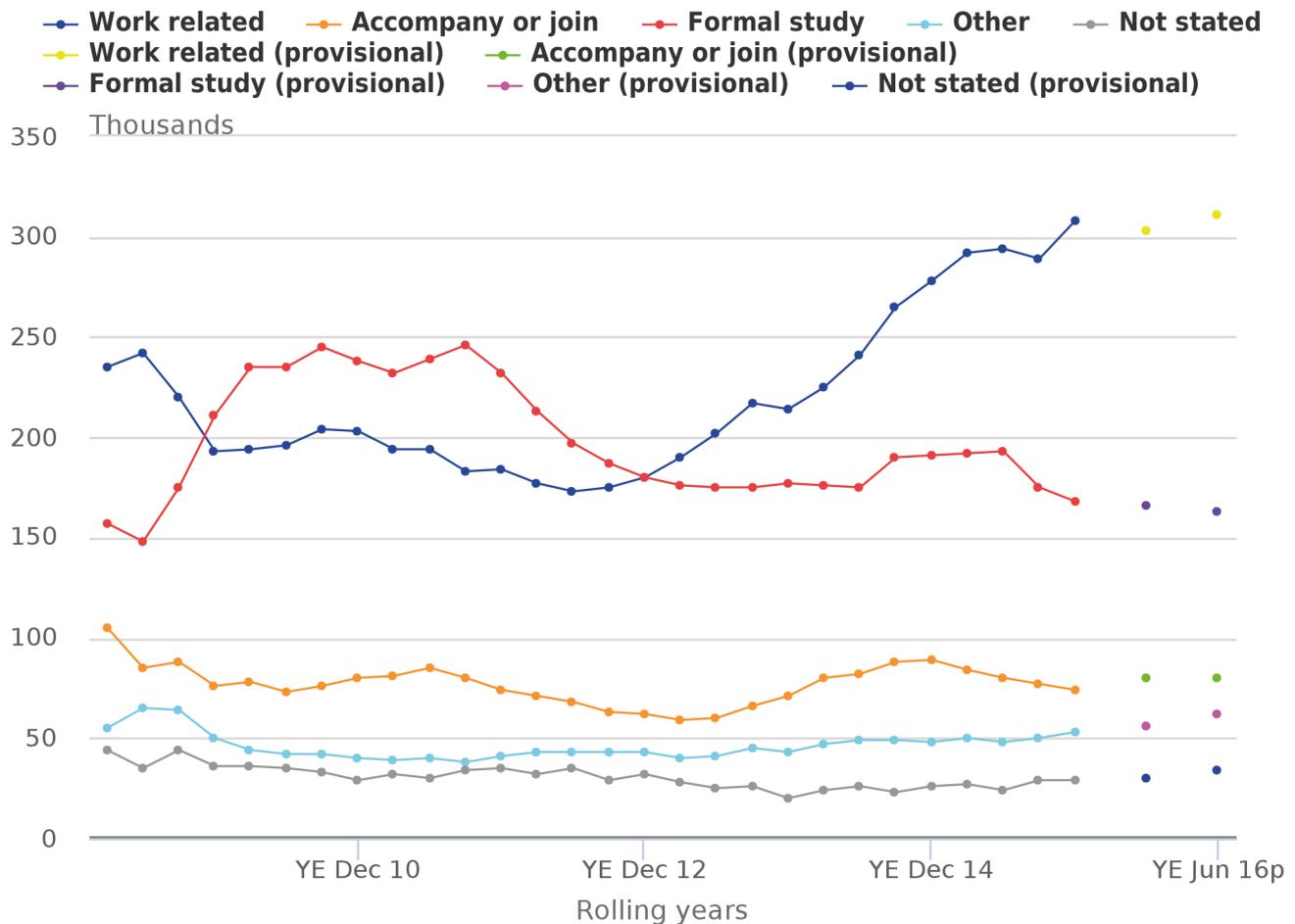
For more information you are invited to read the [Home Office Immigration Statistics July to September 2016 bulletin](#).

## **British citizens**

LTIM estimates show that in YE June 2016, the estimated number of British citizens immigrating to the UK was 77,000 compared with 85,000 the previous year. These numbers include British citizens returning to the UK after living abroad for a year or more, or citizens who were born abroad and may be coming to the UK for the first time. IPS estimates show that 47% of all British citizens immigrated for work-related reasons, half of whom had a definite job to go to and half of whom were looking for work.

## Immigration by main reason

Figure 5: Long-Term International Migration estimates of immigration to the UK, by main reason for migration, 2006 to 2016 (year ending June 2016)



Source: Office for National Statistics, Long-Term International Migration

### Notes:

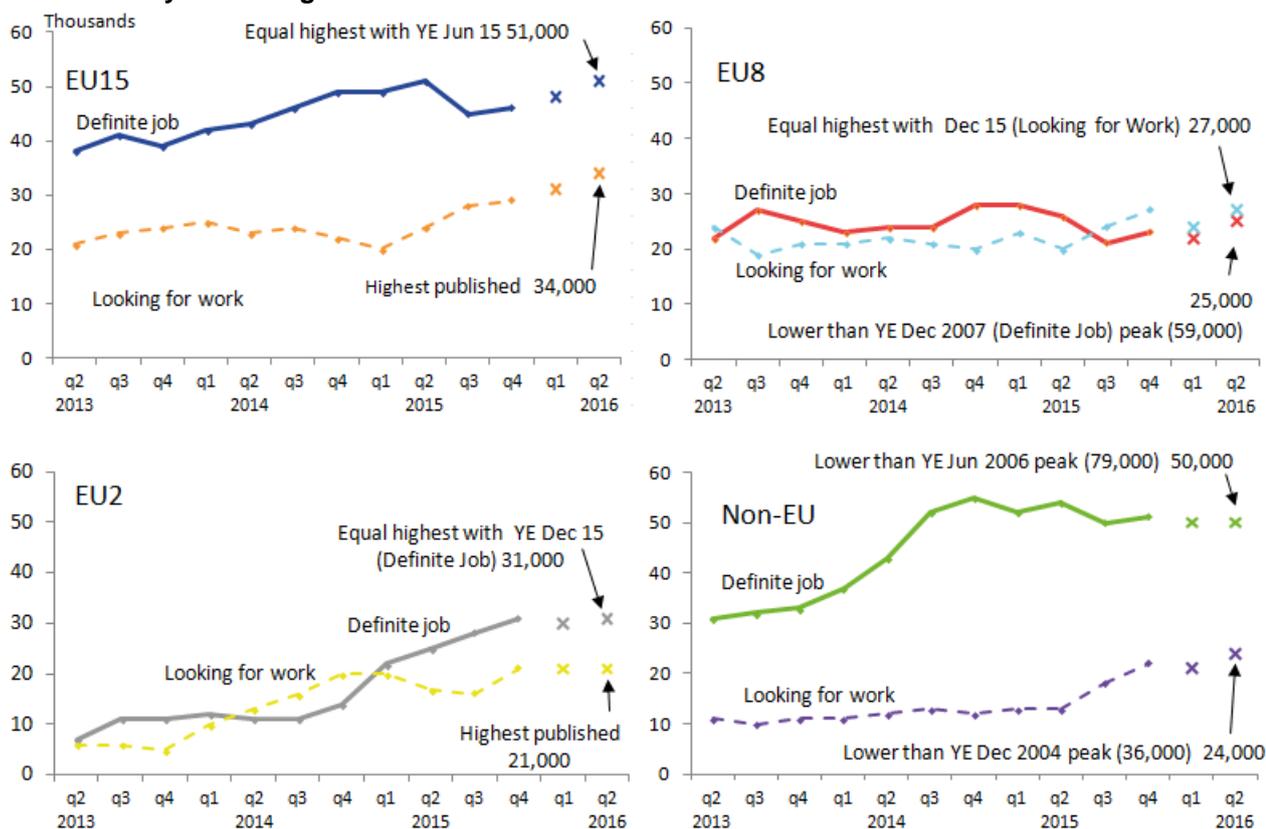
1. Figures for 2016 are provisional. In this chart provisional estimates are shown separated by a break in the series.
2. Up to YE December 09, estimates are only available annually.
3. Acc./join means accompanying or joining.

IPS data show that, of those whose main reason for long-term migration was work-related, the majority (63%) were EU citizens, whereas of those whose main reason for migration was study, the majority (73%) were non-EU citizens. The difference in reason for immigration likely reflects the differing rights of EU and non-EU citizens to migrate to the UK as well as the impact of government policies and other factors (such as economic conditions in origin countries).

## Immigration for work

The most commonly stated reason for immigration to the UK is work (Figure 5). In YE June 2016, 311,000 (48%) people immigrated for work (the highest estimate recorded), compared with 294,000 in YE June 2015. This difference was not statistically significant. Of these, 182,000 (59%) had a definite job to go to and 130,000 arrived looking for work (a statistically significant increase of 23,000 from 107,000 the previous year).

**Figure 6: IPS estimates of immigration to the UK for work-related reasons by citizenship, year ending June 2013 to year ending June 2016**



IPS estimates show around 63% of immigrants arriving for work were EU citizens, 25% were non-EU citizens and 12% were British citizens. In YE June 2016, 189,000 EU citizens arrived for work (the highest estimate recorded), compared with 162,000 in YE June 2015. This difference was not statistically significant. Approximately 57% (108,000) of all EU immigrants arriving for work-related reasons reported they had a definite job to go to. The percentages of those arriving with a definite job for each EU citizenship group were:

- EU15: 60%
- EU8: 49%
- EU2: 60%

These proportions compare with the previous year's figures of 69%, 57% and 60% respectively.

An estimated 82,000 (43%) of EU immigrants arrived looking for work (the highest estimate recorded), a statistically significant increase of 21,000 compared with the previous year. This was partially driven by a statistically significant increase in the number of EU15 citizens arriving to look for work, from 24,000 to 34,000 (the highest estimate recorded), possibly in part reflecting weaker labour market conditions in some southern EU15 states.

Of the 74,000 non-EU immigrants who arrived for work-related reasons, 50,000 (68%) had a definite job to go to.

An estimated 35,000 British citizens arrived for work, a statistically significant decrease from 50,000 the previous year. Half of these (17,000) arrived to look for work, a statistically significant fall from 26,000 the previous year.

## Work-related visas (non-European Economic Area nationals)

In YE September 2016, the number of sponsored skilled work (Tier 2) visas rose by 1% to just under 94,000, including dependants. There were 164,501 work-related visas (including dependants) granted in all work categories in YE September 2016, down 2% (-3,911).

**Table 2: Work related visa grants by category, year ending September 2015 and year ending September 2016**

Type of visa granted	YE Sep 2015	YE Sep 2016	Difference	% change to previous year	UK
Total work-related visas	168,412	164,501	-3,911	-2%	
Tier 1 visas	6,861	4,519	-2,342	-34%	
Tier 2 (skilled) visas	92,840	93,843	1,003	1%	
Tier 5 (youth mobility and temporary) visas	45,413	42,016	-3,397	-7%	
Non-PBS/Other work visas	23,298	24,123	825	4%	

Source: Home Office

Note:

1. Figures include dependants.
2. PBS is "points-based system"

Indian nationals accounted for 57% of total skilled work visas granted (53,808 of 93,843), with USA nationals the next largest nationality group (9,557 or 10% of the total). The information technology sector sponsored 42% of skilled work visa applications, followed by professional, scientific and technical activities (19%) and financial and insurance activities (12%).

Trends in visa numbers reflect both changes to the immigration rules and the prevalent economic environment. There were falls in numbers of work-related visas granted following the introduction of the points-based system and the onset of the economic downturn, in 2008. More recently, the closure of the Tier 1 General and Tier 1 Post-study categories to new applicants has led to further reductions in work visas for dependants (see [Home Office Immigration Statistics release - Work topic](#)).

IPS long-term immigration estimates for work and formal study among non-EU nationals broadly follow the same long-term trends as visas granted for work and study. However, IPS estimates will be lower than the visa figures because the IPS estimates exclude those individuals who intend to stay for less than 1 year and there will be other differences in categorisation. Furthermore, the dependants of those granted a visa to work or study are included in the work and study visa figures, whereas the reason for migration for such individuals, in most cases, are likely to be recorded as accompanying or joining others by the IPS. For more information see the [Home Office Immigration Statistics July to September 2016 bulletin](#).

## National Insurance number (NINo) registrations to adult overseas nationals

NINo registrations and IPS estimates should not be directly compared. NINo figures include short-term migrants and the figures are based on the recorded registration date on the National Insurance recording and Pay As You Earn system (NPS) (after the NINo application process has been completed) and so should not be used as a direct measure of when a person migrated to the UK. As such, there will be differences between the NINo registration data shown in Table 3, and the estimates of long-term international migration. More detailed [information on these differences](#) is discussed in the publication from 12 May 2016.

The number of NINo registrations in the year ending September 2016 was 629,000 for EU citizens and 195,000 for non-EU citizens. Both show a fall from the previous year (to September 2015).

**Table 3: National Insurance number registrations to adult overseas nationals entering the UK, year ending September 2016**

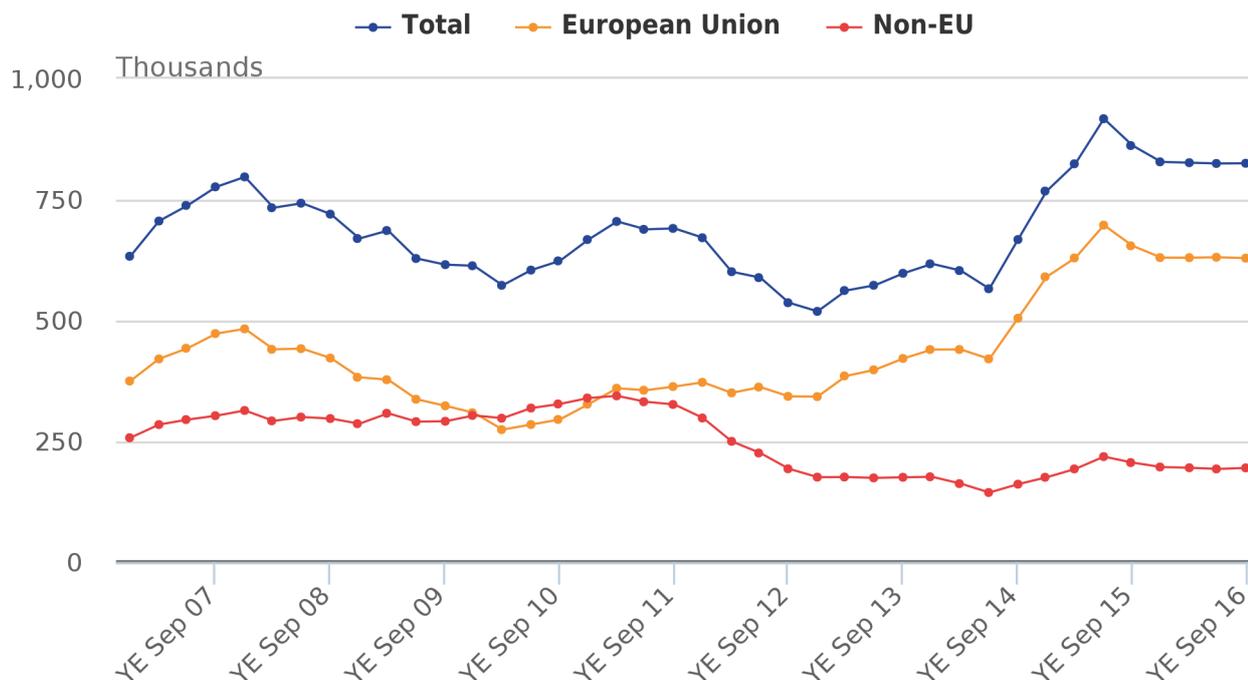
World area	YE Sept 2015 total	YE Sept 2016 total	Difference	% change to previous year	thousands
Total	862	825	-37	-4%	
European Union	655	629	-26	-4%	
(of which) EU15	243	231	-12	-5%	
(of which) EU8	202	167	-35	-17%	
(of which) EU2	206	227	22	11%	
Non-European Union	206	195	-11	-5%	

Source: Department for Work and Pensions.

Notes:

1. The figures are based on recorded registration date on the National Insurance Recording and Pay As You Earn System, ie after the NINo application process has been completed, and are not a direct measure of when a person migrated to the UK.
2. The number of new registrations of NINos to non-UK nationals over a given period is not the same as the total number of non-UK nationals who hold a NINo.
3. The total number of non-UK nationals who have been allocated a NINo is not the same as the number of non-UK nationals working in the UK. This is because people who have been allocated NINos may subsequently have left the UK, or they may still be in the UK but have ceased to be in employment.
4. Some people arriving into the UK may already hold a NINo from a previous stay in the UK. Once a person has been allocated a NINo, they do not need to reapply in order to work in the UK.
5. There are a small number of cases where the nationality of an individual is not recorded on the source system - therefore the sum of world areas may differ from the total.
6. Differences may vary from calculations derived from the totals due to rounding.

**Figure 7: National Insurance number registrations to adult overseas nationals entering the UK from the EU and non-EU, year ending December 2006 to year ending September 2016**



Source: Department for Work and Pensions, National Insurance number registrations to adult overseas nationals

**Notes:**

1. The figures are based on recorded registration date on the National Insurance Recording and Pay As You Earn System (NPS), that is after the NINo application process has been completed, and are not a direct measure of when a person migrated to the UK.
2. Although figures do accurately reflect the number of NINos registered over time, a change to the process of recording NINos during the quarter April to June 2014, means that the volume of NINo registrations recorded were lower in that quarter and then higher in the subsequent quarter July to September 2014 than would otherwise be the case. Comparisons of NINo registrations over time between these periods should be viewed with caution.

The sharp rise in registrations to EU2 nationals in 2014 to some extent mirrors the long-term migration trend over an extended period. However, in the last year, the growth in EU2 registrations has been offset by a fall in registrations from other EU member states.

Table 4 shows the top registrations for individual EU and non-EU nationalities.

**Table 4: Top 5 EU and non-EU country of nationality for NINo registrations, UK, year ending September 2016**

		thousands	
EU country of nationality	NINo registrations	Non-EU country of nationality	NINo registrations
Romania	187	India	34
Poland	101	Australia	13
Italy	61	China	13
Spain	48	Pakistan	12
Bulgaria	40	United States	10

Source: Department for Work and Pensions

## Labour market statistics

There have been increases for all nationality groupings in the employed UK labour force in July to September 2016, compared with the same quarter for the previous year (Table 5).

**Table 5: Change in labour market activity, July to September 2016, UK**

				thousands	
Nationality grouping	Total in employment, Jul to Sep 2015	Total in employment, Jul to Sep 2016	Difference	% Change to previous year	
Total	31,426	31,880	454	1.4%	
British	28,173	28,386	213	0.8%	
Non-UK	3,249	3,490	241	7.4%	
Non-EU	1,210	1,230	20	1.6%	
EU	2,040	2,261	221	10.9%	
EU15	847	937	90	10.6%	
EU8	979	1,053	74	7.6%	
EU2	203	258	55	27.2%	

Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Figures may not sum due to rounding

Labour market statistics are a measure of the stock of people working in the UK and are not designed to provide a measure of migration flows. As a result, changes in the labour market stock cannot be directly compared with changes in long-term net migration.

The growth in overall employment over the last year was 454,000. Of this 47% can be accounted for by growth in employment for British nationals, 49% by growth in employment for EU nationals with the remaining 4% accounted for by non-EU nationals.

Note that these estimates relate to the number of people in employment rather than the number of jobs and therefore show NET changes in the number of people in employment. They do not indicate the proportion of new jobs that have been filled by UK and non-UK workers.

## Immigration for study

The number of people immigrating for more than 12 months to study was estimated to be 163,000 in total (25%) in YE June 2016, a statistically significant reduction from 193,000 in June 2015. This is the lowest estimate since YE December 2007.

IPS estimates show 22% of those arriving to study were EU citizens and 73% were non-EU citizens (the remaining 6% being British citizens). There was a statistically significant decrease in the number of EU citizens arriving to study, from 47,000 to 34,000. The number of non-EU citizens migrating to the UK to study was estimated to be 113,000 in YE June 2016 compared with 130,000 the previous year (not statistically significant). Citizens of Asian countries made up 72% of the 113,000.

Home Office visa data provide additional detail for non-EU migrant students for all lengths of stay <sup>1</sup>. Sponsored study visa applications (main applicants, non-EU) fell in the year ending September 2016.

In YE September 2016, sponsored visa applications (as opposed to grants) from non-EU nationals (main applicants only) to study fell by 2% to 200,653<sup>2</sup>. There were falls in visa applications to study for main applicants for:

- higher education (to 167,208, -1%); within this total the numbers coming from Russell Group universities rose by 6%
- further education sector and other educational institutions (to 14,825, -8%)
- English language schools (to 2,792, -9%)
- independent schools (to 13,340, -3%)

There were 86,149 visas granted to short-term students (formerly known as “student visitors”), a rise of 39%.

Table 6 shows that more than one-third of non-EU study visas were granted to Chinese students, and together the 3 largest nationalities made up more than half of the non-EU foreign students granted visas in YE September 2016.

**Table 6: Top 5 nationalities for study, year ending September 2016 (main applicants)**

Country of nationality	Study visa granted	UK
		% of total
Total	194,635	100%
China	76,162	39%
United States	13,710	7%
India	10,641	5%
Hong Kong	8,911	5%
Malaysia	7,735	4%
Other non-EEA nationalities	77,476	40%

Source: Home Office

For more information on immigration to the UK for study, see the [Home Office topic report on study](#) and the [Home Office research report on short term study \(formerly known as “student visitors”\)](#).

## Immigration to accompany or join others

The third most common reason for migrating to the UK is to accompany or join others. This category can include people who are arriving to marry a UK resident as well as people coming as a family member of another migrant coming for other reasons, such as to work<sup>3</sup>. In YE June 2016, of all long-term immigrants, 12% (80,000) arrived in the UK to accompany or join others (Figure 5), the same estimate as the year before.

Home Office entry clearance visa statistics for non-EEA nationals show that 38,509 family route visas were granted in YE September 2016, an increase of 5% compared with YE September 2015 (36,524), but just over half the peak level in YE March 2007 (72,894).

Further information on [visas granted for family reasons](#) has been published by the Home Office.

## Immigration for other reasons

There was a statistically significant rise in the number of immigrants arriving in the UK for other reasons, from 48,000 to 62,000 in YE June 2016. This includes asylum seekers and refugees (as measured by Home Office data), volunteers, religious pilgrims and those seeking medical treatment. From YE December 2015 the LTIM adjustments additionally include the number of people resettled in the UK under the various resettlement schemes, as provided by the Home Office.

## Asylum applications

There were 41,280 asylum applications (including dependants) in YE September 2016, an increase of 14% compared with the previous year (36,360). Applications are lower compared with YE June 2016 (44,323) reflecting a decline in applications for the third quarter of 2016 as compared with the third quarter of 2015 (from 12,311 to 9,268).

This is the sixth successive year in which asylum applications have risen, although the number of applications is still less than half the level of the peak in 2002 (103,081) and relatively low compared with some other European countries (the UK received the sixth highest number of asylum seekers of the 28 EU member states in YE September 2016).

A total of 10,547 people were granted asylum or an alternative form of protection in YE September 2016, an overall grant rate of 33% at initial decision.

Table 7 shows the 5 nationalities with the highest number of applications for asylum to the UK in YE September 2016.

**Table 7: Nationalities with highest number of asylum applications, UK, year ending September 2016**

Country of nationality	Asylum applications	Change since last year	Proportion granted (at initial decision)
1. Iran	5,382	2460	40%
2. Iraq	4,017	2403	13%
3. Pakistan	3,875	507	16%
4. Afghanistan	3,296	1001	35%
5. Syria	2,298	-317	86%

Source: Home Office

Notes:

1. Figures include dependants

There were 2,298 asylum applications from Syrian nationals (including dependants) in YE September 2016, the fifth highest nationality and a decrease of 12% compared with the previous year (2,615). There were 1,890 grants of asylum or an alternative form of protection (including dependants) to those giving Syrian as their nationality in YE September 2016, which is a grant rate of 86% of the total initial decisions made for Syrian nationals in that period. In addition, 4,162 people were granted humanitarian protection under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme in the YE September 2016 (4,414 since the scheme began in January 2014).

Further detail is provided in the [Home Office topic report on asylum](#).

## Settlement in the UK

The number of non-EEA nationals granted permission to stay permanently in the UK fell by 38% to 61,664 in YE September 2016. The number of grants is low relative to the peak in YE September 2010 (241,586). The decrease in the latest 12 months was driven by falls in family (-15,039), work (-14,057) and asylum-related (-6,176) grants. This may partly reflect changes to the family rules in July 2012 on how quickly partners qualify for settlement and other factors affecting the number of visas and extensions granted in previous years.

For more information on settlement in the UK, see the [Home Office topic report on settlement](#).

In February 2016, the Home Office published its "[Migrant journey: sixth report](#)", which shows how non-EEA migrants change their immigration status, and the immigration routes used prior to achieving settlement in the UK.

## Notes for Immigration to the UK was 650,000, the highest estimate recorded

1. There are a range of reasons why LTIM and IPS figures for long-term migrants for study may be different from Home Office figures for study visas granted. For example, the Home Office visa statistics include short-term students migrating to the UK for less than 1 year, but only record students who are non-EU nationals.
2. Note that this figure relates to Certificates of Acceptance to Study (CAS) data used in the application process for a visa, which will differ from the number of study visas granted, although the number is likely to be similar as sponsors are expected to only issue CAS to legitimate students.
3. Much more detail can be found in the [Home Office Immigration Statistics User Guide](#).

## 6 . Emigration from the UK was 315,000, with most leaving for work

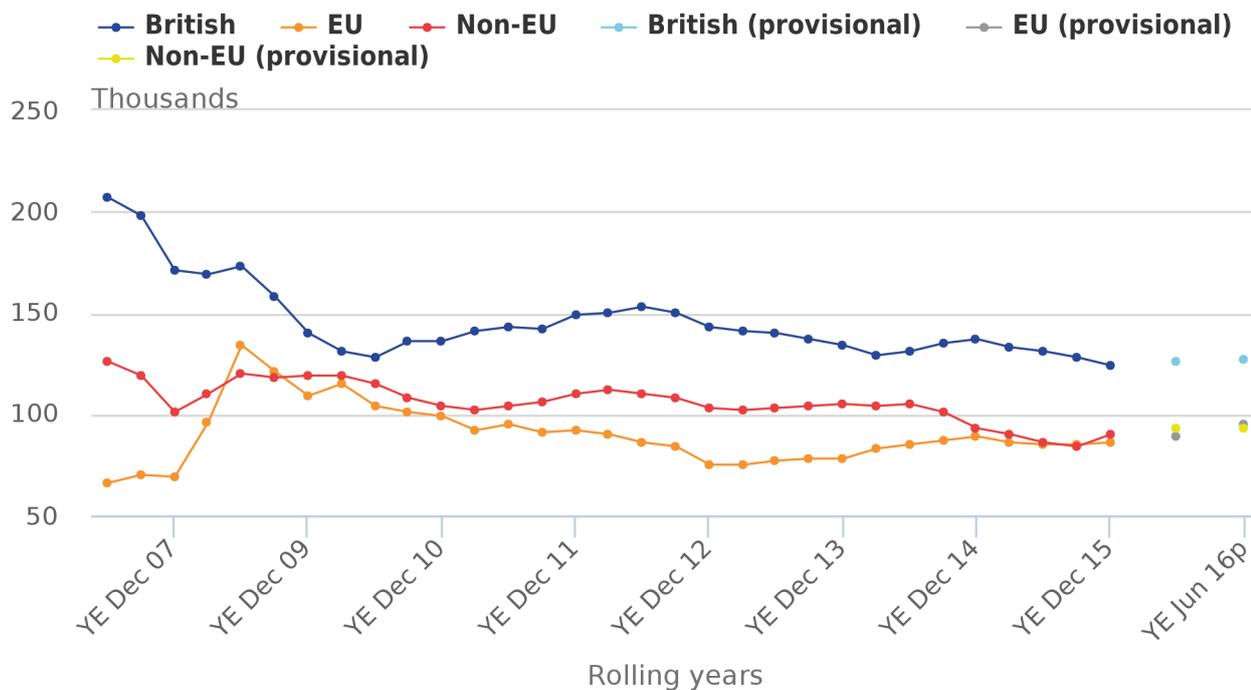
The latest emigration estimate for the year ending (YE) June 2016 was 315,000 with a confidence interval of +/- 21,000, compared with (303,000 +/-20,000) in YE June 2015 (not statistically significant).

(From here on, any reference to change, such as increase or decrease, refers to YE June 2016 compared with YE June 2015. All estimates quoted within this section are Long-Term International Migration (LTIM)-based estimates, and comparisons are not statistically significant, unless otherwise stated.)

Recent levels of emigration have remained fairly stable having fallen from the high of 427,000 in 2008.

In YE June 2016, work-related reasons remain by far the most common reason<sup>1</sup> given for emigration, accounting for 168,000 (53%) of emigrants, similar to 171,000 the previous year.

**Figure 8: Emigration from the UK by citizenship, 2006 to 2016 (year ending June 2016)**



Source: Office for National Statistics, Long-Term International Migration

**Notes:**

1. Figures for 2016 are provisional. In this chart provisional estimates are shown separated by a break in the series.
2. This chart is not consistent with the total revised net migration estimates as shown in Figure 1. Please see guidance note for further information.
3. YE refers to year ending.

**British citizens**

In YE June 2016, 127,000 British citizens emigrated from the UK (40% of all emigrants), compared with 131,000 the previous year.

International Passenger Survey (IPS)-only data show that of 116,000 British emigrants, reasons given for emigration were:

- work-related reasons (60,000, of whom 77% had a definite job to go to)
- accompanying or joining others (13,000)
- formal study (8,000)
- “other” or “not stated” (35,000)

## EU citizens

The estimated number of EU citizens emigrating from the UK was 95,000 in YE June 2016, similar to the estimated number of EU citizens who emigrated in YE June 2015 (85,000).

IPS data show that of the EU emigrants, 47% left for work-related reasons.

Of the 39,000 emigrants who, in the IPS, stated their main reason for migration as “going home to live”, just over two-thirds (28,000) were EU citizens.

## Non-EU citizens

The latest estimates show 93,000 non-EU citizens emigrated from the UK, similar to the previous year (86,000). Of the non-EU emigrants, 58% were of Asian citizenship.

Of all non-EU emigrants, 67% were emigrating for work-related reasons.

## Emigration from the UK by previous main reason for immigration

The IPS asks emigrants about their main reason for originally coming to the UK. Of the 293,000 individuals shown in IPS data to be emigrating from the UK, 85,000 were “new” long-term emigrants (individuals who had not previously lived away from the UK for 12 months or more) and 208,000 were long-term emigrants who had formerly immigrated to the UK, including 88,000 who originally came to work in the UK and 68,000 who originally arrived to study.

More detailed estimates derived from this IPS question can be found in Table 4a and Table 4b in the [accompanying datasets](#) for this MSQR release.

An Office for National Statistics (ONS) report, “[International student migration – what do the statistics tell us](#)” explores the reasons for the apparent gap between student immigrants and emigrants who previously arrived to study and a further progress report was published on 16th November “[Update on international student migration statistics: November 2016](#)”.

## Notes for Emigration from the UK was 315,000, with most leaving for work

1. Note that for former immigrants, the reason a person emigrates may not reflect their original reason for immigration. For more, see the “Emigration from the UK by previous main reason for immigration” section.

## 7 . Further characteristics of long-term international migration flows

For this release we have published our final annual Long-Term International Migration (LTIM), International Passenger Survey (IPS) and methodology tables for 2015. Most of the 52 updated tables contain information on migration by a number of other variables besides citizenship and reason for migration, for example, by age, sex and country of birth.

You can find a more detailed overview of the various data held within these final 2015 tables in the [accompanying spreadsheet](#).

Some findings from the updated tables for 2015 include:

- most common 5 countries from which people immigrated in 2015: Romania, China, Poland, India, Spain
- most common 5 countries to which people emigrated to in 2015: Australia, USA, Spain, France, China
- IPS data calibrated to Labour Force Survey (LFS) data for where recent migrants settle show:
  - of the constituent countries that make up the UK, England had the largest proportion of immigrants in 2015: 88% (553,000); this was followed by Scotland, which had 6% (37,000), Wales with 4% (28,000) and Northern Ireland with 2% (13,000) of the UK immigration estimate
  - of the regions within England, the largest number of immigrants moved to London (173,000) and the lowest number of immigrants to the North East (18,000); the 3 regions which took the largest shares of immigrants (London, South East and North West) saw 49% of all immigrants to the UK
- There was a statistically significant increase in the net migration of professional and managerial migrants, from 62,000 in 2014 to 98,000 in 2015

## 8 . Where can I find more information?

There is a lot more detail within the charts and tables found in the [accompanying download of provisional datasets](#) alongside this report, including breakdowns of the statistics by main reason and by citizenship grouping.

If you are new to migration statistics, you might find it helpful to read our “[International Migration Statistics First Time User Guide, Glossary and List of Products](#)”. This contains information on other measures of international migration, for example:

- [Short-Term International Migration estimates for England and Wales](#), year ending June 2014 were published in May 2016 and cover migrants coming to or leaving the UK for 1 to 12 months and 3 to 12 months
- [Population of the UK by Country of Birth and Nationality, 2015](#) was published in August 2016 and covers the number of people resident in households in the UK by country of birth and nationality in mid-2015

For more detailed information on how our migration statistics are used, along with information on their strengths and limitations, please see the articles “[Quality and Methodology Information for Long-Term International Migration \(LTIM\) releases](#)” and “[Long-Term International Migration Estimates Methodology](#)”, as well as the “[Note on Sampling and Uncertainty](#)” section later in this bulletin.

If you would like to subscribe to our newsletter, please send an email to [pop.info@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:pop.info@ons.gsi.gov.uk) with the subject title “Subscribe to ONS Population Statistics Newsletter”, or you can also follow our statistician @PaulVickers\_ONS on Twitter for the latest population statistics news and updates and join in the conversation.

## 9 . Understanding the main terms used in this report

Here is a quick overview of 6 of the main terms used throughout the report. More can be found in our [First Time User Guide, Glossary and List of Products](#) article.

## **Immigration**

This refers to those people coming into the UK. Our estimates sometimes refer to EU or non-EU immigrants, but the estimates of total immigration include EU, non-EU AND British immigrants.

## **Emigration**

This refers to those people leaving the UK and, as with immigration, totals include EU, non-EU AND British emigrants.

## **Net migration**

Net migration is the difference between immigration and emigration. If immigration is higher than emigration, meaning more people come to the UK than leave the UK, then net migration will be a positive (+) number. If more people leave the UK than come to the UK then net migration will be a negative (-) number.

## **EU2**

The EU2 are the 2 countries that joined the EU on 1 January 2007: Bulgaria and Romania. Between 2007 and 2013, in the first 12 months of stay, working Bulgarian and Romanian nationals were subject to restrictions on the types of work they could undertake in the UK. These restrictions were lifted on 1 January 2014.

## **EU8**

The EU8 are the 8 central and eastern European countries that joined the EU on 1 May 2004: Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. The EU8 does not include the 2 other countries that joined on that date: Cyprus and Malta.

## **EU15**

The EU15 consists of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Republic of Ireland, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. However, our EU15 statistics exclude British citizens (and as a result in some other publications the EU15 are referred to as the EU14).

## **10 . A note on sampling and uncertainty**

Surveys gather information from a sample of people from a population. Using the International Passenger Survey (IPS) as an example, the population is passengers travelling through the main entry and exit points from the UK including airports, seaports and the Channel Tunnel. The estimates produced are based on only one of a number of possible samples that could have been drawn at a given point in time. Each of these possible samples would produce an estimated number of migrants. These may be different from the true value that would have been obtained if it were possible to ask everyone passing through about their migration intentions. This is known as sampling variability.

The published estimate is based upon the single sample that was taken and is the best estimate of the true value based on the data collected. However, to account for sampling variability, the estimates we publish include a "95% confidence interval".

The confidence interval is a measure of the uncertainty around the estimate. Confidence intervals become larger (meaning there is more uncertainty) for more detailed estimates (such as citizenship by reason for migration). This is because the number of people in the sample who have these specific characteristics (for example, EU8 citizens arriving to study) is smaller than the number of people sampled in higher level categories (such as the total number of EU citizens arriving to study). Where possible, it is better to use the highest level breakdown of data available.

We use the widely accepted 95% confidence interval, meaning that over many sampling repetitions under the same conditions, we would expect the confidence interval to contain the true value 95 times out of 100. Equivalently, we can say that there would be a 1 in 20 chance that the true value would lie outside of the range of the 95% confidence interval.

Estimates from a survey could change from one period to the next simply due to sampling variability. In other words, the change may be due to which individuals were selected to answer the survey, and may not represent any real-world change in migration patterns.

Statistical tests can be used to determine whether any increases or decreases that we see in the estimates could be due to chance, or whether they are likely to represent a real change in migration patterns. If the tests show that the changes are unlikely to have occurred through chance alone, and are likely to reflect a real change, then the change is described as being “statistically significant”. The usual standard is to carry out these tests at the 5% level of statistical significance. This means that in 1 out of 20 differences identified as statistically significant, the difference may not be the result of a real change.

For information on the accuracy of these statistics, comparing different data sources, and the difference between provisional and final figures, please see the [“MSQR Information for Users”](#).

## Revisions to net migration estimates in light of the 2011 Census

In April 2014, we published a report [examining the quality of international migration statistics between 2001 and 2011](#), using the results of the 2011 Census. A main finding of the report was that, over the 10 year period, annual net migration estimates were a total of 346,000 lower than total net migration implied by the 2011 Census. However, the report also showed that the quality of international migration estimates improved following changes made to the IPS in 2009.

Within the report, we published a revised series of net migration estimates for the UK. Published tables have been updated on our website to include the revised estimates. The [report](#), a [summary](#) and [guidance](#) on how to use these revised figures are available on our website. You should be aware that no revisions were made to separate immigration and emigration estimates at the time the net migration estimates were revised – ONS analysis of the differences between the 2011 Census and population estimates suggest immigration figures could have been higher in the mid-2000s as a result of migration from Eastern Europe.

## 11 . Future releases

- 23 February 2017 – for the year ending September 2016 (the first Migration Statistics Quarterly Report to include Long-Term International Migration (LTIM) statistics for the entire quarter following the EU referendum)
- 25 May 2017 – for the year ending December 2016
- 24 August 2017 – for the year ending March 2017
- 30 November 2017 – for the year ending June 2017 and final estimates for 2016

## 12 . Quality and methodology

The [Long-Term International Migration Quality and Methodology Information document](#) contains important information on:

- the strengths and limitations of the data and how it compares with related data
- users and uses of the data
- how the output was created
- the quality of the output including the accuracy of the data

[International migration methodology](#)