

Article

Living abroad: migration between Britain and France

Contact:
Melissa Randall
pop.info@ons.gsi.gov.uk
+44(0)1329 444661

Release date:
8 August 2017

Next release:
To be announced

Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Introduction](#)
3. [How many British citizens are there in France?](#)
4. [What are British citizens living in France doing?](#)
5. [Where are British citizens living in France?](#)
6. [1-month to 12-month short-term migration to France, from England and Wales](#)
7. [British citizens travelling to France for less than 28 days](#)
8. [How many French citizens are there in the UK?](#)
9. [What are French citizens living in the UK doing?](#)
10. [1-month to 12-month short-term migration from France, to England and Wales](#)
11. [French citizens travelling to the UK for less than 28 days](#)
12. [Next steps](#)
13. [Appendix 1: More information on how the data were compiled](#)

1 . Main points

- There were an estimated 148,800 British citizens living in France in 2016.
- 43% were aged 15 to 54 years and 46% were aged 55 and over, in 2014.
- About half of British citizens in France were working – the majority of those aged under 50 years old work, whilst the majority of those aged 50 and over were neither working nor looking for work.
- The most common region for British citizens to live in France is Nouvelle-Aquitaine; 26% of British citizens live in this south western region. Amongst 25-to-54-year-olds, being close to Paris is most common, with the Île-de-France region home to 10,400 British citizens in this age group.
- There were 154,800 French citizens estimated to be resident in the UK in 2013 to 2015; more than half of these were aged 25 to 44 years.
- Of French citizens working in the UK, 29% worked in the banking and finance sector and 25% worked in the public admin, education and health sector – 65% worked in the higher level professions.

2 . Introduction

This report is the third in a series being published to provide more information on British citizens living in the European Union (EU), and EU citizens living in the UK. This series has been created in response to an increased user need for data about the people who may be most likely to be affected by the UK's decision to leave the EU. Previous reports consider migration between the [UK and Spain](#), and the [UK and EU8 countries](#).

We previously published an article on this topic, entitled [How many British citizens live in Europe?](#). Now, more up-to-date data about British citizens living in the EU are available and more detailed analysis has been conducted using data from the 2011 round of European censuses. In addition, we have combined the Annual Population Survey into a 3-year-average dataset, allowing a robust analysis of European citizens living in the UK.

Additional analyses of short-term migration and visits of less than 28 days are also included in this report. Together, these sources provide a more complete picture of how many UK and EU citizens are “living abroad”, how many are staying abroad for shorter periods of time, and what they are doing while there.

There are three “types” of migrant discussed in this report:

Long-term resident

Those people who have lived abroad for 1 year or longer, or intend to live there for 1 year or longer. However, because this doesn't include those spending part of the year abroad, two further “types” are considered.

Short-term migrant

Those spending 1 to 12 months living abroad. This can be for any reason and would include those who spend part of the year living abroad (for example, winter in France and summer in the UK).

Visitor

Those spending up to 28 days abroad. This group is largely holidaymakers and will include those who repeatedly spend time in France.

Most of the statistics in this report use a citizenship definition to identify migrants, as this is considered to be the most useful in identifying those who may be most likely to be affected by the UK's decision to leave the EU.

This is particularly the case when compared to the use of a “country of birth” definition of a migrant, which can miss some groups of citizens. Differences in the use of these two definitions are fully explained in the January 2017 report, [What information is there on British migrants living in Europe?](#)

Citizenship can change over time and multiple citizenships can be held. The way that multiple citizenships are dealt with is different between the different data sources in this report. For more information, please see Appendix 1.

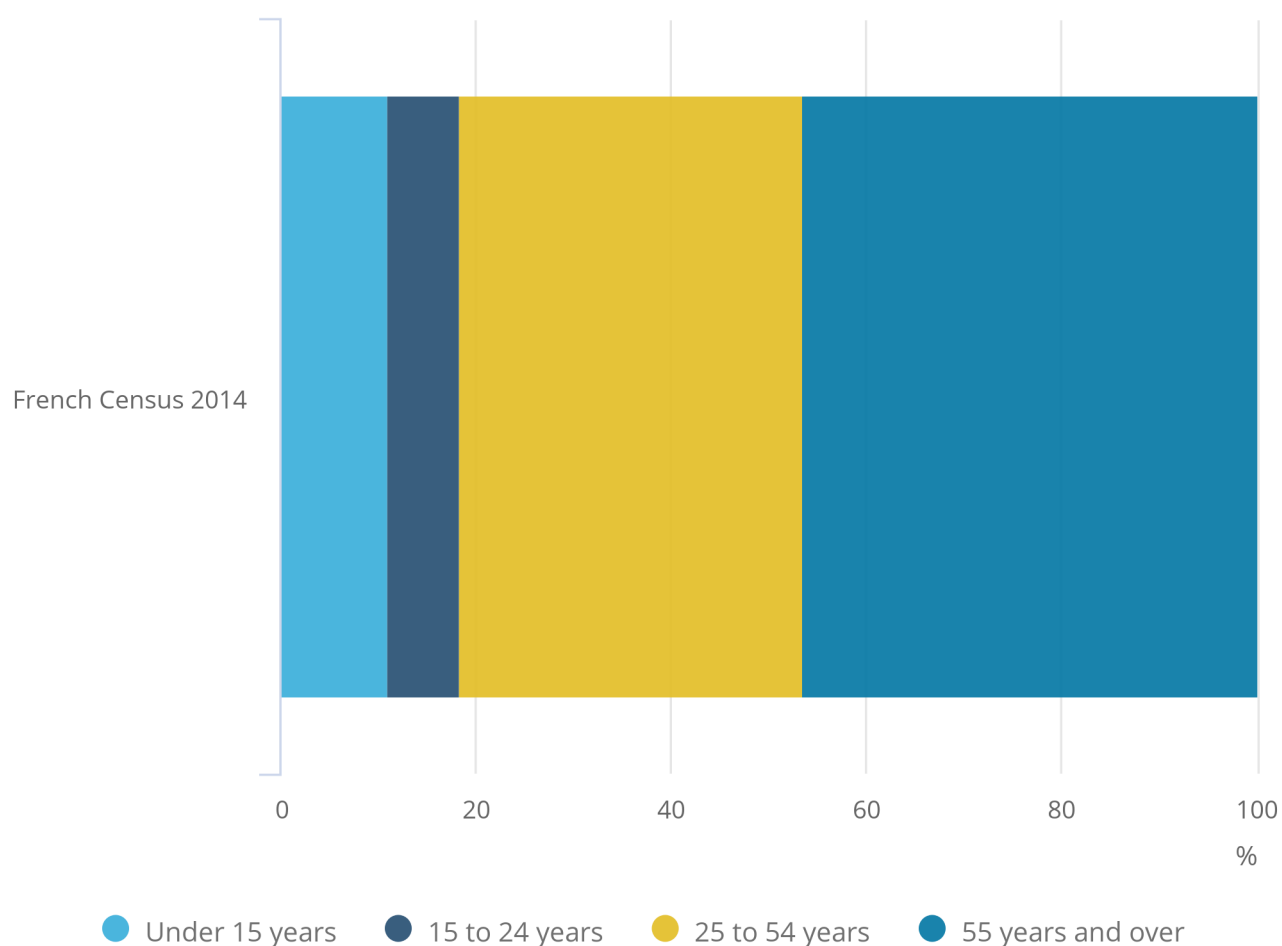
3 . How many British citizens are there in France?

The French Labour Force Survey, collated and published by Eurostat, provisionally estimates that on 1 January 2016 there were 148,800 people with British citizenship in France.

For more detailed analysis it is necessary to use French Census data. According to the Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Économiques (INSEE), the French national statistics office, the total number of British citizens estimated to be living in France in 2014 (the latest Census data available) was 151,800.

Figure 1: British citizens living in France by age groups, 2014

Figure 1: British citizens living in France by age groups, 2014



Source: Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Économiques (INSEE), French Census 2014

Source: Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Économiques (INSEE), French Census 2014

In 2014, of British citizens living in France, 43% were aged 15 to 55 years old, whilst 46% were aged 55 and over.

UK State Pensions

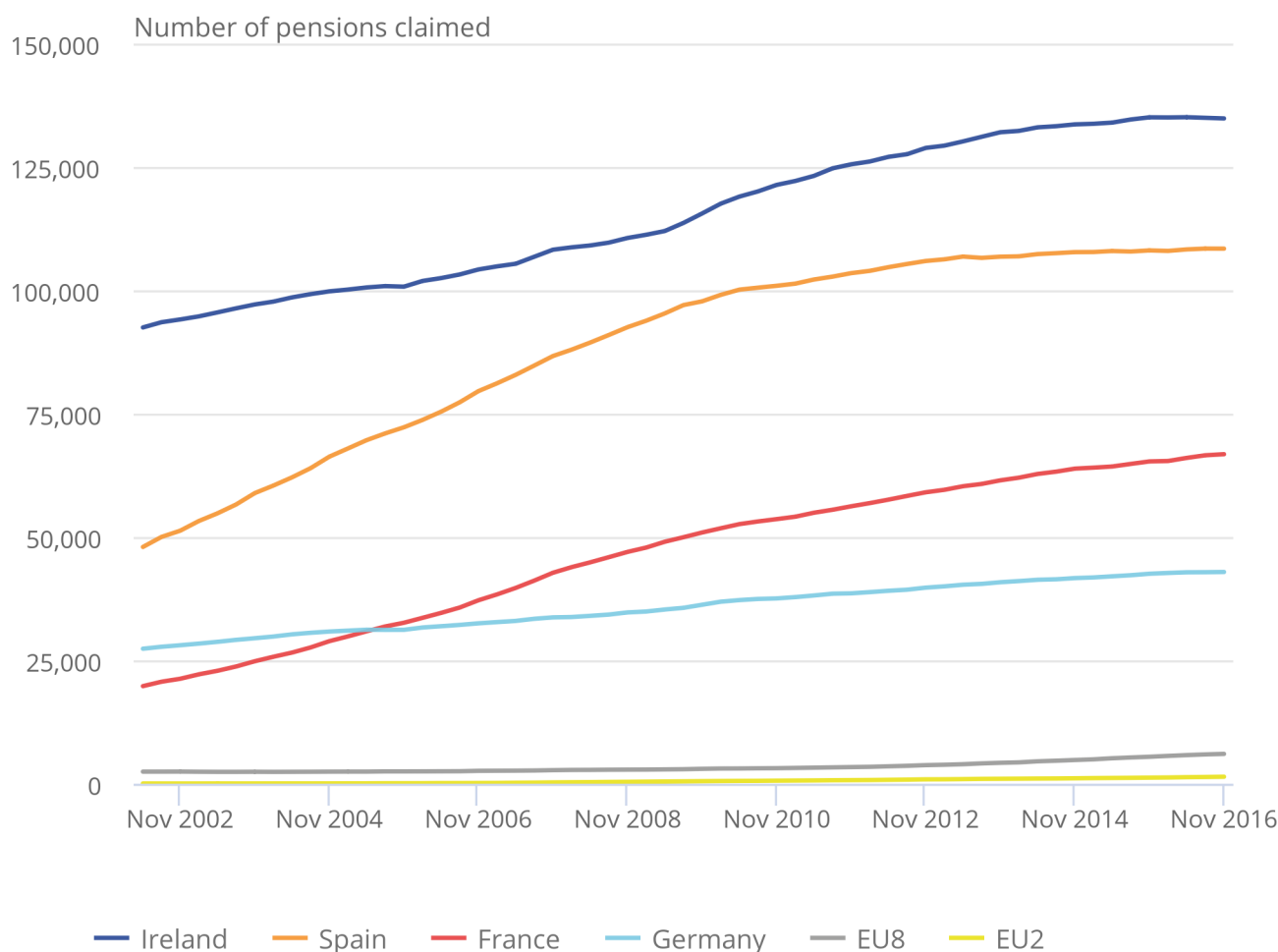
UK State Pensions claimed by those living in France can help to corroborate French Census data for the older, aged 65 years and over, age group. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) report (from administrative data) that approximately 66,773 recipients of the UK State Pension were resident in France in November 2016.

The number of UK State Pension recipients resident in France has increased each year since May 2002, increasing at a slightly faster rate between 2002 and 2008.

Anybody with qualifying UK National Insurance contributions or credits can receive the State Pension, so recipients are not necessarily British. Registering a French address is also not confirmation that the recipient is a long-term resident of France.

Figure 2: Recipients of the UK State Pension living in the EU, not including the UK, from 2002 to 2016

Figure 2: Recipients of the UK State Pension living in the EU, not including the UK, from 2002 to 2016



Source: Department for Work and Pensions, State Pension Administrative Data

Source: Department for Work and Pensions, State Pension Administrative Data

Notes for: How many British citizens are there in France?

1. State Pension

DWP [administrative data on State Pension recipients](#) is available.

These data on State Pension recipients include both British citizens and non-British citizens who qualify for a UK State Pension. The data are for people who have notified DWP that they are resident overseas. People are required to inform DWP about any change in their circumstances, including a change of address. DWP have data matching arrangements with France, which allows information to be shared about UK State Pension recipients resident in France, including notifications of death.

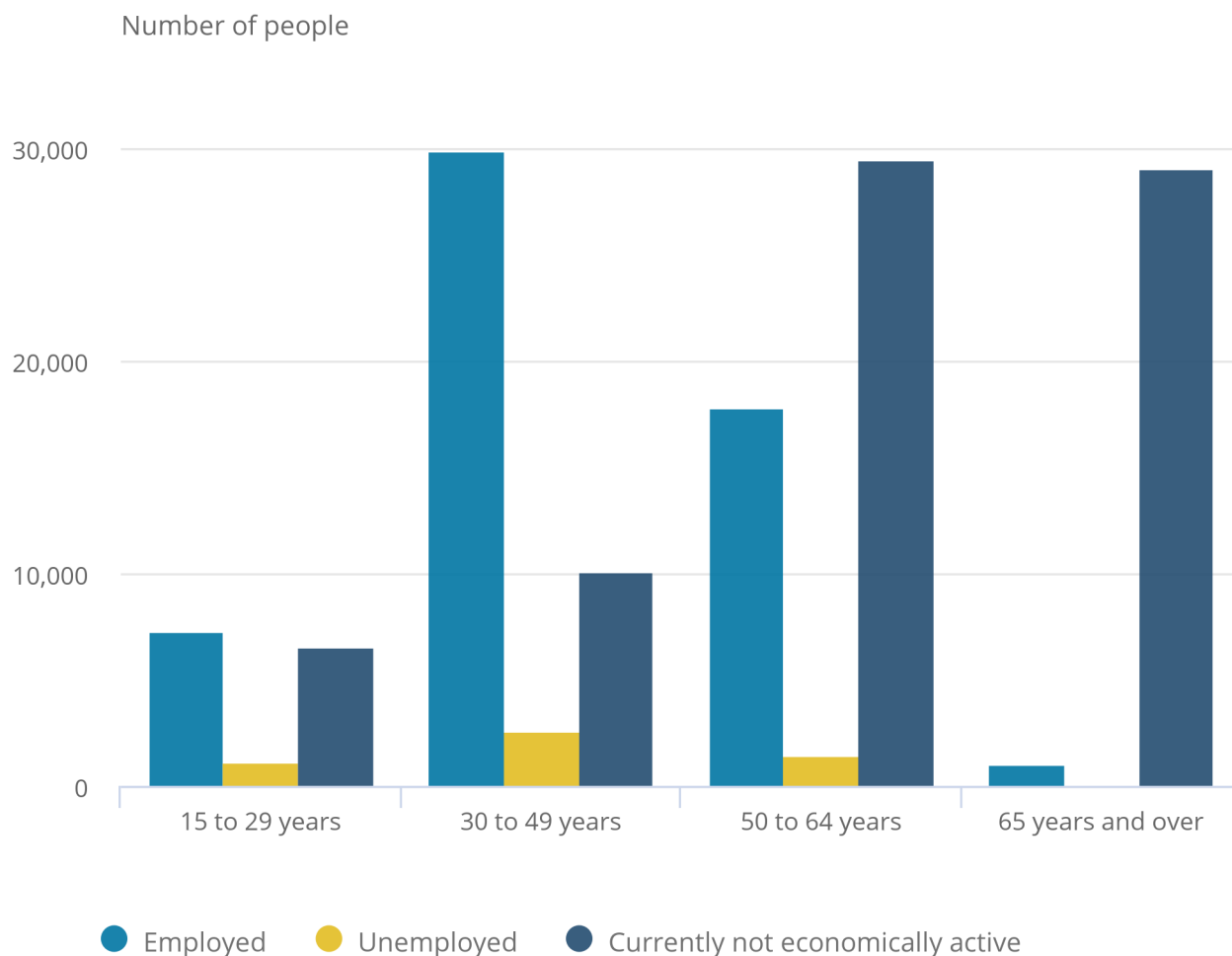
Those living between France and the UK might be counted in the French Census, but register their pension to a home they maintain in the UK.

4 . What are British citizens living in France doing?

In 2011 (most recent available data), of the 106,200 estimated to be aged 15 to 64 years living in France; 52% were employed, 5% were unemployed and 43% were not currently economically active. Not currently economically active is neither working nor looking for work, for example retired, studying or staying at home to look after children. This does not include the 20,400 people aged 0 to 15 years who account for 13% of the British citizens living in France, and the 30,100 people aged 65 and over who account for 19%.

Figure 3: Employment status of British citizens living in France by age groups, 2011

Figure 3: Employment status of British citizens living in France by age groups, 2011



Source: French Census, 2011 as collated and published by Eurostat

Source: French Census, 2011 as collated and published by Eurostat

Most people aged 30 to 49 years were employed, whereas most of those aged 50 and over were not economically active.

Unfortunately, information on the occupations and industries of British citizens in France is not available.

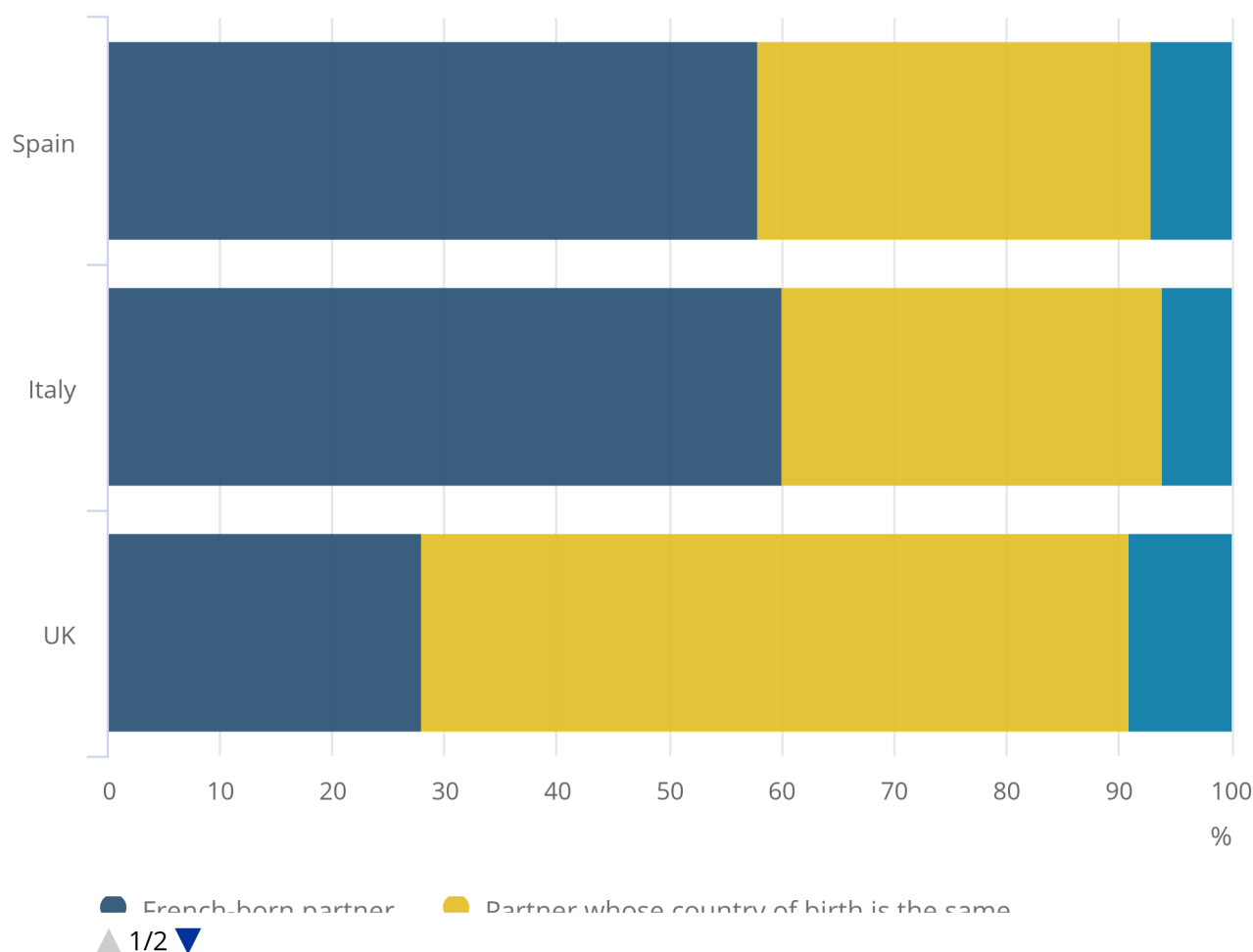
British citizens and their partners in France

The Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Économiques (INSEE) publish information on the composition of couples living together in France, which offers some insight into the population. It is only available by country of birth and looks at couples who are married as well as cohabiting.

Of those born in the UK, 28% lived with a French born partner; this is compared with around 60% for those born in Spain or Italy who live in France with a French born partner (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Proportion of those in a couple and living in France and born elsewhere, by country of birth and country of birth of their partner, 2013

Figure 4: Proportion of those in a couple and living in France and born elsewhere, by country of birth and country of birth of their partner, 2013



Source: Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Économiques (INSEE), French Census 2013

Source: Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Économiques (INSEE), French Census 2013

Notes for: What are British citizens living in France doing?

1. French Census

The French Census estimates those long-term migrants who have lived or intend to live in France for more than 1 year.

It doesn't estimate those who live in France for shorter periods of time, or who split their time each year between France and the UK.

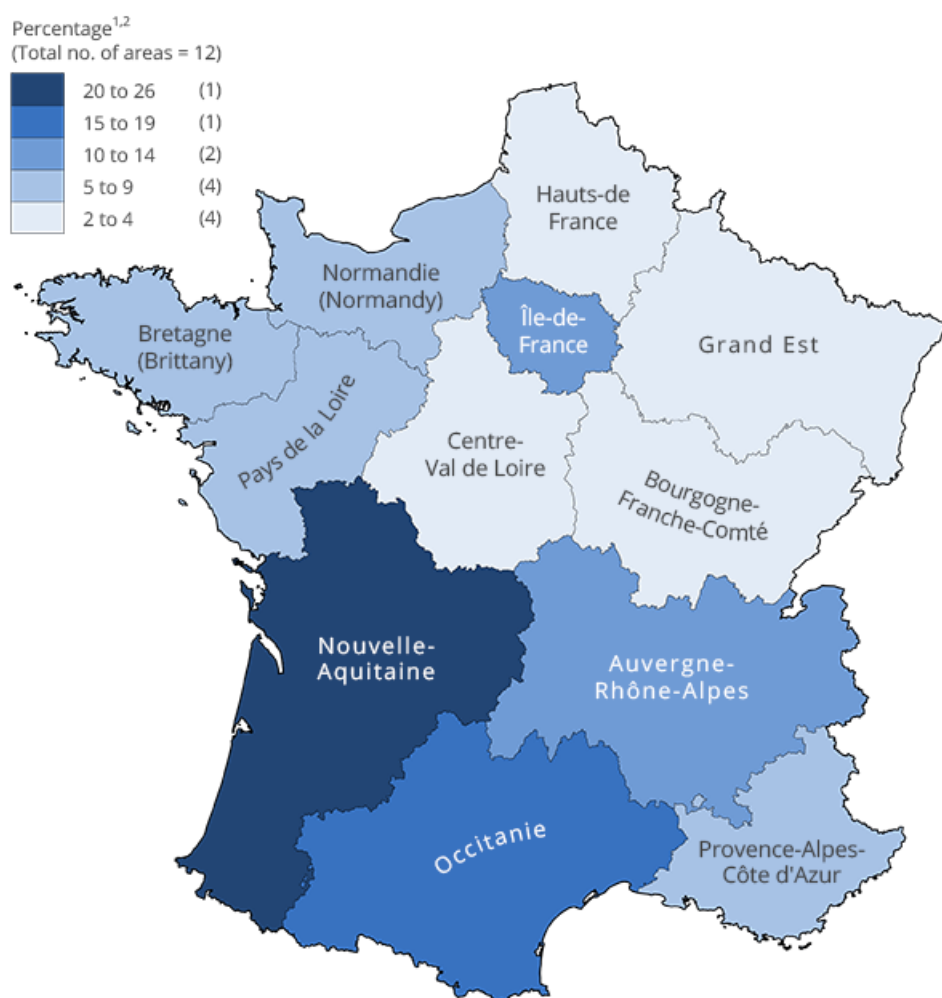
5 . Where are British citizens living in France?

Figure 5 shows that 26% of British citizens live in the south-west of France, in Nouvelle-Aquitaine, 17% live in Occitanie (the southern part of the Mediterranean coast) and 13% live in Île-de-France (Paris and the surrounding area).

There is a difference between the age groups. Amongst those aged 25 to 54 years, the most common place to live is Île-de-France (Paris and the surrounding area), with 20% of those aged 25 to 54 years living in this region.

Figure 5: British citizens living in France by region, 2014

Percentage of all British citizens resident in France



Source of data: Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques (INSEE), the French national statistics office, 2014 Census

Boundaries: These data were extracted from the Global Administrative Areas (GADM) database (www.gadm.org), version 2.8, November 2015. They can be used for non-commercial purposes only. It is not allowed to redistribute these data, or use them for commercial purposes, without prior consent. See the website for more information. The GADM boundaries were extracted by ONS Geography and aggregated to the level of geography shown on the map.

6 . 1-month to 12-month short-term migration to France, from England and Wales

Short-term migration data when disaggregated to a country level have large confidence intervals but are useful as a broad indication of flows and trends.

There were 187,000 short-term trips between 1 and 12 months made to France by British citizens in the year ending June 2015 (latest data available).

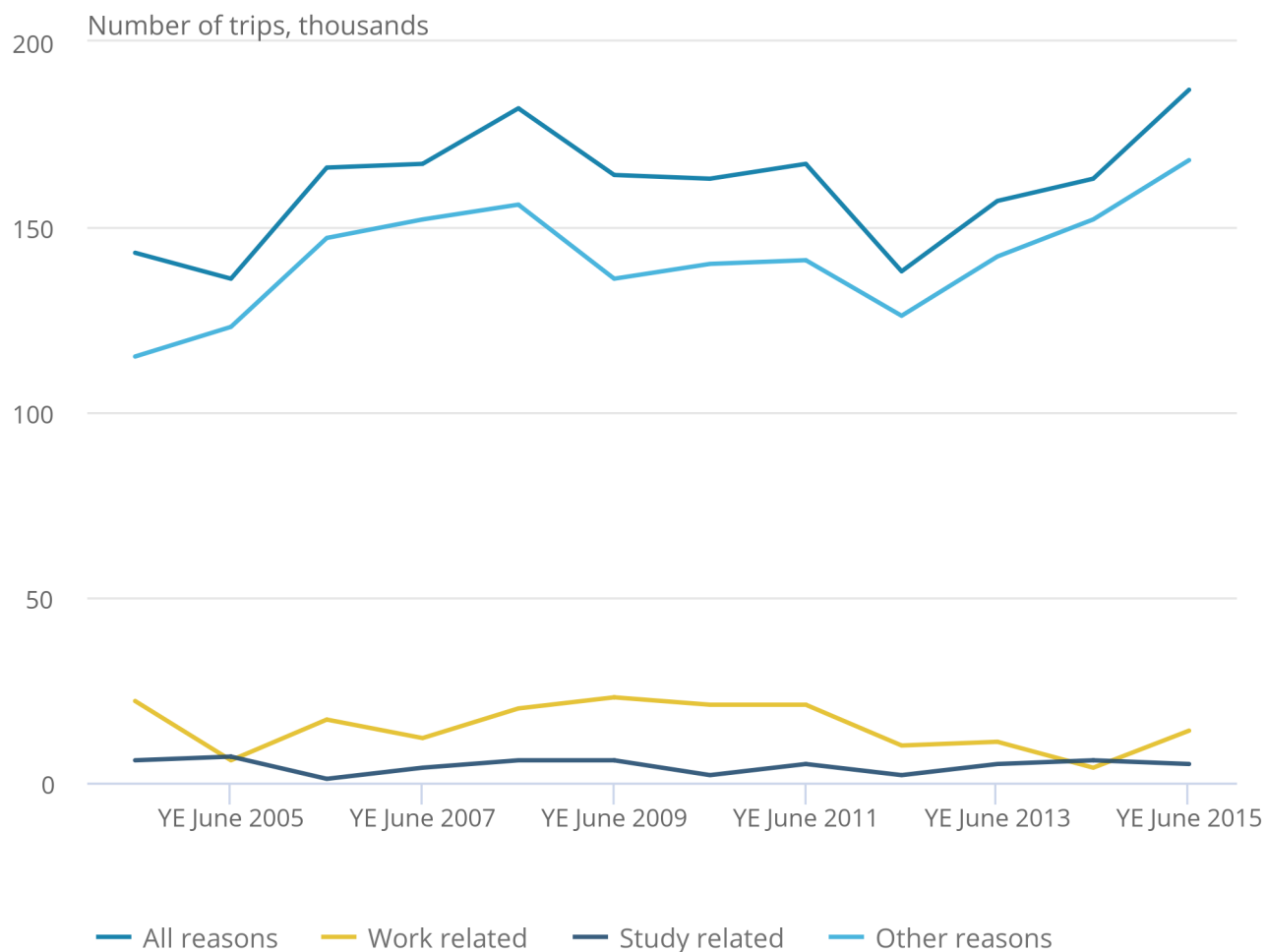
In these data, employment (migration to work, paid in the new country in which the migrant works) and work (other) (visiting on business for their existing employer and self-employment) are combined as “work”.

Study includes all formal higher and further education but excludes evening and informal tuition. “Other” reasons include holidays and travelling; visiting or accompanying family and friends; working holidays; medical treatment; and religious pilgrimage.

“Other” is by far the most common reason for short-term migration to France (Figure 6). This would include living in a second home (owned or rented) for part of the year, prolonged travelling (for example, in a campervan or caravan), as well as working holidays such as summer and ski seasons, where work facilitates an experience and is not the principle reason for visit. There were 168,000 visits to France for this reason in the year to June 2015.

Figure 6: Short-term migration by British citizens to France, 2003 to 2015

Figure 6: Short-term migration by British citizens to France, 2003 to 2015



Source: Office for National Statistics International Passenger Survey, Short-Term International Migration Estimates

Source: Office for National Statistics International Passenger Survey, Short-Term International Migration Estimates

Notes:

1. 2015 data are provisional.
2. YE refers to year ending.

Notes for: 1-month to 12-month short-term migration to France, from England and Wales, for the year to June 2015

1. Short Term International Migration data

[Short-term international migration estimates](#) are derived from the International Passenger Survey (IPS), which is a sample survey and therefore subject to some uncertainty. When data are disaggregated to a country level confidence intervals will be larger, but the data are useful as a broad indication of trends.

These data only include those travelling to and from England and Wales.

This data source estimates the number of journeys, rather than the number of people visiting.

There is evidence to suggest that due to the sampling design and coverage of the IPS between 2004 and 2008, coverage of some routes may have caused some short-term migrants to be missed. For more information, please refer to our [Quality of Long-Term International Migration estimates from 2001 to 2011 full report](#).

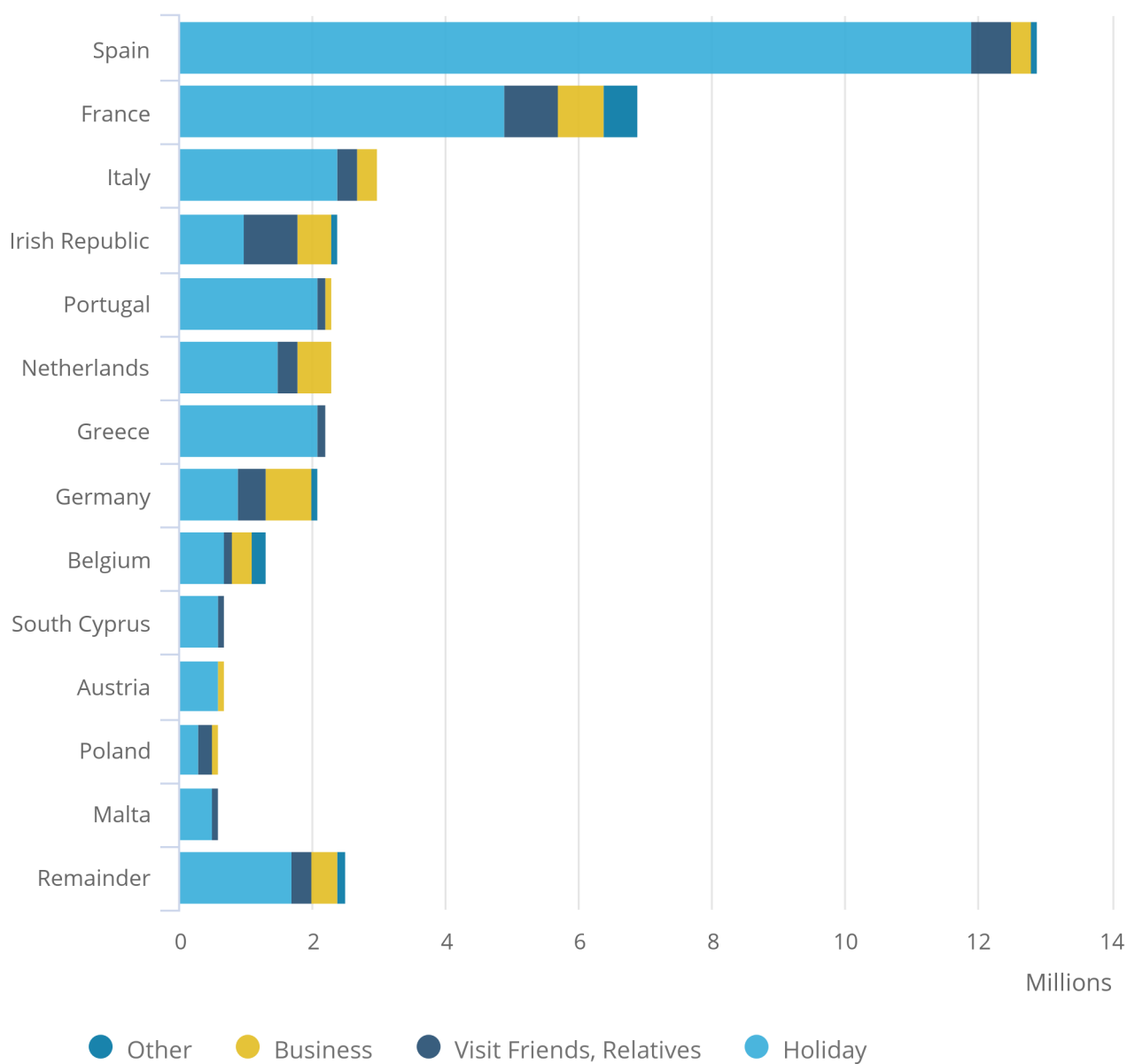
7 . British citizens travelling to France for less than 28 days

France was the second most popular country in the EU for British citizens to visit, with 6.9 million visits made to France in 2016; of these visits, 4.9 million were for holidays, second only to Spain.

France (842,500) and the Republic of Ireland (837,200) were the most common destinations for British visits to see friends and family. France (678,200) and Germany (667,800) were the top destinations for business.

Figure 7: British citizen visits to the EU, for less than 28 days, by reason for visit, 2016

Figure 7: British citizen visits to the EU, for less than 28 days, by reason for visit, 2016



Source: Office for National Statistics, International Passenger Survey

Source: Office for National Statistics, International Passenger Survey

Notes:

1. Remainder includes (by number of visits, most to fewest): Denmark, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Sweden, Bulgaria, Finland, Romania, Latvia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Luxembourg, Lithuania and Estonia.

8 . How many French citizens are there in the UK?

There were 165,000 French citizens estimated to be resident in the UK in 2015, according to the [population by country of birth and nationality](#) estimates, based on 1 year of data from the Annual Population Survey (APS).

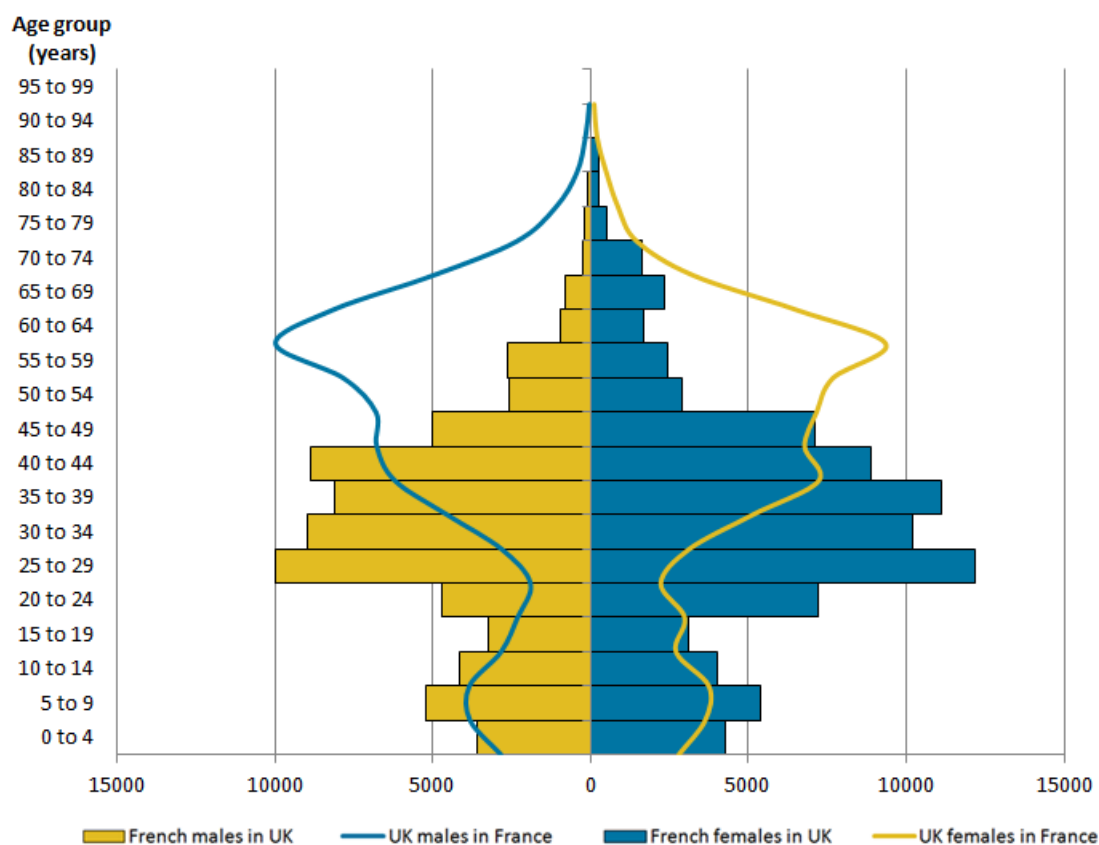
For more detailed analysis it is necessary to use the 3-year pooled APS dataset, which provides a larger sample than annual data. It is an average for the years January 2013 to December 2015.

The 3-year pooled APS dataset (January 2013 to December 2015) estimates that there were 154,800 French citizens resident in the UK. Of these French citizens, 79% were estimated to be aged 15 to 64 years, while 95% were estimated to live in England, 3% in Scotland and 2% in Wales (the estimate for Northern Ireland is rounded to 0%). Overall, there are similar numbers of French citizens estimated to be resident in the UK as there are British citizens resident in France.

As Figure 8 shows, French residents living in the UK outnumber their British counterparts in France for those aged 15 to 44 years, while British residents living in France aged 60 and over outnumber the older French residents living in the UK.

Figure 8: Population pyramid comparing British citizens living in France and French citizens living in the UK

Annual Passenger Survey (2013 to 2015) and French population estimates (2011)



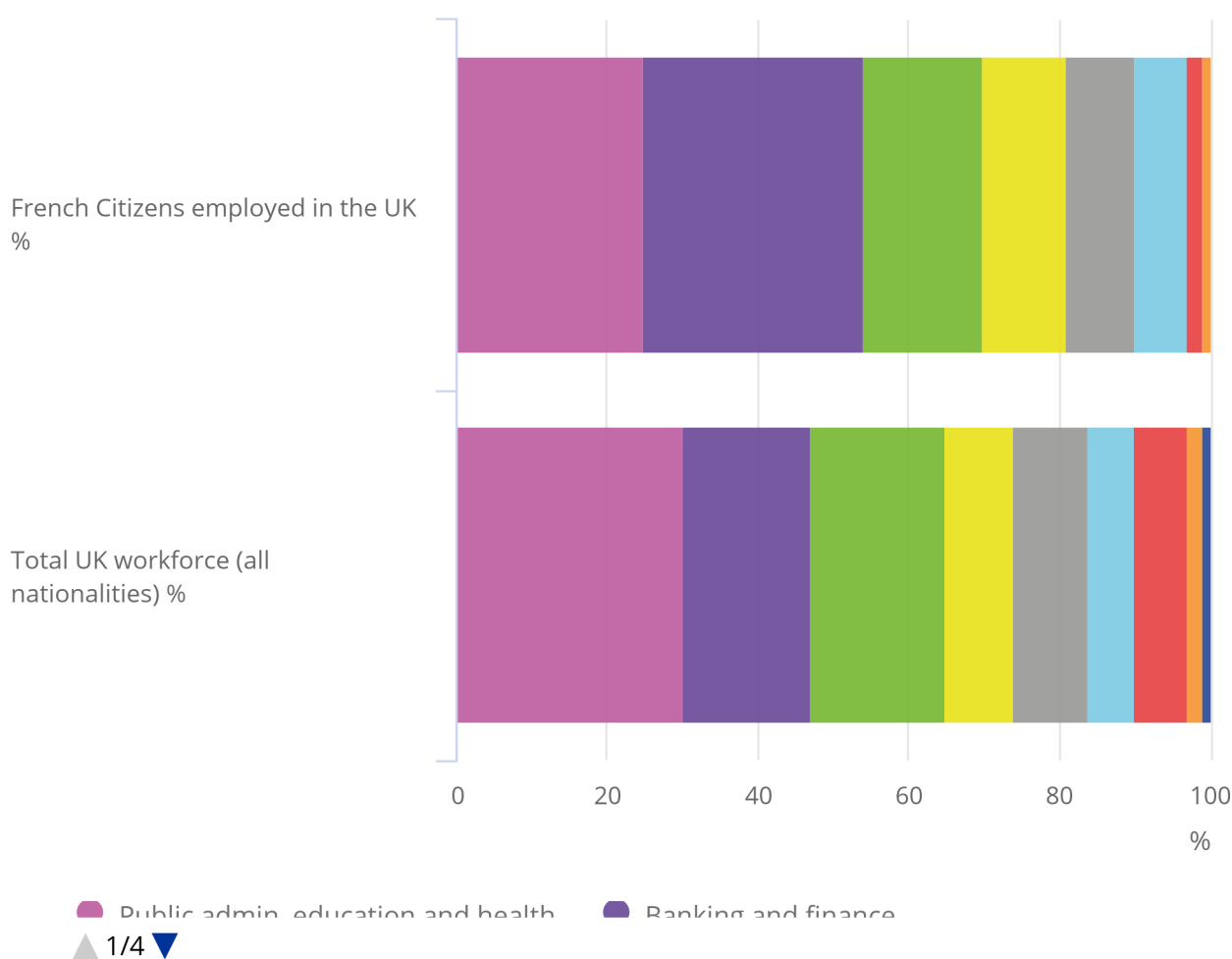
9 . What are French citizens living in the UK doing?

Of the 154,800 French citizens living in the UK in 2013 to 2015, an estimated 121,900 were aged between 16 and 64 years (79%).

Of those aged 16 to 64 years, 94,000 were working (78%), 7,700 were unemployed (6%), 8,500 were students (7%), and 9,800 were otherwise economically inactive (8%) – for example, those staying at home with children or early retired – according to the 3-year pooled Annual Population Survey (APS) for 2013 to 2015 (note that totals may not sum due to rounding).

Figure 9: Proportion of working citizens by industry, French citizens (aged 16 to 64 years old resident in the UK in employment), and total UK population (aged 16 to 64 years and in employment), 2013 to 2015

Figure 9: Proportion of working citizens by industry, French citizens (aged 16 to 64 years old resident in the UK in employment), and total UK population (aged 16 to 64 years and in employment), 2013 to 2015



Source: Office for National Statistics, 3-year pooled Annual Population Survey, annual average from

Source: Office for National Statistics, 3-year pooled Annual Population Survey, annual average from January 2013 to December 2015

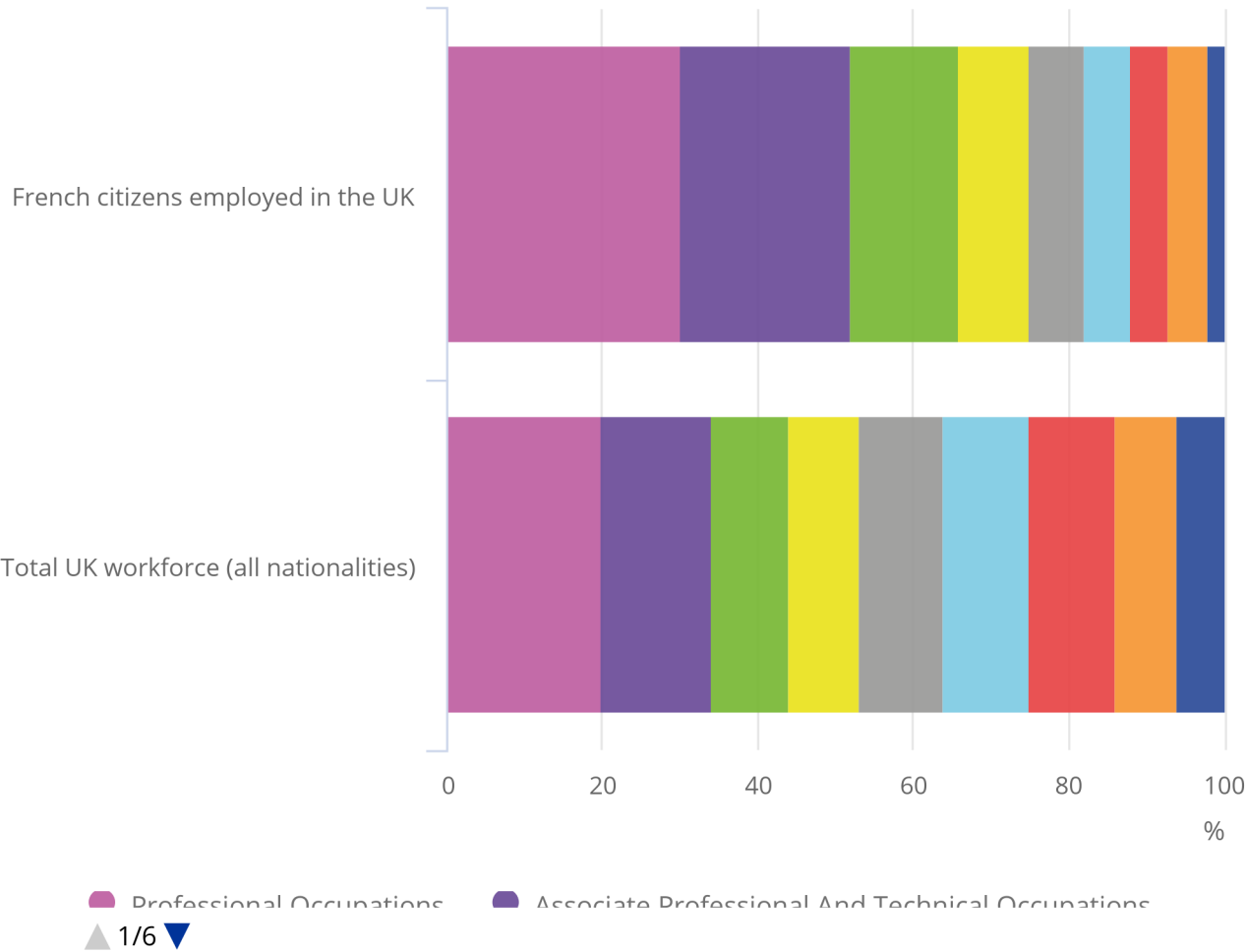
Of French citizens working in the UK, 27,300 (29%) worked in the banking and finance sector (0.5% of all workers in this sector) and 25% worked in the public admin, education and health sector (0.3% of all workers in this sector). Within the 23,700 French citizens working in the public admin, education and health sector, 12,700 worked in education (0.4% of all workers in this sector), 2,100 worked in human health activities (0.1%), and 1,300 worked in residential care (0.2%).

This compares with Spanish citizens in the UK, where 25% worked in banking and finance and 28% worked in public admin, education and health. There was also a large group of Spanish citizens that worked in distributions, hotels and restaurants (25%), compared with 19% of French citizens.

Note that the industry sector does not necessarily reflect job content – for example, people working in the manufacturing industry occupy a variety of jobs, such as managerial, operative and cleaning.

Figure 10: Proportion of working citizens by occupation, French citizens (aged 16 to 64 years old resident in the UK in employment) , and total UK population (aged 16 to 64 years and in employment), 2013 to 2015

Figure 10: Proportion of working citizens by occupation, French citizens (aged 16 to 64 years old resident in the UK in employment) , and total UK population (aged 16 to 64 years and in employment), 2013 to 2015



Source: Office for National Statistics, 3-year pooled Annual Population Survey, annual average from

Source: Office for National Statistics, 3-year pooled Annual Population Survey, annual average from January 2013 to December 2015

Of French citizens working in the UK, 65% worked in “higher level professions” (comprised of managers, directors and senior officials, professional occupations and associate professional and technical), compared with 44% of the UK workforce as a whole, and 48% of Spanish citizens in the UK.

The biggest difference is for professional occupations, with 30% of French citizens (aged 16 to 64 years) working at this level. This occupational group makes up 20% of the total UK labour market and 26% of Spanish citizens.

The next most common occupation for French citizens working in the UK is “associate professional and technical” occupations (22%); in comparison to this, 14% of the total UK labour market and 14% of Spanish citizens in the UK work in these occupations. Just 6% of French citizens in the UK work in elementary occupations compared with 11% of the total workforce and 18% of Spanish citizens in the UK.

Professional occupations are those that require a degree or equivalent qualification, postgraduate qualifications and/or a formal period of experience-related training. Elementary occupations require a minimum general level of education (that is, that which is acquired by the end of the period of compulsory education).

This concentration in higher-paying occupations compares to the “split” distribution for Spanish citizens, where [26% of Spanish citizens work in professional occupations versus 20% of the total workforce, and 18% of Spanish citizens versus 11% of the total workforce work in elementary occupations.](#)

Notes for: How many French citizens are there in the UK and what are French citizens living in the UK doing?

1. Annual Population Survey (APS)

Data are collected from individuals in households, but do not include most communal establishments (managed accommodation such as halls of residence, hostels and care homes); this means that students living in communal establishments will only be included in APS estimates if their parents (resident in a household) are sampled and include the absent student.

Students living in non-communal establishments will be captured in APS sampling.

The APS will include long-term migrants and some short-term migrants although it is unlikely to include short-term migrants living in the UK for very short periods of time.

The APS 3-year pooled dataset January 2013 to December 2015 is less sensitive to more volatile trends than 1-year datasets, as this dataset encompasses 3 years.

[Population by Country of Birth and Nationality](#) is the latest annual data, for 2015.

Further information on the quality of the Annual Population Survey is available in the [Quality and Methodology Information report](#).

10 . 1-month to 12-month short-term migration from France, to England and Wales

In the latest period, for the year ending June 2015, there were 60,000 short-term visits by French citizens to England and Wales. The reasons for visiting were evenly distributed, with 20,000 visits each for work, study and other reasons.

In these data, “employment” (migration to work, paid in the new country in which the migrant works) and “work (other)” (self-employment and visiting on business for their existing employer) are combined as “work”.

The study includes all formal higher and further education but excludes evening and informal tuition. “Other” reasons include holidays and travelling; visiting or accompanying family and friends; working holidays; medical treatment; and religious pilgrimage.

Notes for: 1-month to 12-month short-term migration from France to England and Wales

1. Short-term International Migration data

2015 data are provisional.

[Short-term international migration estimates](#) are derived from the International Passenger Survey (IPS), which is a sample survey and therefore subject to some uncertainty. When data are disaggregated to a country level confidence intervals will be larger, but data are useful as a broad indication of trends.

These data only include those travelling to and from England and Wales.

This data source estimates the number of journeys, rather than the number of people visiting.

There is evidence to suggest that due to the sampling design and coverage of the IPS between 2004 and 2008, coverage of some routes may have caused some migrants to be missed. For more information, please refer to our [Quality of Long-Term International Migration estimates from 2001 to 2011 full report](#).

11 . French citizens travelling to the UK for less than 28 days

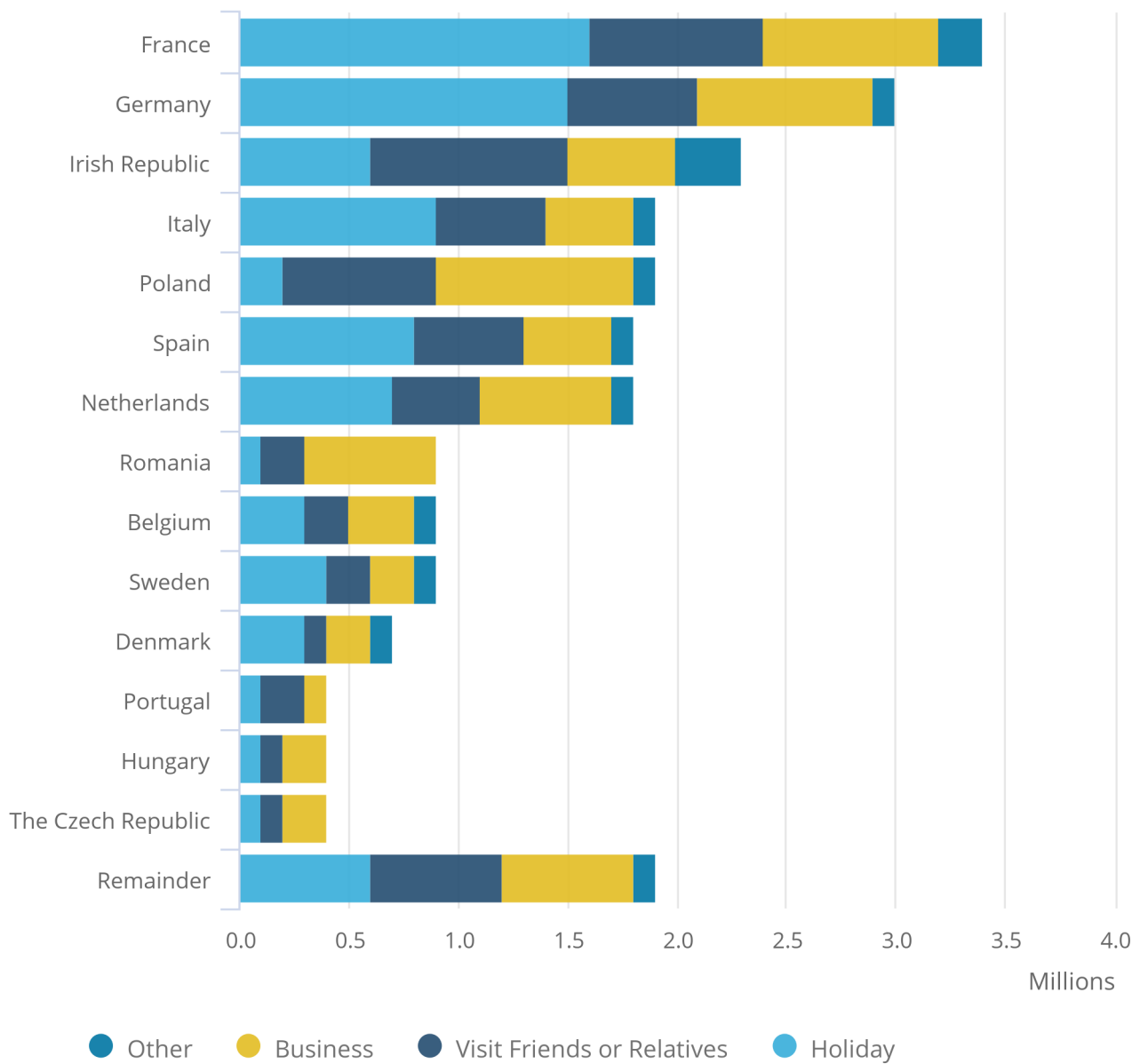
French citizens made more visits to the UK than citizens from any other EU country, with 3.4 million visits in 2016. Of these visits, 1.6 million were for holidays and 847,000 were to visit friends and family, compared with 890,000 visits to friends and family from the Republic of Ireland and 718,000 from Poland.

In addition, 762,000 (22.3%) of these 3.4 million visits by French citizens were for business. Business was the reason for 6.6 million visits of less than 1 month to the UK by EU citizens. Polish citizens made the most visits for business reasons, with 879,000, followed by French citizens (762,000) and German citizens (759,000).

By comparison, British citizens¹ (Figure 11) made 3,877,000 business visits to the EU in 2016. The most common countries to visit were France (678,000 visits) and Germany (668,000 visits).

Figure 11: Number of visits to the UK by citizens of European countries, for less than 28 days, by reason for visit, 2016

Figure 11: Number of visits to the UK by citizens of European countries, for less than 28 days, by reason for visit, 2016



Source: Office for National Statistics International Passenger Survey

Source: Office for National Statistics International Passenger Survey

Notes for: French citizens travelling to the UK for less than 28 days

1. Not including British citizens resident overseas.
2. International Passenger Survey visitor data estimates only the number of visits made – there may be multiple visits by one person.

These data might also include (but not identify) those who travel to and from the UK regularly.

For the purposes of this report, data are provided for only those visits of 28 days or less, so that there is no overlap with short-term migration estimates. Regular [Overseas Travel and Tourism](#) reports do not make this distinction.

Further information on the quality of the International Passenger Survey is available in the [Quality and Methodology Information](#) report.

12 . Next steps

We are in the process of [improving the evidence on migrants in the UK](#), aiming to make better use of data sources and offer more evidence on migrants living in the UK. Improvements to international data sources on migration could add to the body of evidence on British citizens living in the EU, which will continue to be monitored by Office for National Statistics (ONS). In addition, it is possible that access to data sources, such as the Department of Health European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), may contain useful detailed information.

13 . Appendix 1: More information on how the data were compiled

This report provides updated figures to those previously published in January 2017, in the report [What information is there on British migrants living in Europe?](#)

The January 2017 report established the resident population of citizens as the most useful statistics for identifying who may be affected by the UK's decision to leave the EU. This is particularly the case when compared to the use of a “country of birth” definition of a migrant, which can miss some groups of citizens. It should be noted that people can change their citizenship and some people hold multiple citizenships.

This report has been compiled by Office for National Statistics (ONS) from a variety of data sources, using a range of additional data sources, to provide more up-to-date data on the resident populations and the number of short-term migration events and visits by British citizens to the EU (and by EU citizens to the UK), which may be affected by the UK's decision to leave the EU.

These data sources are not always comparable (see Table 2 for the differences between definitions used). For example, the sources used to identify British citizens in France are on a different basis to the sources used to identify French citizens in the UK. However, they have been selected as the best available data to indicate the number of citizens in the UK and France.

Table 1: Comparison of definitions between the data sources used in this report, UK and France, 2011 to 2016

Type of migrant		Source	Citizenship	Migrant definition
Long-term resident (to and from UK)	British citizens in France	Census 2011, INSEE	Yes, estimates are by citizenship. Those with multiple citizenships have one citizenship selected for reporting. This is determined in the following order: French, other EU citizenship, non-EU citizenship	Those who have lived abroad for one year or longer, or intend to live there for one year or longer.
		Population Estimates, INSEE	Yes, estimates are by citizenship. Those with multiple citizenships have one citizenship selected for reporting. This is determined in the following order: French, other EU citizenship, non-EU citizenship	Those who have lived abroad for one year or longer, or intend to live there for one year or longer.
		Eurostat, Labour Force Survey	Estimates are by citizenship.	Those who have lived abroad for 1 year or longer, or intend to live there for 1 year or longer.
		UK State pensions claimed abroad, DWP	Does not provide estimates by citizenship	No definition is applied, although it is assumed that those claiming pension in another country will be a long-term resident
	French citizens in UK	Annual Population Survey, ONS	Yes, estimates are by citizenship. Citizenship is a response to 'What nationality do you hold?'	The APS will include long-term migrants and some short-term migrants although it is unlikely to include short-term migrants living in the UK for very short periods of time.
Short-term migrants (to and from England and Wales)	British citizens in France	Short-Term International Migration estimates, ONS	Yes, estimates are by citizenship.	Those that migrate between 1 to 12 months for all reasons
	French citizens in UK		Citizenship is collected as 'passport held' and migrant usually shows passport to the interviewer.	
Visitors (to and from UK)	British citizens in France	Visitor estimates, ONS	Yes, estimates are by citizenship.	Visits abroad. For the purposes of this report, data is provided for only those visits of 28 days or less, so that there is no overlap with short-term migration estimates.
	French citizens in UK		Citizenship is collected as 'passport held' and migrant usually shows passport to the interviewer.	

Source: Office for National Statistics