Statistical bulletin

Migration Statistics Quarterly Report: February 2018

A summary of the latest official long-term international migration statistics for the UK for the year ending September 2017 published by Office for National Statistics (ONS). The report also includes data from the Home Office and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for the year ending December 2017.

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1 . Main points

In the year ending September 2017 net migration was at a similar level to early 2014 with 244,000 more people coming to the UK than leaving, so still adding to the UK population. This follows record levels of net migration during 2015 and early 2016.

The latest headline estimates are similar to last quarter (published 30 November 2017).

EU net migration has fallen over the last year, as fewer EU citizens are coming to the UK and the number leaving the UK increased. However, there are still more EU citizens coming to the UK than leaving.

The number of EU citizens coming to the UK for work-related reasons has fallen over the last year, in particular, those coming to the UK "looking for work".

Non-EU net migration increased over the last year. This time last year we saw a decrease in the number of non-EU citizens arriving to study, which was not reflected in the most comparable Home Office's student visa data.

The latest ONS estimate of non-EU citizens arriving to study shows a return to the level before this decrease, therefore any interpretation of this latest increase in non-EU citizens arriving to study should be made with caution.

In 2017, the UK granted asylum, alternative forms of protection or resettlement to almost 15,000 individuals, 40% of who were under 18 years of age.

This quarter we also release a blog to explain more about what you need to know about the latest figures .

2 . Statistician's comment

"Today's figures show that 244,000 more people are coming to the UK than leaving so net migration is adding to the UK population and is at a similar level to early 2014.

"Looking at the underlying numbers we can see that EU net migration has fallen as fewer EU citizens are arriving, especially those coming to look for work in the UK, and the number leaving has risen. It has now returned to the level seen in 2012.

"The figures also show that non-EU net migration is now larger than EU net migration, mainly due to the large decrease in EU net migration over the last year. However, migration of both non-EU and EU citizens are still adding to the UK population.

"Brexit could well be a factor in people's decision to move to or from the UK, but people's decision to migrate is complicated and can be influenced by lots of different reasons."

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

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3 . Things you need to know about this release

The reporting period for the International Passenger Survey (IPS) and Long-Term International Migration (LTIM) data in this release is year ending (YE) September 2017. Entry clearance visas and other Home Office statistics, National Insurance number (NINo) and labour market data are available to the end of December 2017.

Office for National Statistics (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."

Due to the nature of illegal migration it is not possible to quantify accurately the number of people who are in the country illegally. For this reason, ONS does not produce estimates on the size of the illegal migrant population. However, while our data do not identify illegal migrants separately, some will be included in the stocks and flows of migrants in our data.

The Long-Term International Migration (LTIM) estimates methodology describes how data from the IPS and other sources are used to create LTIM estimates. LTIM estimates are based on IPS data, but with additional adjustments made for migrants not included in the survey, such as asylum seekers. Some estimates are only available based solely on IPS data. Differences between ONS, Home Office, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and other sources are described in Comparing sources of international migration statistics.

Specific notes for this release:

- all of the changes detailed in the release are statistically significant unless specifically stated otherwise

- EU estimates exclude British citizens; citizens of countries who were EU members prior to 2004, for example France, Germany and Spain, are termed the EU15; Central and Eastern European countries who joined the EU in 2004, for example Poland, are the EU8; EU2 comprises Bulgaria and Romania, who became EU members in 2007

- rolling year estimates for LTIM and IPS are produced quarterly for year ending (YE) March (Quarter 1), YE June (Quarter 2), YE September (Quarter 3) and YE December (Quarter 4)

- LTIM and IPS data for 2017 are provisional, there is minimal change between provisional and final data

Full details of terms and definitions can be found in the International Migration – terms, definitions and frequently asked questions.

4 . Net migration continues to add to the UK population

Net migration, the difference between those coming into the UK and those leaving the UK is positive, meaning that migration is adding to the UK population – with 244,000 more people arriving in the UK than leaving. The latest headline estimates are similar to last quarter (published 30 November 2017). (Table 1)

Table 1: Latest estimates of long-term international migration

UK, year ending September 2017

Thousands

	YE Sept 2017	95% CI	Change since YE Sep 2016
Net migration	+244	+/-42	-29
Immigration	578	+/-35	-20
Emigration	334	+/-23	+9

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

Notes:

1. The estimates given are the sum of the EU, non-EU and British citizenship groupings.

2. 2017 estimates are provisional.

3. CI is Confidence Interval.

4. None of the changes are statistically significant at the 5% level.

In the year to September 2017, net migration was at a similar level to early 2014, following the record levels of net migration from year ending March 2015 to year ending June 2016 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Long-Term International Migration

UK, 2007 to 2017 (year ending September 2017)

Figure 1: Long-Term International Migration Peak net migration

UK, 2007 to 2017 (year ending September 2017)
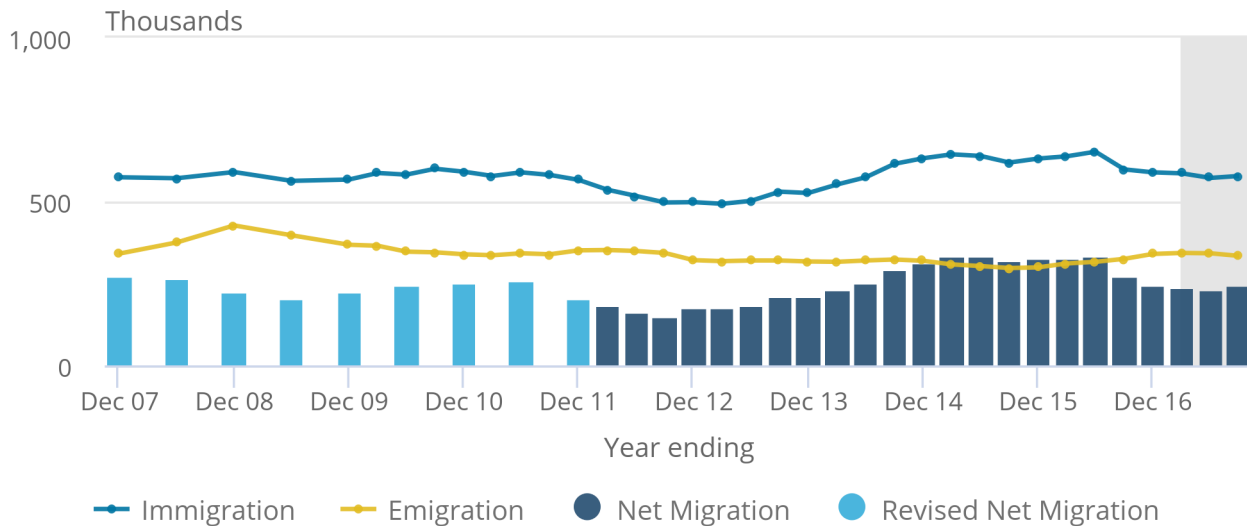
Source: Long-Term International Migration, Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Figures for 2017 are provisional. In this chart provisional estimates are shown in a shaded area.

Net migration over the past 10 years has ranged from a low of +154,000 in 2012 to a high of +336,000 in 2015. Further historical trends from 1964 for long-term international migration to and from the UK show that net migration has been continually positive since 1994.

More detailed Long-Term International Migration (LTIM) estimates of immigration, emigration and net migration over time, along with confidence intervals around all of the estimates can be found in Table 1 and Chart 1TS in the accompanying datasets.

5 . Differing migration patterns seen for EU and non-EU citizens

Non-EU net migration (+205,000) is now larger than EU net migration (+90,000), mainly due to the large decrease in EU net migration over the last year. Net migration of EU citizens has fallen by 75,000 over the last year, returning to the level seen in 2012. However, there are still more EU citizens coming to the UK than leaving. For non-EU citizens net migration increased by 40,000 over the last year and is now similar to the level seen in early 2016 (Figure 2 and Table 2).
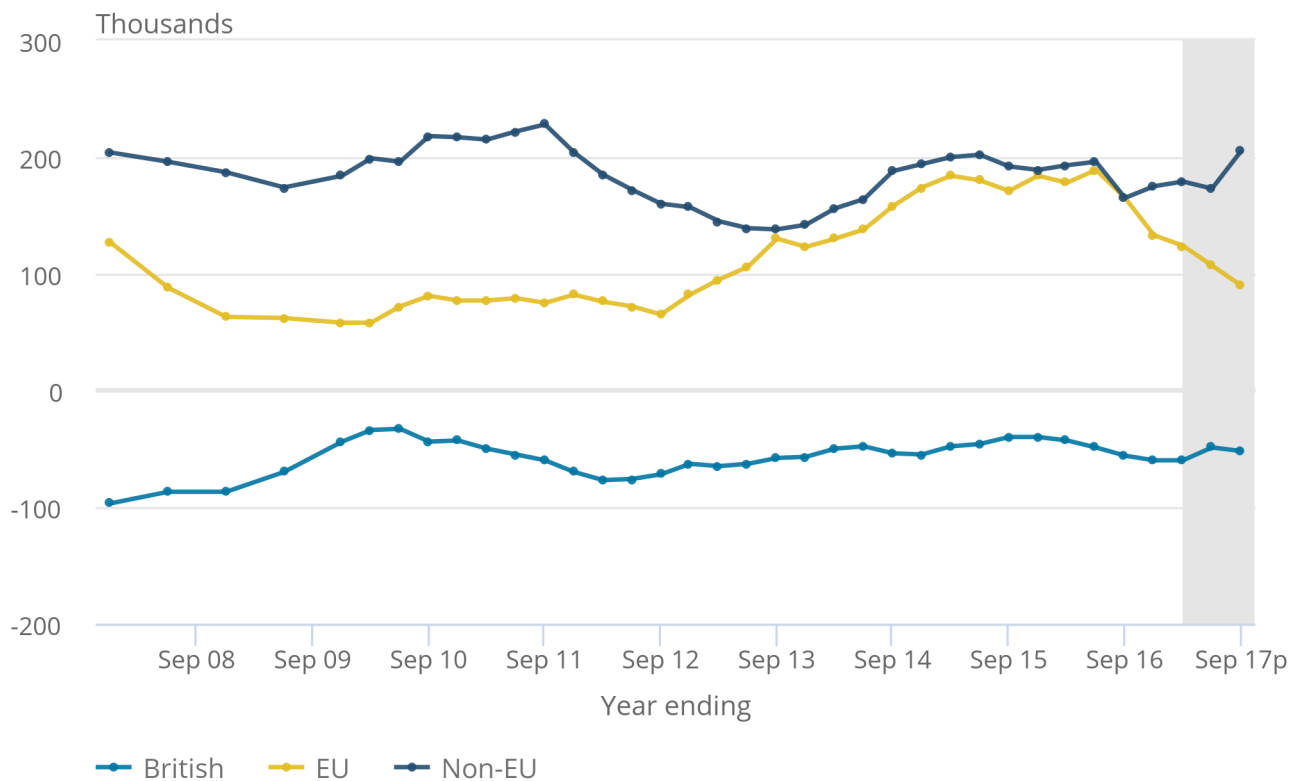
Figure 2: Net migration to the UK by citizenship

UK, 2007 to 2017 (year ending September 2017)

Figure 2: Net migration to the UK by citizenship

UK, 2007 to 2017 (year ending September 2017)

Migration is adding to the UK population

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

Notes:

1. Figures for 2017 are provisional. In this chart provisional estimates are shown in a shaded area.

Falls in EU net migration are seen particularly for EU15 and EU2 citizens, although falls were seen for EU8 citizens in previous periods. The increase in non-EU net migration is mainly accounted for by the increase in net migration of Asian citizens, many of whom are coming to study (Table 2) (see section 7 for further details).

Table 2: Net migration by citizenship

Thousands

	YE Sep 2017	95% CI	Change since YE Sep 2016
Total	+244	+/-42	-29
British	-52	+/-19	+4
EU	+90	+/-28	-75*
(of which) EU15	+41	+/-20	-40*
(of which) EU8	+12	+/-14	-7
(of which) EU2	+34	+/-13	-30*
Non-EU	+205	+/-24	+40*
(of which) Asia	+135	+/-18	+29*
(of which) Rest of World	+60	+/-14	+16

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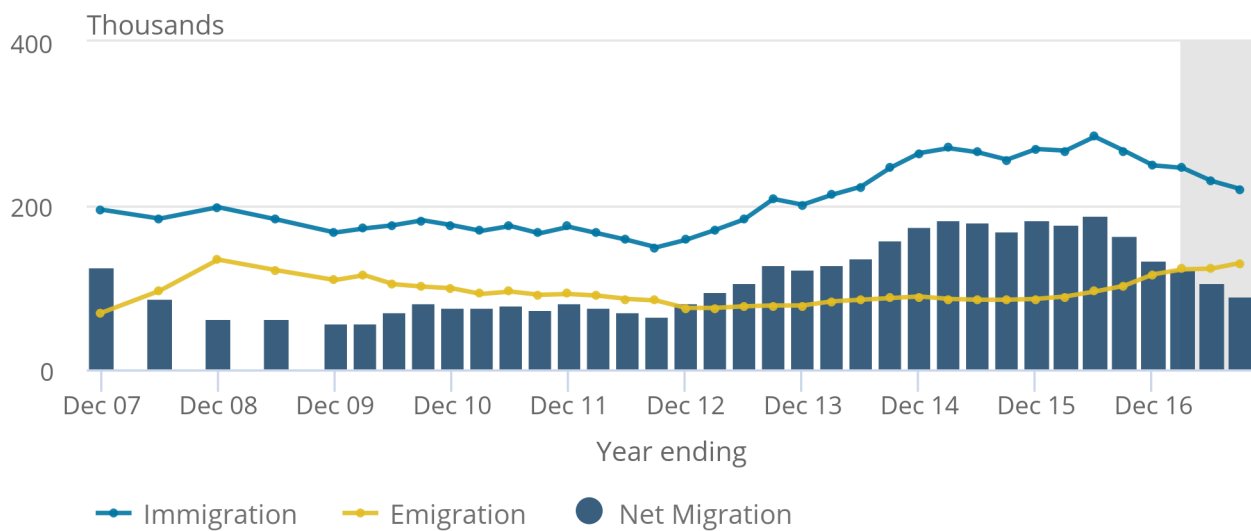
Notes:

1. EU other and Other Europe citizenship groupings are not included as separate groups in the table but are included under the EU and non-EU totals.

2. 2017 estimates are provisional.

4. CI is Confidence Interval.

5. Statistically significant change at the 5% level is indicated by an asterisk.

Fewer EU citizens are coming to the UK, and the number leaving the UK has risen

Figure 3: EU Long-Term International Migration

UK, 2007 to 2017 (year ending September 2017)

Figure 3: EU Long-Term International Migration

UK, 2007 to 2017 (year ending September 2017)

Peak EU net migratic

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

Notes:

1. Figures for 2017 are provisional. In this chart provisional estimates are shown in a shaded area.

The number of EU citizens coming to the UK (220,000) decreased by 47,000 over the last year and is now at a level comparable with 2014 (Figure 3 and Table 3). The number leaving the UK (130,000) is the highest recorded level since 2008. As a result, EU net migration has now returned to the level last seen in 2012.

Citizens from the EU15 and EU2 groups have driven the fall in EU net migration in the latest period, with the number of each group leaving the UK increasing and now at the highest levels recorded. There were also fewer EU15 and EU2 citizens arriving in the UK, although the decrease for EU15 citizens was not statistically significant. Previous periods also saw large changes for EU8 citizens.

Table 3: Immigration and emigration to and from the UK by citizenship

UK, year ending September 2017

Thousands

	Immigration			Emigration		
	YE Sep 2017	95% CI	Change since YE Sep 2016	YE Sep 2017	95% CI	Change since YE Sep 2016
Total	578	+/-35	-20	334	+/-23	+9
British	73	+/-15	+1	125	+/-12	-3
EU	220	+/-23	-47*	130	+/-17	+28*
(of which) EU15	111	+/-16	-22	70	+/-13	+18*
(of which) EU8	51	+/-11	-6	39	+/-9	+1
(of which) EU2	53	+/-11	-21*	20	+/-8	+10*
Non-EU	285	+/-22	+26	80	+/-9	-15*
(of which) Asia	180	+/-17	+21*	45	+/-6	-7
(of which) Rest of World	88	+/-13	+5	28	+/-6	-11*

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

Notes:

1. EU other and Other Europe citizenship groupings are not included as separate groups in the table but are included under the EU and non-EU totals.

2. 2017 estimates are provisional.

3. Statistically significant change at the 5% level is indicated by an asterisk.

4. CI is the confidence interval.

Net migration of non-EU citizens similar to early 2016

Net migration of non-EU citizens has increased by 40,000 over the last year. Whilst the overall increase in immigration (up 26,000) was not statistically significant, the increase seen for Asian citizens arriving to the UK was statistically significant (up 21,000) (Table 3).

The number of non-EU citizens leaving the UK has decreased over the last year. This decrease in emigration, along with the increase in immigration, led to the increase in net migration for non-EU citizens.

It should be noted that this latest increase follows a low level of non-EU immigration in the year ending September 2016. Looking at the underlying reasons why non-EU citizens arrived in the UK, this low level was due to a fall in non-EU citizens coming to the UK to study which was not reflected in the most comparable visa data (further details can be found in Section 7). Therefore, any interpretation of the latest increase in non-EU immigration and net migration should be made with caution and the longer-term trends assessed rather than just the year on year change.

More detailed Long-Term International Migration (LTIM) estimates of immigration, emigration and net migration by citizenship over time, along with confidence intervals around all the estimates can be found in Table 1 and Chart 1TS in the accompanying datasets.

6 . Fewer EU migrants coming to the UK for work

The total number of people coming to work in the UK was 248,000 in the year ending September 2017, a decrease of 45,000 on the previous year and comparable to the level seen in 2014. This decrease is driven by fewer EU citizens coming to the UK looking for work.

In the year ending September 2017, the number of EU citizens coming to work in the UK has fallen by 58,000, driving the decrease in EU immigration. The most noticeable changes are seen for:

- EU15 citizens (down 24,000) – lowest estimate since 2013

- EU8 citizens (down 18,000) – lowest estimate for both work-related and looking for work since their accession

The numbers of EU citizens arriving with a definite job saw a small decrease over the last year (not statistically significant) (Figure 4a). The number of EU citizens coming to the UK looking for work decreased by 35,000 over the last year, again particularly driven by EU15 and EU8 citizens (Figure 4b), continuing a fall which began in the year ending September 2016. Estimates for EU2 citizens also decreased over the last year but the change was not statistically significant.

Figure 4a: EU citizens coming to the UK with a definite job

UK, 2007 to 2017 (year ending September 2017)
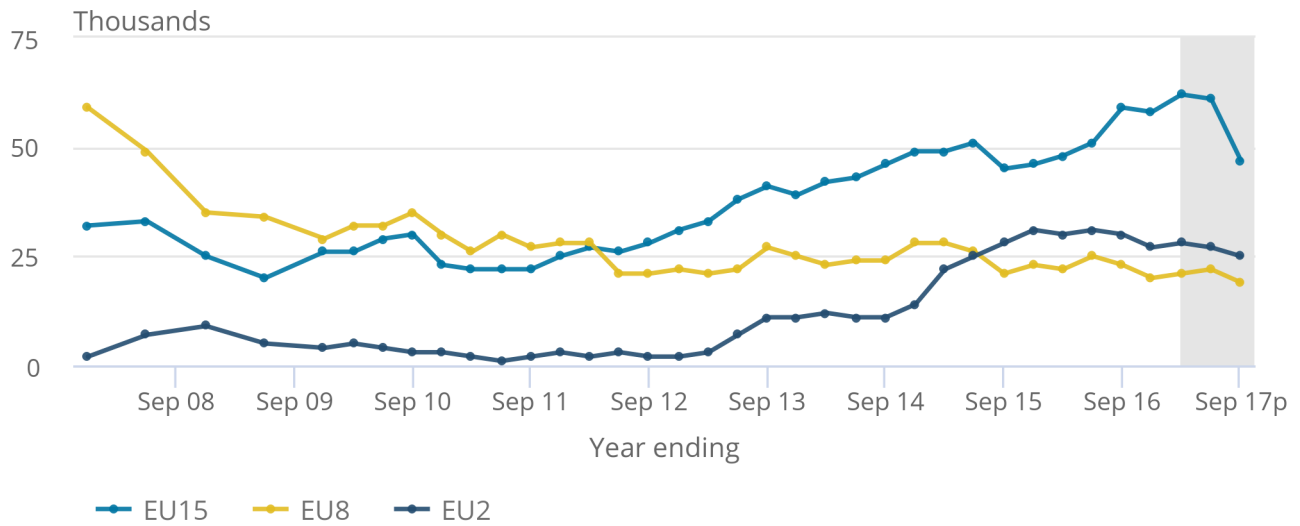
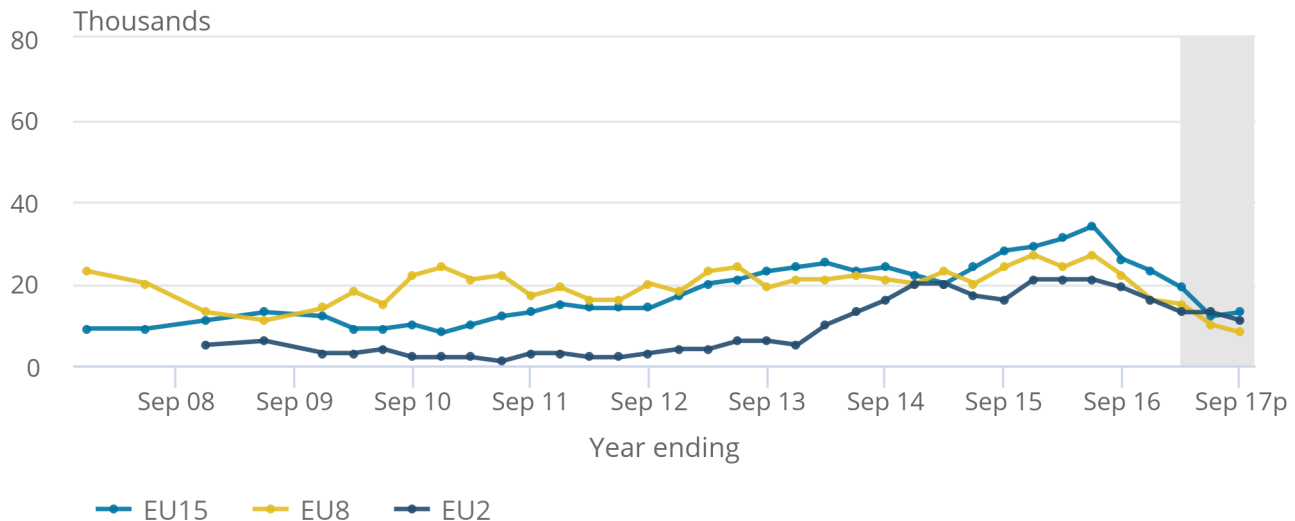**Source: International Passenger Survey, Office for National Statistics**

Notes:

1. Figures for 2017 are provisional. In this chart provisional estimates are shown in a shaded area.

Figure 4b: EU citizens coming to the UK looking for work

UK, 2007 to 2017 (ar ending September 2017)

Source: International Passenger Survey, Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Figures for 2017 are provisional. In this chart provisional estimates are shown in a shaded area.

2. No contact was made with an EU2 citizen arriving in the UK 'looking for work' in YE Dec 07 or YE Jun 08, and so data cannot be displayed for these periods.

More detailed estimates over time by main reason for migration can be found for Long-Term International Migration (LTIM) in Table 2 and by citizenship and main reason for IPS in Table 3 in the accompanying datasets.

In order to work in the UK, a person requires a National Insurance Number (NINo) and, if a citizen from a non-European Economic Area (EEA) country, a valid work visa (dependent on type of work and length of stay). These administrative requirements provide additional data sources and can be used to help build a more comprehensive picture of those arriving to the UK for work. Although not directly comparable to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimates, due to differing definitions, these sources provide a more timely indication of the pattern for long and short-term immigration for work.

Work visas are issued to non-EEA citizens only. Figures are for both short-term and long-term visas (including dependants) and so the total figures published are higher than the ONS estimates for non-EU citizens immigrating to work. Latest figures for the year ending December 2017 show the total number of work-related visas granted slightly increased to 165,131 (a 1% increase). The majority of these were Skilled (Tier 2) visas granted (94,247) up 1% over the year.

Indian nationals accounted for over half of all skilled work visas granted, whilst 40% of sponsored visa applications were from within the Information Technology sector.

More detailed statistics by visa category, citizenship, industry sector and the underlying data can be found in the Home Office Immigration Statistics release.

NINo registrations, from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), are for all nationalities and include both short and long-term migrants and so the figures are much higher than the ONS estimates. Although not directly comparable they can provide useful insights into trends of different nationalities [1].

Latest figures for the year ending December 2017 show there were 683,000 NINo registrations overall (a decrease of 17% over the year):

- 497,000 from EU citizens (down 21% over the year), including 188,000 EU15, 113,000 EU8, and 193,000 EU2

- 185,000 from non-EU nationals (down 7% over the year).

Within the EU and non-EU, specific citizenship groups account for larger numbers of NINo registrations (Table 4).

Table 4: Top five individual nationalities, registrations in year to December 2017 (thousands) and the % change from previous year

EU		Non EU	
Romania	154 (-19%)	India	32 (-10%)
Poland	62 (-34%)	Pakistan	12 (0%)
Italy	51 (-19%)	Australia	11 (-12%)
Bulgaria	39 (-8%)	China	11 (-15%)
Spain	36 (-25%)	United States	10 (-2%)

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

NINo summary tables provide more detail by nationality and location of registrations in the UK. Further information including detail on data sources, uses and limitations of the series is provided in the background information.

Differences between the data sources are described in Comparing sources of international migration statistics.

EU nationals more likely to be in employment than UK and non-EU nationals

Estimates of the labour market activity of the resident population in the UK by nationality and country of birth are published quarterly and measure the net change in employment, unemployment and inactivity. They are not designed to provide a measure of migration flows.

These statistics are derived from the Labour Force Survey up to the latest period, that is, October to December 2017. The latest estimates show that [2]:

- there were 2.35 million EU nationals working in the UK, 101,000 more than for a year earlier

- there were 1.17 million non-EU nationals working in the UK, 68,000 fewer than for a year earlier

- the employment rate (the proportion of people aged from 16 to 64 years who were in work) was 81.2% for EU nationals, higher than that for UK nationals (75.6%) and higher than that for non-EU nationals (63.2%)

These data include people resident in the UK for many years as well as more recent arrivals, and also include those who are moving in and out of employment or between labour market statuses. Changes in the labour market stock cannot be directly compared with long-term net migration, and so the best measure of total migration flows into and out of the UK is the International Passenger Survey (IPS) and the Long-Term International Migration estimates.

The flows show that more people are arriving in the UK than leaving meaning that net migration is above zero. This means that migration is adding to the non-UK population, which is reflected in the increasing numbers of non-UK workers.

Notes for: Fewer EU migrants coming to the UK for work

1. National Insurance number (NINo) registrations and IPS estimates should not be directly compared. 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). See note on the difference between NINo and long-term international migration. NINo allocations to adult overseas nationals and nationality at point of NINo registration of DWP working age benefit recipients (NINo benefit claimants) are no longer badged as National Statistics. The statistics continue to be published as official statistics following Office for Statistics Regulation reassessment of the statistics. The full assessment can be found on the UK Statistics Authority website in a report on the reassessment of the NINo statistics.

2. Statistical significance testing is not available for EU and non-EU breakdowns.

7 . Study is the second most common reason to come to the UK

Long-Term International Migration (LTIM) estimates showed that immigration for study (163,000) increased by 29,000 compared with the previous year and is now at a similar level to that seen in early 2016. Of those whose main reason for long-term immigration was study, almost three quarters (113,000) were non-EU citizens, which saw an increase of 26,000 compared with the previous year, returning to the level seen in early 2016 (Figure 5).

However, this time last year we saw a decrease in the number of non-EU citizens arriving to study, which was not reflected in the most comparable Home Office's student visa data. So, this year's increase appears to be driven by the unusual dip we saw last year, as the latest estimate shows a return to the level before this dip. Therefore, any interpretation of this latest increase should be made with caution and the longer-term trends assessed rather than just the year on year change.

Student immigration follows a seasonal pattern, with the majority of international students arriving between July and September (the start of the academic year). As such, annual figures typically change most in the year ending September period. The increase in the numbers coming to study seen in the latest figures will reflect intake for the 2017 to 2018 academic year.
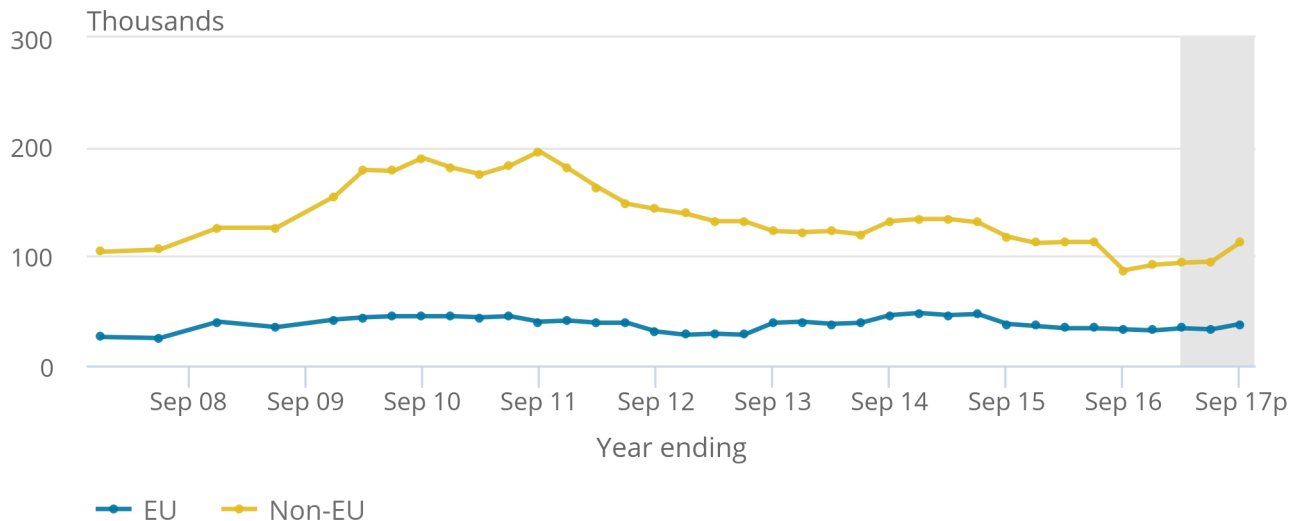
The number of long-term Home Office student visas (for 12 months or more) issued over the year to September 2017 to main applicants increased 8% compared with the previous year.

Figure 5: EU citizens coming to the UK for study

Figure 5: EU citizens coming to the UK for study

UK, 2007 to 2017 (year ending September 2017)

Thousands

(Chart showing EU and Non-EU citizens coming to the UK for study, with y-axis in thousands from 0 to 300, x-axis labelled "Year ending" from Sep 08 to Sep 17p. The Non-EU (yellow) line rises from about 105 in 2007 to a peak near 195 around Sep 11, then declines to around 90-115 by Sep 17. The EU (blue) line remains relatively flat around 30-50 throughout.)

EU — Non-EU

Source: International Passenger Survey, Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Figures for 2017 are provisional. In this chart provisional estimates are shown in a shaded area.

The long-term trend in non-EU student immigration is influenced by policy. Since 2010, the Home Office have implemented a range of measures to improve compliance within the sponsored study route for non-EU nationals. These changes are reported in the Second report on statistics being collected under the exit checks programme (page 7) and will have influenced the decrease seen in the IPS figures from 2011 (Figure 5).

Study visas are for non-European Economic Area (EEA) citizens only, but figures include both short and long-term visas. The figures published by the Home Office are therefore higher than the ONS estimates for non-EU citizens. Although not directly comparable, due to differing definitions, the Home Office visa data provide a more timely indication of the pattern for long and short-term immigration for study for non-EAA citizens.

In the year ending December 2017, there were 223,536 study-related visas granted (including dependants), an increase of 8%. This excludes the short-term study category.

Three nationalities (China, United States and India) accounted for over half (53%) of the study-related visas granted in 2017, with the largest number going to Chinese nationals (88,456 or 40% of the total).

The latest [research on understanding international student migration](#) was published in August 2017. Differences between ONS and Home Office data are explained further in [Comparing sources of international migration statistics](#).

More detailed estimates over time by main reason for migration can be found for LTIM in Table 2 and by citizenship and reason for IPS in Table 3 in the [accompanying datasets](#). More detailed statistics and underlying data on visas for study reasons and by sector can be found in the [Home Office Immigration Statistics release](#).

8 . Work is the most common reason people leave the UK

Migrating to the UK for work or study are the two most common reasons for coming to the UK. Work-related reasons are also the most common reason for people leaving the UK (two-thirds of whom have a definite job to go to).

There are other reasons why people come to, or leave, the UK, including accompanying or joining others already in the UK or abroad. Total emigration figures include UK citizens moving overseas as well as foreign citizens who were previously resident in the UK returning home or moving to a new place to live (Table 5).

Table 5: Immigration and emigration to and from the UK by main reason

UK, year ending (YE) September 2017

	Immigration			Emigration		
	YE Sep 2017	95% CI	Change since YE Sep 2016	YE Sep 2017	95% CI	Change since YE Sep 2016
Work	248	+/-24	-45*	179	+/-15	+12
Definte Job	173	+/-21	-17	118	+/-12	+13
Looking for Work	75	+/-12	-28*	62	+/-8	0
Study	163	+/-19	+29*	22	+/-5	-1
Accompany or Join	81	+/-13	+7	25	+/-5	0
Going home to live	15	+/-6	-3	53	+/-13	+5
Other	21	+/-10	+5	20	+/-6	-4
No reason	9	+/-4	-6	18	+/-6	-9

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

Notes:

1. Figures for 2017 are provisional.

2. Accompany or join means accompanying or joining others and includes those migrating to "accompany or join" a partner or immediate family; it includes those migrating to get married and those who, on prompting, gave no further reason of their own for migrating.

3. The breakdowns 'Going home to live', 'Other' and 'No reason' are IPS only data as such this table will not sum to the adjusted LTIM estimate.

4. 'Other' includes any other stated reason, for example, working holidaymakers, those visiting friends and family, anyone taking a long holiday as well as migrants who are travelling for religious reasons.

5. 'No reason' includes non-responses and the response "Emigrating or Immigrating".

More detailed estimates over time can be found for Long-Term International Migration (LTIM) in Table 2 and for International Passenger Survey (IPS) in Table 3 in the accompanying datasets. More detailed statistics and underlying data on visas for family reasons can be found in the Home Office Immigration Statistics release.

How many people are granted asylum or protection in the UK?

Long-term international migration estimates are adjusted to include refugees and asylum seekers.

In 2017, there were 14,767 grants of asylum, alternative forms of protection and resettlement (40% of who were under 18 years of age), compared with 15,156 in the previous year. This comprised of:

- 7,469 grants of asylum to main applicants and dependants (down 11%)

- 1,086 grants of alternative form of protection to main applicants and their dependants (down 29%)

- 6,212 people provided with protection under a resettlement scheme (up 19%).

Additionally, 5,218 family reunion visas were issued to partners and children of those granted asylum or humanitarian protection in the UK, a 14% decrease since last year.

These data are provided by the Home Office and more detailed statistics and underlying data on asylum and protection can be found in the Home Office Immigration Statistics release.

9 . Links to related statistics

This publication is one of a suite of migration-related statistics and analysis, which together give a more comprehensive view on migration into and out of the UK.

Today (22 February 2018) the regular quarterly outputs are released across the Government Statistical Service:

- this jointly published Migration Statistics Quarterly Report (MSQR) and Office for National Statistics accompanying datasets

- Home Office Immigration Statistics, October to December 2017

- Department for Work and Pensions National Insurance Number allocations to adult overseas nationals to December 2017

This quarter ONS also release a blog to explain more about what you need to know about the latest figures .

The Home Office are also releasing Statistics on changes in migrants' visa and leave status: 2016 .

If you are new to migration statistics, you might find it helpful to read the Migration Statistics First Time User Guide .

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. The ONS international migration and the Home Office migration research and analysis pages provide links to further publications. Differences between these sources and the definitions used are described in the summary note Comparing sources of international migration statistics .

Government statisticians are responding to demand for more information on the impact of migration by collaborating and data sharing across government to improve the information that is currently available. International migration data and analysis: Improving the evidence describes our future work programme. A further update on progress of this collaboration was published in a blog from the Deputy National Statistician for Population and Public Policy in ONS forum signals new era for migration statistics .

If you would like to subscribe to our newsletter, please send an email to pop.info@ons.gsi.gov.uk with the subject title "Subscribe to ONS Population Statistics Newsletter", or you can also follow our Director of Migration Statistics @JayLindop_ONS on Twitter for the latest population statistics news and updates and to join in the conversation.

10 . Quality and methodology

The Long-Term International Migration Quality and Methodology Information report 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

For more detailed information on our migration statistics methodology please see International migration methodology.

A note on the accuracy of long-term migration estimates

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.

A confidence interval is a measure of the uncertainty around the estimate. Confidence intervals are reported in the accompanying datasets. Users are advised to be cautious when making inferences from estimates with relatively large confidence intervals. For immigration and emigration estimates where the lower confidence interval is below zero, users should assume the estimate is above zero. 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.

For further information on confidence intervals, the accuracy of these statistics, comparing different data sources, and the difference between provisional and final figures, please see International migration methodology.

The quality of the long-term student migration statistics – former student emigration estimates are now labelled as Experimental Statistics. As part of the ONS work plan on student migration the latest research on understanding international student migration was published in August 2017. This report focuses on analysis of Home Office exit check data for non-EU students and the results of a new student survey exploring student intentions on completion of study.

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. As a result, we published a revised series of net migration estimates for the UK. Published tables have been updated to include the revised estimates. The report, a summary and guidance on how to use these revised figures are available. No revisions were made to separate immigration and emigration estimates at the time the net migration estimates were revised.